



Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism

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Table of Contents

Preface	1
The GNAR Initiative: Empowering Gateway Communities Through Collaboration (Jake Powell, Danya Rumore, and Jordan Smith)	3
Social Innovation as a Tool to Create a More Sustainable Tourism – the Example of the Platform Socialbnb (Alexander Haufschild and Dirk Reiser)	17
Embracing Change: The Cayuga Collection’s Way of Building Resilience in the Tourism Industry (Carolyn Seiferth)	33
Finding their Way Through the Weeds: How Festivals Navigated Legalized Cannabis (Kiri Shafto and Christine Van Winkle)	52

Preface

The World Leisure Centre of Excellence at Vancouver Island University and the National Extension Tourism Network are pleased to share the second volume of Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism. This initiative aligns with the mandate of both partners and enables the mobilization of knowledge in sustainable tourism to a global audience.

- The [World Leisure Centre of Excellence \(CoE\) at Vancouver Island University](#) is one of a global network of CoE of the World Leisure Organization. The Center is dedicated to questioning the relationship between leisure and sustainability, determining the level of sustainability of the leisure industry and inviting and monitoring new models and approaches to enhance sustainability.
- The [National Extension Tourism Network](#) strives to integrate research, education and outreach within Cooperative Extension and Sea Grant institutions in the United States to support sustainable tourism thereby contributing to the long term economic development, environmental stewardship and socio-cultural well being of communities and regions.

Case studies are a valuable way to synthesize and share lessons learned and they help to create new knowledge and enhanced applications in practice. The intent of this volume is to provide an opportunity for academics, extension professionals, industry stakeholders and community practitioners to reflect, discuss and share the innovative approaches that they have taken to develop sustainable tourism in a variety of different contexts. Faculty and students will benefit from having access to current examples where researchers and practitioners are approaching common issues, opportunities and trends. Practitioners, volunteers, board members and leaders of community organizations will benefit from having a platform to share their own innovative practices or to gain insights from those in other contexts. Each case incorporates some learning outcomes and discussion questions to guide readers and learners in case exploration.

This volume includes four cases from North and Central America and Europe. The volume begins with Jake Powell, Danya Rumore and Jordan Smith's case titled *"The GNAR Initiative: Empowering Gateway Communities Through Collaboration"*. This chapter explains the recent development of the Gateway and Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative in the intermountain west region of the United States. Through this Cooperative Extension program of the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University, community stakeholders collaborated to identify shared needs, and develop, share, and access resources. The case describes the GNAR's efforts to include a diverse stakeholder group to guide its efforts which enabled it to be a helpful resource in quickly responding to the evolving issues in gateway communities during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

In the second chapter, we look at an innovation in Germany in the case study by Alexander Haufschild and Dirk Reiser titled *"Social Innovation as a Tool to Create a More Sustainable Tourism – the Example of the Platform Socialbnb"*. The authors describe an innovative tourism booking platform, socialbnb, founded by students at the Cologne University in 2018. The accommodation platform connects social and ecological NGOs with potential customers, especially youth travelers to have authentic travel experiences. The case describes the evolution of a more inclusive business model from the initial idea to the pilot phase to become a start-up.

The third case shifts our attention to Costa Rica in a case study by Carolin Seiferth titled *“Embracing Change: The Cayuga Collection’s Way of Building Resilience in the Tourism Industry”*. In this case study, Seiferth introduces Cayuga Collection, one of the world leaders in sustainable travel as a context for the exploration of organizational resilience. Using the lens of the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model, and interviews into Cayuga’s company culture, Seiferth describes how a continuous commitment to a sustainability strategy, flexible business operations and crisis management actions resulted in a strong position relative to competitors during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The final case by Kiri Shafto and Christine Van Winkle titled *“Finding their Way Through the Weeds: How Festivals Navigated Legalized Cannabis”* takes us to the Canadian context. The case outlines recent changes in public policy in Canada after the 2018 legalization of Cannabis before discussing the implications that cannabis legalization has had for festivals related to cannabis use by attendees, volunteers, and staff. The authors research explored the approach taken by multiple festival organizations and identified diverse issues that need to be considered by organizers.

Like many things, the publication of this volume was delayed due to the pandemic. We are pleased to be able to share this collection of case studies and hope that the dedication of the authors to document the examples of innovative and promising practices in sustainable tourism provide valuable insights to its readers.

The GNAR Initiative: Empowering Gateway Communities Through Collaboration

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Chapter Summary

Gateway communities throughout the intermountain west are an important part of the tourism experience. They are often the doorstep to the national parks and public lands that draw millions of international and domestic visitors each year. Along with many benefits, tourism brings unique challenges to these communities, and they face them with limited staff, resources, and time.

This chapter explains the recent development of the Gateway and Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative and its current efforts to assist gateway communities in the intermountain west region of the United States. The GNAR Initiative is a Cooperative Extension program of the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University. The Initiative is a hub for gateway community stakeholders to identify shared needs, and cooperatively develop, share, and access resources. The initiative utilizes the infrastructure and mission of the university land grant extension system to operationalize its own, similarly aligned three-part mission: multidisciplinary, trans-boundary research, community and student education, and community capacity building.

An overview of the GNAR Initiative's development is provided as a possible model for similar efforts in other regions. The GNAR Initiative's internal structure and development path focused on using a collaborative, grass-roots effort to build peer-to-peer networks that link GNAR communities to GNAR communities, and GNAR communities to research and resources in an arena that continues to rapidly evolve. The Initiative's efforts to include a diverse stakeholder group to guide its efforts resulted in the initiative being equipped to quickly respond to the evolving issues in gateway communities during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

Learning Objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the challenges western gateway communities continue to face.
2. Recognize gateway communities' role in the tourism "ecosystem".
3. Highlight the potential role universities and university extension programs can play in assisting gateway communities.
4. Illustrate the process and initial outputs from creating a collaborative regional program that could be replicated to serve gateway communities elsewhere in the world.

The Issue, Opportunity or Trend

Small towns and cities located near natural amenities such as national parks, other major public lands, destination resorts, and scenic rivers often provide the "staging area" from which visitors experience these landscapes (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Thus, these "gateway communities" are an integral part of the tourism economy and are inextricably connected to their surrounding natural resources (Howe, McMahon, & Propst, 1997; Gunn, 1988). Visitors both passing through, and staying in gateway communities often perceive these towns and cities mainly as a source of lodging, groceries, fuel, guides, and gift shops. However, many people call these places home, and behind the infrastructure that supports the tourism economy is a community of residents, public officials, and organizations that benefit from and also must deal with the challenges of hosting hundreds and sometimes thousands of visitors every day. Throughout the western United States, many regions with high natural amenity value are being "discovered" and, as a result, the gateway communities in these areas are becoming increasingly popular places to visit and live (Stoker, Rumore, Romaniello, & Levine, 2020). As a result, a growing number of small gateway towns and cities are experiencing the kinds of complex planning and management challenges typically encountered in an urban context, such as acute concerns associated with housing affordability and traffic congestion (Stoker et al., 2020). Unlike urban or suburban communities, these towns and cities must confront these challenges with the limited resources common in small rural communities. The fate of these communities as both traditional tourism destinations as well as a desirable place for people migrating to amenity rich areas rests on the decisions of community leaders, planners, and residents being made right now--and those that were made historically.

The issues being confronted by western gateway communities are evolving in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many of these towns and cities experiencing a "triple whammy" from the virus. Many of these communities have experienced surprisingly high caseloads of the virus as a result of their transient populations and visitors; communities reliant on tourism and service industries have been disproportionately affected economically; and many of these towns are now experiencing unprecedented levels of amenity migration as people flee cities and remote working becomes increasingly common. Communications with gateway community staff and elected leaders indicate they are leaning on a range of federal, state, and local resources and informal communication networks to help them navigate and respond to their ongoing and emerging planning, development, public health, and economic challenges. However, they continue to struggle to respond to the growth and development pressures they face and express a desire for resources

tailored specifically to their unique needs as rural communities with “big city problems” (Stoker et al., 2020). The planning and support resources traditionally available to gateway communities often fall short of addressing the complexity inherent in their unique, quasi-rural position.

Any efforts to promote sustainable tourism to western public lands and other natural amenities must consider the effect visitation has on the planning and management of the gateway communities that support the tourism experience. The erosion of the social and structural fabric of a gateway community and the subsequent loss of its authenticity and economic stability threaten both the visitor experience and the long-term viability and livability of the community itself (Bergstrom, Harrington, 2018; Mathieson & Wall, 1982, Ulrich-Schad, Qin H, 2018).

The Innovation

Case Context

Gateway communities in the western United States experience many of the same dynamics as gateway communities throughout the United States (see for example Marcouiller, Gartner, & Chraca, 2013). However, there are some important contextual features that distinguish western gateway communities from gateway communities elsewhere in the United States and must be considered when trying to provide sustainable tourism and community planning and decision-making assistance.

First, western gateway communities are typically farther away from major urban areas than gateway communities in the eastern part of the country. The remote nature of these communities affect their regional dependence as well as their rural character.

Second, there is also considerably more public land in the western United States and this extensive public lands network exerts an influence unique in scope and scale to any other geographic region in the country. Indeed, decision-making in many western gateway communities is heavily dependent on and interwoven with management of adjacent public lands. Rural gateway communities near National Parks, for example, may only have a few hundred residents but deal with thousands of visitors traveling through their community to access a nearby National Park on any given day. The daily life for residents in many western gateway communities are highly influenced by adjacent public land policies. Similarly, local and regional planning decisions affect residents and also heavily impact public land management decisions, policies, and planning.

Further, the political and planning context of the western United States (see Fig. 1) is quite different from that in Midwestern and eastern states. Many western gateway communities are located in areas that are historically quite conservative politically. As the communities develop, they often attract more liberal populations, which can create a range of community tensions and challenges for planning and community decision-making.



Figure 1. Western states of focus for the GNAR Initiative

Stakeholders Involved

The challenges faced by gateway communities are diverse and interconnected, and are not easily addressed through a single organization or discipline. As such, multiple agencies and organizations currently work to address western gateway communities. However, these entities are typically constrained to limited geographic boundaries or focused on a limiting set of issues. The Gateway and Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative was formed in 2018 as a trans-discipline, trans-boundary effort to link communities with information, research, and existing stakeholders. Stakeholders were invited to participate in the GNAR Initiative in order to bring a variety of specialists, perspectives, and entities already assisting gateway communities together to highlight gaps in knowledge and resources. Since its inception, the GNAR Initiative has attracted a variety of stakeholders from the public and private sector to its leadership team, the events it has hosted, and its contact list. Stakeholders are categorized into the general groups listed below for which targeted events, information, and resources are developed.

Communities:

Gateway communities are considered the primary client the GNAR Initiative serves. The individuals representing these communities in GNAR Initiative events have ranged from elected officials to community

residents. Staff associated with community planning, tourism, and economic development have been instrumental in identifying needed tools and resources.

Land Managers

As noted above, public land management is inextricably entwined with planning and decision-making in most western gateway communities. Accordingly, public land managers are a core audience and partner for GNAR Initiative efforts and are actively engaged in efforts and conversations with gateway community representatives through peer-to-peer learning sessions and other outreach efforts

Support Organizations:

Numerous organizations-including federal and state government agencies, non-profit entities, academic programs, and private consultants provide a range of resources, guidance, and other services to assist gateway community staff, businesses, and public land managers in dealing with the challenges they face. These “support organizations” include entities such as state offices of outdoor recreation, tourism, and community development; non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups; and various consultancies and regional networks. The GNAR Initiative brought these organizations into the conversation to better understand the gaps in their services and to unite existing resources with communities. We found that communities were often unaware of existing services such as planning process facilitation, funding opportunities, and regional planning efforts or these efforts were focused on a limited geographic scope and not shared widely. Conversely, support organizations were often focused on their specific program offerings and geographic extent and unaware of many community challenges outside of their programs.

University Cooperative Extension:

University Cooperative Extension programs are engaged with rural communities across the United States and the intermountain west is no exception. Counties are often considered Cooperative Extension partners and help support county extension agents and/or faculty. The expertise, history of community collaboration, and recognition of Cooperative Extension in rural areas helped the GNAR Initiative to quickly network with gateway communities and invite communities to participate in GNAR Initiative events. Cooperative Extension faculty have key leadership roles within the GNAR Initiative’s core team in order to empower the GNAR Initiative in its efforts to connect with western gateway communities.

Researchers:

The GNAR Initiative was born from academic efforts to better understand and document planning and development challenges in western gateway communities (Rumore, Stoker, Levine, & Romaniello, 2019; Stoker et al., 2020). Research continues to be a core part of the GNAR Initiative's work and, thus, researchers are key partners and stakeholders. The Initiative is dedicated to providing usable science and data that meets community needs. Coordinated research efforts are just getting underway in 2021 with the formation of a research working group. Key research agenda topic questions the GNAR Initiative anticipates addressing focus on gateway community vulnerabilities, resilience, wellbeing, amenity migration impacts, variations and responses in gateway community COVID-19 responses, and visitation and visitor use management strategy effectiveness. The Initiative is working to create opportunities for researchers to engage with gateway community members such as having researchers participate in community learning forums, and matching desired community data and information needs with researchers who can help fill those gaps.

Approach Used and the Impact

The Gateway and Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative was initiated by the research efforts of Dr. Danya Rumore at the University of Utah in 2018 with the mission of mobilizing diverse disciplines and partners to better understand and address planning and development challenges in western gateway and natural amenity regions. The University of Utah’s Department of City and Metropolitan Planning and the Wallace Stegner Center for Environmental Dispute Resolution provided a solid foundation for the GNAR Initiative’s efforts to begin assessing gateway communities planning challenges. As the GNAR Initiative’s network of partners and community interest increased, it became apparent that sharing information and connecting with rural gateway communities would benefit from the experience and infrastructure already operating through the state’s existing land grant Extension system. Connecting the GNAR Initiative with Utah State University provided an opportunity to incorporate a progressive idea into an existing statewide infrastructure that already has strong local and regional connections. The GNAR Initiative was adopted in January of 2020 as an initiative within the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism, an existing Cooperative Extension program at Utah State University. This transition united the growing efforts of the GNAR Initiative with the land grant mission of Utah State University to “improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities throughout Utah” (University, 2020). Locating the GNAR Initiative within a Cooperative Extension program further solidified the original trans-discipline, trans-boundary mission of the initiative.

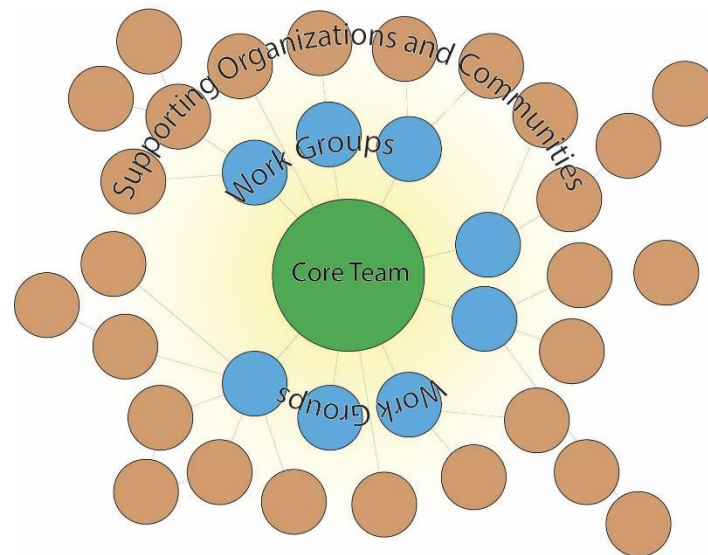


Figure 2 – GNAR Initiative Organization Model

The GNAR Initiative was envisioned and established as a “hub” for an interdisciplinary team of university researchers, extension faculty, community support organizations, community leaders, and planning practitioners. Using a “hub” model (Fig. 2) governed the Initiative’s organizational and operational structure and continues to guide its development today. The intent of this hub model is to collaboratively identify gaps

in stakeholder knowledge and resources, and then seek out, and provide appropriate resources to gateway communities within three interconnected strategic focus areas: Research, Education, and Capacity Building (Table 1).

GNAR Initiative Strategic Focus Areas			
	Research	Education	Capacity Building
<i>Knowledge Gaps</i>	Impacts of COVID-19 on gateway community resilience	Gateway community specific planning curriculum development in academic institutions	Understanding of available resources at a local and regional scale
	Examples of how visitor use management on public lands effects on gateway communities	Training resources for gateway community planners and elected officials	Alignment of planning tools with community change.
	Wellbeing of gateway communities post COVID-19	Information sharing opportunities for community leaders and staff	Processes for effective community visioning and capacity building efforts
	Strategies for proactive planning in the face of growth		Understanding of the unique interplay between economic, environmental and social forces in gateway communities.
<i>Resource Gaps</i>	Funding	Collaborative, cross disciplinary community engagement opportunities for design and planning students	Facilitation of community focused visioning efforts
	Dissemination platforms to make relevant research accessible to communities		Peer to peer/community to community learning and information sharing opportunities

Table 1 – Identified Knowledge and Resource Gaps Across Strategic Focus Areas

The initiative's organizational structure reflects its mission as a connection point for a variety of interests and stakeholders. The Initiative is currently led by a core team of university faculty representing several departments at Utah State University and the University of Utah. This core team is responsible for the detailed operation of the Initiative based on input provided from stakeholders throughout the region working to understand and support gateway communities. These partners provide input and help deploy the

Initiative's vision and strategies. In order to remain responsive to the dynamic nature of gateway community issues in the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond the GNAR Initiative structure uses ephemeral workgroups to move targeted initiatives forward. When pressing issues are identified by service providers or communities the GNAR Initiative assesses its potential role in the issue in relation to its own mission, and if aligned, works to guide the formation of a workgroup. Volunteers within these workgroups identify a particular goal tailored to the challenge at hand and then work toward accomplishing that specific goal. Once the goal is accomplished or irrelevant, the workgroup is disbanded and members are invited to engage in other pressing issues. The efforts of the workgroup are integrated into the larger GNAR Initiative and shared via the website, email updates, blog, and toolkit. The Initiative continues to engage the network of partner communities and support organizations to identify ongoing and emerging information and resource needs, disseminate information and resources, and to generally inform and deploy our research, education, and capacity building efforts.

Research:

The GNAR Initiative has created a new space for university faculty from across the intermountain west to collaboratively develop gateway community specific research questions, apply for competitive grants, and a platform to share research findings with communities. The collaborative purpose and resultant structure of the Initiative and its transboundary approach has generated new opportunities for research questions, projects, and funding that responds to the interconnected nature of gateway community challenges. For example, Dr. Danya Rumore lead a team of researchers interested in GNAR communities in 2020 to frame a list of priority research topics and associated research questions as part of a National Science Foundation Converge COVID-19 Working Group for Public Health and Social Sciences Research grant. Researchers within the region are also leveraging the GNAR Initiative's infrastructure and network of communities to collaborate across disciplines and diversify the impacts of their competitive grant proposals. The Initiative has also solicited and attracted funding from private businesses such as the North Face outdoor equipment company as well as federal agencies like the National Park Service interested in supporting research that incorporates outreach efforts that translate research findings into meaningful resources for gateway communities.

Like many other Cooperative Extension programs, the GNAR Initiative has also served as conduit to unite unmet community research needs with researchers in both the private and public realm. For example, the Initiative is working with Utah State University's Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism and a collaboration of Utah gateway communities to develop an online tool that overlays visitor use data with other community metrics to assist community planners, local businesses, and elected leaders visualize visitation trends and inspire data driven decisions. Connections like these have uncovered fertile ground for meaningful future research projects that provide direct community benefits.

Education:

The GNAR Initiative is committed to providing educational opportunities for university students and professionals working in the field. The Initiative provides inter-university and cross university opportunities for students to prepare to engage the unique challenges occurring within gateway communities through courses, mentored research, and group projects. For example, the University of Utah's Department of City and Metropolitan Planning has offered a gateway community workshop annually since 2018. In 2020 the course included a summer workshop course focused on engaging students in understanding the evolution of

the COVID-19 pandemic in gateway communities and its impact on three gateway communities in Utah. The GNAR Initiative's guidance in this class resulted in connecting planning students to gateway community leaders in a collaborative service learning environment.

Stakeholders have also been important in identifying gaps in educational resources for planners and community leaders. The GNAR Initiative is working to address these gaps through providing training opportunities for planning professionals and community leaders tailored to the challenges identified in stakeholder listening sessions. Trainings have included a webinar series focused on amenity migration, an online meeting facilitation training, and a webinar series covering housing affordability and short term rentals.

Capacity Building:

The GNAR Initiative is committed to building the capacity of gateway communities to address their current and emerging challenges. This commitment is realized through the Initiative's multi-pronged mission. Through our research on, work with, and other engagement with gateway communities throughout the west, we consistently heard a desire for peer-to-peer learning and sharing as well as interest in an easily accessible online toolkit designed specifically for gateway communities and regions. Responding to these needs, the GNAR Initiative created a "GNAR Network" which provides a space for gateway community leaders to make personal connections with other community leaders in the region, share lessons learned across these communities, and collaboratively problem-solve shared challenges. The GNAR Network utilizes facilitated interactive virtual meetings to create a space for community leaders to connect, share, and learn. This network allows community leaders to share both individual expertise and experience and needs. The GNAR Initiative then works to help link individuals with expertise with those in need, thereby encouraging collaborative problem solving. GNAR Network members are invited to participate in peer to peer learning sessions and can opt-in to receive email updates on research and resources. The GNAR Initiative works with the GNAR Network, the steering committee, partner support organizations, and communities to build out a free and publicly accessible online toolkit (<https://www.usu.edu/gnar/toolkit>) to share resources and information about a wide range of topics identified as important through our research and engagement with gateway communities throughout the west.

Implications & Lessons learned

The GNAR Initiative is still very much a work in progress and continues to evolve. The long-term benefits, implications, and lessons learned from the effort remain to be fully realized. However, since the Initiative's inception many important lessons have been learned and the impact of the Initiative's effort is growing.

The role of academia and Extension: In terms of lessons learned the GNAR Initiative's efforts have affirmed the role academic institutions and Cooperative Extension partnerships can play in addressing large scale public challenges in a holistic, collaborative way. The Initiative's collaborative model also highlights the value of bringing gateway communities and support organizations together to assess the breadth of current resources, and identify information and resource gaps (Table 1). Perhaps more noteworthy has been the efforts to connect research with stakeholders to both inform what data and research are needed, and to ensure that the subsequent research findings are delivered to stakeholders in useful ways. For example, connecting community leaders to GNAR Initiative webinars through Extension's contact lists and providing

resources to County Extension representatives. The experience of Cooperative Extension professionals has been valuable in uniting research and outreach continues to assist this effort.

Community Interest in Peer to Peer Collaboration: Another lesson learned is how eager gateway communities are for peer to peer problem solving opportunities and interaction. The GNAR Initiative hosted four facilitated community listening sessions during 2020. Feedback from participants in these sessions highlighted the value of hearing from communities across the region facing similar issues. For example, a state agency participant working to support gateway communities related his realization that “GNAR communities from across the West have similar fears and questions”. A community leader participant realized that “Other towns and organizations with similar challenges have good ideas,” while another participant expressed, “We’re in this together, amid social distancing that kind of connection means so much.” Providing a regional perspective on the evolving challenges facing gateway communities helped participants identify potential solutions and personal connections from within their peer group.

Modeling Virtual Collaboration: A key component to these events was the value of thoughtfully designed, interactive online events. As the use of virtual meetings exploded in the spring of 2020 the GNAR Initiative events were an opportunity to model online meeting facilitation techniques to GNAR communities struggling with community communication. The GNAR Initiative worked to model effective audience engagement using virtual meeting software accessories such as polls, use and management of virtual breakout rooms, and allowing for the audience to share feedback through facilitated chat questions. Throughout these meetings participants highlighted the value of engaging in a collaborative virtual meeting. When asked what key thing the participants got out of one such session, a community leader responded, “Awesome use of chat rooms and zoom features. Good use of time.”

Access: Additionally, recording and making the content of the GNAR Initiative meetings available has created an all access repository of these lessons learned. While over 800 people attended the 11 virtual workshops and webinars hosted by the GNAR Initiative, many sessions have been viewed online by more people than participated in the event live. Providing lasting open access to content has provided opportunities for a multiplying benefit beyond those who participated in the event.

The Value of a Diverse Leadership Team: Guiding the GNAR Initiative’s evolution is a core team of individuals with diverse responsibilities, skills, and connections. This diversity allowed the core team to quickly adapt and respond to the changing resource and delivery needs of gateway communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The core team’s initial efforts were also instrumental in securing the support of private as well as public funding to support the GNAR Initiative. The North Face, a private outdoor products business interested in supporting sustainable outdoor recreation and tourism was the first to support the GNAR Initiative and subsequent funding from the National Park Service’s Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance program has allowed the Initiative to employ a part time coordinator to assist with managing the day to day logistics that expand the services offered to western gateway communities.

Collaborative Partnerships: The final lesson learned from the initiation of the GNAR Initiative is the importance of establishing and maintaining truly collaborative partnerships. The GNAR Initiative’s growth model relies on listening to understand, creating meaningful content and connections, then knitting existing

networks together through identifying missing linkages and bridging those gaps. For example, communities interested in night sky preservation were connected with a regional dark sky preservation organization working to develop and share tools for rural community dark sky preservation near large expanses of public lands. The organizational structure uses partners representing diverse networks of gateway communities and support organizations (Fig. 2). These partners have been instrumental in building connections between the GNAR Initiative's efforts and across networks that transcend political boundaries and disciplines.

Scalar Planning Needs: In terms of impacts, the GNAR Initiative's network of communities highlighted that mid-term and long term planning was taking a backseat as communities became overwhelmed with merely reacting to the tourism and community impacts from the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. This concern was also reiterated by many of the support organizations within the GNAR Initiative. GNAR Initiative listening sessions made it apparent that communities were concerned about unanticipated growth due to COVID-19 inspired migration. The GNAR Initiative team prepared a five-part webinar series held during the fall of 2020 to share insights into the amenity migration phenomenon specific to the region. This series connected communities to research, data, tools and approaches, and case studies of communities addressing this emerging issue. Long term access to the webinar series through recording and posting the webinars on the GNAR Initiative website (gnar.usu.edu) has established another resource for gateway communities to access in the future.

The Need for a "Toolkit": An outgrowth of both participant responses and previous research (Stoker et al., 2020) highlighted the need for community representatives to access a shared repository of resources and tools tailored to gateway communities. The GNAR Initiative responded to this need by developing an online repository of resources currently called a "toolkit". The Initiative works with partner communities and support organizations to gather relevant tourism and community planning resources, model ordinances, tools, and case studies. Where needed resources don't exist, the Initiative is reaching out to partners with relevant experience or expertise to ask them to develop a resource they are willing to share to grow the toolkit. This toolkit is currently accessible to any interested party through the GNAR Initiative website (gnar.usu.edu).

The GNAR Initiative has further illuminated the distinct challenges GNAR communities face and the increased need to share targeted research, information, and resources regardless of the challenge. The GNAR Initiative is demonstrating that GNAR community leaders find value in connecting with leaders in other GNAR communities and find their limited resources can be expanded through learning from the experience of other communities if given the space and forum to do so. The GNAR Initiative continues to use collaboration as a means to evolve to meet the uncertain future of gateway communities. Sustainable tourism requires that both the destinations and the communities' visitors pass through be sustainable. The GNAR Initiative has created a new space for gateway communities to engage in a dialog about how tourism affects their community now and into the future.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the tourism industry impact, both positively and negatively, the gateway communities near you?
2. What external and internal forces are threatening the aspects that you think make gateway communities near you special?
3. What organizations and efforts are currently engaging gateway communities in their efforts to plan for and address the current and future challenges you identified above?
4. What are potential gaps in knowledge or resources with regards to gateway communities in your area? How might these be addressed?

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Social Innovation as a Tool to Create a More Sustainable Tourism – the Example of the Platform Socialbnb

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Chapter Summary

This case study is about an innovative tourism booking platform, socialbnb, founded by students at the Cologne University in 2018. It describes a new accommodation platform that connects social and ecological NGOs with potential customers, especially youth travelers. The focus of the study lays on the development of the platform from the initial idea to the pilot phase to become a start-up. In general terms, the platform helps NGOs to earn an additional income by renting out accommodation on their premises to tourists. At the same time, it helps travelers to have an authentic experience. The case study can therefore be described as an example of a more inclusive business model that incorporates sustainability.

Overall, the case study gives the background information of the entrepreneurs (from the beginning of the idea to the current status), the business opportunity that they saw in the trend towards more sustainable travel behavior, and how they put their idea into practice. It also details the benefits of such an approach.

Learning Objectives:

1. To learn about the development process of a social business from the idea to start-up.
2. To recognize that different stakeholders other than the classic travel agent can be involved in the provision of tourism spreading its benefits more widely within a visited region.
3. To understand the business model that combines tourism and local development with the goals of social and environmental NGOs.
4. To understand that NGOs can play an important role in local sustainable tourism development.
5. To embrace the concept that NGOs can become a multiplier to shift the income generated by tourism to a greater number of locals

The Issue, Opportunity or Trend

“Tourism has become a pillar of economies, a passport to prosperity, and a transformative force for improving millions of lives. The world can and must harness the power of tourism as we strive to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” **António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General**

The quote from the Secretary-General of the United Nations reflects the increasing importance of tourism in global development issues. The travel industry is one of the most important economic sectors these days. In 2019, it accounted for more than ten percent of global economic output, and the trend is rising (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020) and more than 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded with revenues of approximately 1,717 billion US dollars (UNWTO, 2020a). Because of its economic significance, tourism offers the potential to accelerate socio-economic developments in rural and peripheral regions. It is seen as a key to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030. However, in March 2020 the global Covid-19 pandemic brought the worldwide tourism industry to a standstill and stopped much of those socio-economic developments. As a consequence, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) developed its Restart Tourism program, presenting a roadmap on how the industry should be restructured for the future after this crisis. In this program, the UNWTO proposes sustainability as the new normal. They argue that it is particularly important to initiate a change towards more sustainability in the tourism industry at this very moment. Thereby using its immense economic potential to fulfill the adopted Agenda 2030 (UNWTO, 2020b). To achieve this, it's important to look for innovative concepts that realize such socio-economic impact-oriented tourism. One of those innovative solutions is the concept behind socialbnb, which was developed within an interdisciplinary student team from the University of Cologne.

Socialbnb is the first booking platform that connects travelers with social and ecological organizations (NGOs) to provide an authentic overnight experience, thereby creating sustainable tourism in line with the United Nations' Agenda 2030. In particular, NGOs can play “a prominent role in promoting tourism to generate wider development.” (Clausen, 2019, p. 71.) Many local aid organizations in developing countries offer an essential added value for such a development. Currently, it could be argued that “NGO-

funded projects, bring minimal benefits to local communities and fail to transform the economies or infrastructure of developing countries in any meaningful way” (Smith, 2015, p. 216). However, NGOs are potential economic, environmental, social or political pressure groups that can provide vital input to sustainable touristic development (Fennell and Cooper, 2020) such as being a watchdog to monitor tourism impacts on indigenous communities and the natural environment as well as providing political support, advocacy, and programming (Simpson, 2008; Derrien, Cervency and Wolf, 2019). Their role as contributors to sustainable development has increased over the past decades. This also leads to the fact, that NGOs enjoy greater acceptance and trust than governmental institutions (Nuscheler, 2004). On the one hand, NGOs have the image of being independent. Development work from governmental institutions often follows economic or foreign political interests. (Nuscheler, 2004). In addition to this aspect, NGOs are also expected to be able to shape development more effectively. They are closer to their target groups, less bureaucratic, more motivated, and more committed in their undertakings (Rauch, 2009).

The potency of NGOs stems from the close ties and relationships to local populations (grassroots links) that many other international actors lack (Scholz, 2006). NGOs are in their definition an organized form of civil society. For that reason, they operate closely with local communities and can better assess the situation in the region they are operating in. Therefore, they can help the local population to stand up for their rights in an independently organized way. This is more difficult for state institutions, in view of the fact that they cannot initiate groups that counteract existing power structures (Nuscheler, 2004).

The main issue in the efficiency of NGOs arises from the non-profit status of NGOs. This implies that they do not engage in any economic activity to strive for profit, but instead allocate all funds to their defined purpose. This often leads to a shortage of resources for their work, which is why they rely on external support (Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002). Due to the fact that funds have so far been limited and are often allocated to short project periods, the long-term financing of projects to promote sustainable development presents particular challenges for many NGOs (Pasquini et. Al, 2011).

If funds are provided by external sources, it leads to a dependency from the respective donor organization or states. This often leads to a conflict of interest between the NGO and the donors (Bank and Hulme, 2012). Especially with funds stemming from foreign countries, this can lead to the political or economic interests of third countries that implement the NGO programs (Ghosh, 2009). The conflict of interest

between NGOs and donor institutions is further exacerbated by the fact that NGOs, in their pursuit of innovative solutions, seek to implement new programs and are required to test their functionality accordingly, while most donors are eager to achieve rapid successes (Jellinek, 2003). As a result, NGOs tend to focus on immediate results in order to obtain further funding and therefore focus on short-term measures rather than sustainable development (Michael, 2002). Especially numerous small and local NGOs don't even have the opportunity to receive external funding, because of their lack of Know-How and resources for the bureaucratic applying process.

In addition to the predicament of obtaining financial resources, over-reliance on external funds is a central obstacle for NGOs. It thus represents one of the greatest challenges and reasons why NGO programs might be ineffective. Consequently, it is necessary to explore new approaches for NGOs to finance themselves and, above all, ascertain how these funds can be acquired locally so that there is no dependency on other countries (Haque, 2002; Abouassi and Trent, 2016).

In particular, as NGOs can be seen as 'of utmost importance in bringing innovative transformation and alternative modes of exchange and development within sustainable tourism' (Clausen, 2019, p. 82.) socialbnb is an example of an alternative mode of exchange in that it cooperates with smaller local NGOs to provide additional funding opportunities. The entrepreneurs of socialbnb created a concept to potentially finance NGOs worldwide to implement their projects by giving them access to additional funding from the growing tourism market. This business concept is especially linked to the accommodation sector that is able to directly support the development of destinations (Chilufya, Hughes and Scheyvens, 2019). The idea is to offer touristic accommodation within the premises of local NGOs.

Initially, the team identified the strong connection that NGOs have with the local population, additionally to their advantage in facilitating development issues as a touristic potential. In addition to higher interest in recreation opportunities, the demand for local experiences and sustainable tourism alternatives has grown vigorously (Schmücker et al., 2019). Due to economic growth, improved social conditions in tourists' countries of origin and a much better-quality tourism infrastructure in many destinations, the number of international travelers is continuously growing.

Especially the target of Youth Travellers, aged between 18 -25 are pursuing more sustainable and authentic travel experiences (Yousaf et. al, 2018). Of the world's nearly 1.5 billion travelers, 23% consist of young travelers between the ages of 18 and 25, making a Market of 368 million travelers (UNWTO, 2016). This target group travels primarily to discover new cultures and landscapes, as well as to connect with the local population, as they increasingly perceive travel as an accessory to education (Yousaf, 2018).

The Innovation

Case Context

Socialbnb is helping to transform the tourism industry to realize its potential of sustainable tourism (Smith, J. 2019). This realization opens up the premises of the NGOs as accommodation for the travel market, consequently creating an entirely new, sustainable offer for a constantly growing target group. On the digital platform *socialbnb.org*, social and ecological aid organizations (NGOs) can offer their unused premises as overnight accommodation. Usually, these are accommodation facilities for seasonal employees, which are not utilized throughout the whole year. It was found out that there are three main categories of premises available to local NGOs worldwide: 1. Accommodations that are similar to hostels and located near the projects; 2. Homestays, where the traveler stays with the staff at home or directly on the project site; 3. More luxurious accommodations with hotel or lodge character. Therefore, there is an abundance of and appropriate offers for different target groups, especially youth travelers, regarding their individual needs.

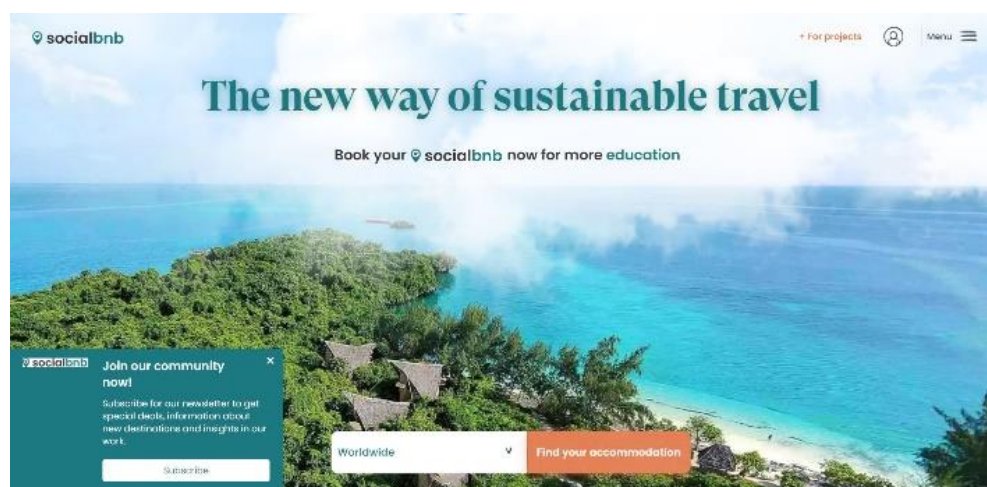


FIGURE 1: LANDING PAGE OF THE ONLINE PLATFORM SOCIALBNB

Travelers can book these accommodation facilities on the online platform (see Figure 1). After booking, the traveler pays a commission fee of 15% towards socialbnb so that the booking is confirmed. After the confirmation of the NGOs, the guest travels to the NGO and the rest of the price is paid on-site. This way the money is directly funneled into a social or ecological project of the NGO and helps to reduce their dependency on donations.

An essential component during their stay is a guided tour of the project. In this way, travelers obtain exclusive insight into the project first hand and gain further knowledge about the thematic field in which the NGO operates. The thematic fields of the NGOs matches in many cases the interest of young people between the ages of 18 and 35. Recent studies show that they are increasingly concerned with issues such as health, diversity, environmental protection, and social justice (Hoffmann, 2020). The NGOs that collaborate closely with socialbnb mainly work in education, animal welfare, environmental protection, equality, health, and sports. Travelers can filter by these characteristics through the platform to find a suitable experience for them. They are integrated into the daily lives of local people for the duration of their stay and, depending on availability, can participate in cultural experiences such as a shared local dinner or festivities. Each stay finances the respective visited project. Thus, the three levels of sustainability (ecological, social, and economic) are taken into account. In comparison to other offers in sustainable travel, which focus solely on having as little negative impact as possible through good eco-efficiency, Socialbnb meets the increased desire for the social responsibility of the target group (Hoffmann, 2020). Better financing ensures an increasing quality of NGO projects, from which large parts of the local population benefit (social). Besides, NGOs can finance themselves on a sustainable basis and thus set incentives for further economic processes (economic).

Such an opening of the travel market for NGOs, which uses the socialbnb platform as providers, is social innovation. It is a potential solution to more sustainable tourism while at the same time helping to stabilize the underfinanced projects of NGOs worldwide. The social innovation generated by socialbnb enables NGOs to achieve sustainable economic financing continuously and to establish a link between an NGO and a more business-like approach. It allows NGOs to create more available resources, thereby significantly increasing the quality and economic security of the implemented projects. In addition, large sections of

the local population in the surrounding area, for whom the projects' offerings are essential, benefit from the improved financing.

Stakeholders Involved

Socialbnb started as a project of the student initiative Enactus an der Universität zu Köln e.V. During their studies, the founding team got acquainted with each other and developed the concept behind socialbnb. The initial pilot project, that was visited on a trip abroad, was a small NGO near the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, that aspired to provide free English lessons, which were not available at the state school nearby. The team of the local NGO was seeking funding to build the school and to hire a teacher, however, they were unable to receive any donations, due to the lack of attention regarding the project. Together with the NGO, the team of students developed an innovative solution to this problem, in which they rented out the available space in the village to travelers to finance the construction of the school and hire an English teacher. For the student team, it was important to use such an entrepreneurial approach to the realization of the project to guarantee long-term success and sustainability. In only three months, more than 30 travelers were able to visit the NGO, and thus enough money could be allocated locally to build the school and hire an English teacher for the first six months. Consequently, the NGO was able to provide free English lessons for about 200 children.

After that success, it was important to validate, if the concept would be an intelligent way to make the income streams of tourism beneficial for a broader mass of local populations. One of the students, Alexander Haufschild used his bachelor thesis to analyze the role of NGOs in the socio-economic development of the Global South. In a meta-analysis, more than 60 studies were evaluated to highlight the benefits of NGOs and the challenges they face in their work. In his thesis, the outstanding importance of NGOs for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 was highlighted. A further insight was that one-sided financing through donations was found to be one of the main problems in the effectiveness of NGOs. Therefore, it was concluded that alternative business models for the financing of NGOs need to be developed to provide more effective development co-operations.

To verify the interest of NGOs and the potential demand for such a solution, two members of the team traveled to Cambodia and Peru to speak personally with NGOs. At the same time, the team developed a

process for acquiring NGOs worldwide from Germany and a catalog of criteria for assessing the suitability and security of the NGOs' location as potential tourist destinations. After the selection criteria were created, the student entrepreneurs were capable of attracting over 140 cooperation partners in 36 countries. As of the start of 2021, more than 500 overnight stays have been booked over the digital platform. Due to that, the willingness of NGOs worldwide to open up to the tourism market was confirmed, as well as the demand for such an experience within the field of sustainable tourism. Over time the student project was reshaped into a Start-up with a strong long-term impact focus to reach more NGOs and people. A two-member founding team was formed consisting of Alexander Haufschild and Nils Lohmann. They follow the principles of creating a social business that focuses on maximizing sustainable impacts instead of maximisation of revenues.

Alexander Haufschild completed his bachelor's degree in Geography and Media studies. In his bachelor thesis, he predominantly focused on the role of NGOs for the development of the Global South. In addition, he also attained work experience in the field of development cooperation in the public sector. Before his studies, he successfully completed a traineeship at a public relations agency in Cologne, where he developed online communication campaigns, social media strategies, and independently organized events. Furthermore, he enjoyed a journalistic education and worked as a freelancer for three years at German newspapers and television. Therefore, he continuously focused on the communication of issues of development cooperation and sustainability. With his experience in both areas, he is in charge of public relations, PR, and marketing at socialbnb and therefore ensures customer acquisition.

Nils Lohmann has a Bachelor's degree in International Business and, in the course of his studies, focused on cooperation with international markets and social entrepreneurship. Afterward, he gained practical experience as the first employee of a start-up company in Mexico. Here he was able to witness the strategic build-up and was mainly responsible for business development in the form of opening up new markets and winning customers, as well as follow-up financing. Furthermore, he was active at BASF and KPMG, where he acquired new customers and suppliers and advised companies in the strategic implementation of sustainability aspects into their business model. Besides his business experience, he has been involved and working with local aid organizations for many years, experiencing first-hand what issues they are dealing with. He has worked with aid-organizations in South America and Africa in both nature preservation and education. At socialbnb, he is responsible for business development including finance and

strategic development. Besides those two social entrepreneurs, the team consists of eight more people from different scientific backgrounds, as well as an advisory board consisting of scientists, entrepreneurs, NGO leaders, and tourism experts.

Approach Used and the Impact

Since the very beginning, one of the biggest challenges was the search for suitable NGOs across the Globe. Small and local NGOs often do not possess the visibility on online platforms or the know-how to garner enough attention. But since socialbnb has a pioneering in touristic entrepreneurship, it was necessary to develop a multi-layered concept that would enable the NGOs to participate in the tourism market. Therefore, the team works with trained regional managers that speak to each organization personally. This acquisition process follows a particular procedure. Accordingly, we talk to each NGO personally in a video call based on our own developed and scientifically based quality criteria whether a listing on socialbnb.org is possible. Afterward, the future hosts are given information on how to deal with travelers on-site and what the socialbnb experience looks like in concrete terms. We support NGOs with this enabling process to find the optimal focus for their individual stay and thus create a unique travel experience. This is an important point, as not many NGOs are already experienced in the field of tourism and don't exactly know how to deal with travelers. Based on this interview and the information provided, the suitability of the NGO for the tourism market is validated. After this interview, the NGOs can register themselves at the socialbnb platform.

A component in the selection process of NGOs is the review of quality standards. The focus of this process are twelve quality criteria. An overview of the criteria is shown in Table 1. The first six quality criteria measure the impact and quality of an NGO for the region where it is situated. In addition, there are another six criteria that check for the fulfillment of tourism standards, primarily to ensure the safety of travelers. For example, the infrastructure criteria also cover the accessibility of hospitals. The incorporation of these standards is accomplished and tested in cooperation with the Research Chair for Sustainable Tourism of Prof. Dr. Dirk Reiser of the Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, Germany. There are currently several students working on specific topics regarding socialbnb like the evaluation of the twelve quality criteria or a target group analysis.

All twelve criteria were derived into qualitative questions under consideration of respective intercultural aspects. The questions are asked in the video interview and the answers are evaluated using a rating matrix. This process enabled the platform to reach more than 140 NGOs, who now profit from the socialbnb concept.

Table 1. Quality Criteria

Criteria	Aim	Questions asked (examples)
Local Issue	It must be recognizable that the NGO has dealt intensively with the local conditions and founded the project based on a local need.	Why is the problem that has been solved important for the region in particular?
Good Management	To get an understanding of the organizational structure of the NGO and the working atmosphere, as well as the qualifications.	How is your NGO structured?
Empowerment	To find out whether an increase in the self-determination of individuals or communities is achieved.	Does your work have an educational approach?
Participation	To find out if the local population is included in the strategy of the project.	Can the local people participate in decision-making processes?
Independence	To find out who supports the project.	Are there concepts that promote or enable economic independence?
Transparency	To find out how transparently the NGO deals with spending on donations.	How is the NGO financed?
Accommodation	To find out if the available rooms are suitable as accommodation for travelers.	What's the room size? Where is the room located?
Infrastructure	To find out how accessible the destination is for travelers.	How easy are goods for daily needs to obtain?
Touristic potential	To find out if the stay has a benefit for the traveler as well.	What can travelers experience on-site?
Ecology	To be able to evaluate the influence on the environment.	Does the NGO have ecological standards?
Experience	To find out if the NGO knows how to handle foreign guests.	Does the NGO already have experience with foreign guests?
Security	To make sure that the whole experience is safe and brings a benefit for both parties.	Is there a protection strategy for the project target group?

Furthermore, there is another aspect of consideration, this entails the protection of the people who work in the NGOs and benefit from the projects. For this purpose, the team developed region-specific host guidelines that specify how the NGOs should deal with travelers. These were created in cooperation with the current 140 partner NGOs, as well as with public and touristic institutions. Central aspects are that travelers are not allowed to enter the project site unsupervised and that overnight accommodation has to be separate from that of the project target group. After approval, the regional managers advise the NGOs on establishing this protection concept on site. In addition, particularly vulnerable NGOs, such as those with children, can request more information about the travelers in advance. At the same time, the team developed extensive specific Traveller Guidelines that also provide travelers with information that sensitizes them to the topic with specific house rules.

Implications & Lessons learned

Using the socialbnb platform has already led to several benefits for NGOs and travelers, but the concept can lead to a higher financial and moral independence of NGOs worldwide so that they can make an even greater contribution to fulfilling Agenda 2030. Besides the monetary effect, the service through the regional managers helps to advise the NGOs on how to gain a foothold in the tourism industry. In personal talks, they give information on the establishment of an overnight accommodation, specifically adapted to the NGOs and the respective cultural conditions. As part of this, the developed host guidelines are used to ensure the safety of the NGOs' employees and their target group. This enables the NGOs to host travelers with a high standard.

When using the platform, NGO employees are also sensitized to and educated in digital issues as well as gaining access to digitization. By taking over the initial listing for the NGOs and displaying them on the platform on an ongoing basis and showing them how to keep their data up-to-date, they immediately experience the benefits for their organization without needing any digital skills. However, they can acquire those skills by collaborating with socialbnb.

Moreover, the focus on targeting youth travelers also ensures that the NGOs receive more travelers who are interested in NGO work. These travelers might become long-term supporters and promoters.

During the coming years, the vision is to develop socialbnb into the largest travel platform for impact-oriented travel. Firstly, the team focuses on Marketing to increase the number of customers. Nevertheless, there are already first ideas of diversification of the concept. During the next year, they are thinking about the expansion of the offer to more luxurious accommodations with some more experienced NGOs, so that the team could reach out to other target groups. Furthermore, there are first thoughts on how to integrate small tour operators and other local businesses, such as transportation services and activity providers to also promote regional tourism, which stabilizes the business model. With these expansions, there is a large opportunity to potentiate the impact of socialbnb.

Nevertheless, some risks might occur, since socialbnb is the first operator that opens NGOs for tourists in some regions and brings new tourists in 'untouched' or less frequented regions. It is therefore important to improve the process of quality criteria and accelerate the deep contact the founding team has with the local NGOs. This way they can empower local NGOs to interact with travelers in a sustainable way that benefits the local population.

Discussion Questions

1. If you were a social or environmental NGO, why would you join (or not join) the internet platform socialbnb?
2. Please argue if and how a social business concept like socialbnb can provide an alternative for a more sustainable tourism industry?
3. Think about the risks involved in running such an operation for the entrepreneurs, the tourists, the locals and the tourism industry.
4. Looking at the quality criteria applied by socialbnb to acquire NGOs, what do you think is missing?
5. Explain if you think that such a social business approach will be successful in the future or not.

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Embracing Change: The Cayuga Collection's Way of Building Resilience in the Tourism Industry

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Chapter Summary

By introducing Cayuga Collection as one of the world leaders in sustainable travel, my case study explores principles for building organizational resilience. I will illustrate effective and innovative solutions regarding crisis management strategies through the lens of the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model. To explore the potential of companies with a high level of resilience and flexible business operations to recover faster from crisis, I am going to outline management actions all while discussing their potential to constitute competitive advantages. Through interviews, my own insights into Cayuga's company culture, and personal communication over a period of six months, I will describe how tourism companies' continuous commitment to their sustainability strategy can set them apart from their competitors. Further, I will situate my findings within a broader industry context. Based on my research, I argue that companies such as Cayuga that conduct business operations all while considering the triple bottom line, imply principles for building resilience, and embrace flexible but effective crisis management are the ones that navigate the transition of an entire industry towards sustainable consumption.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore how principles for building ecological, organizational, and social resilience may advance recovery from crisis and adaptation to future change
2. Apply the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model with its different stages to contemporary crisis management in tourism
3. Identify best practices of committing to sustainability strategies in times of crisis
4. Acknowledge commitment to sustainability strategies as a competitive advantage and an opportunity to initiate change and transition towards sustainable consumption

The Issue, Opportunity or Trend

The first days of March 2020 will go down in annual reviews as the time the world stopped traveling since the worldwide tourism industry was hit by Covid-19. Closed borders and airports and the absence of international arrivals present major challenges for countries which heavily rely on tourism as an important driver for economic development. Various industry experts highlight the urgent need for an effective crisis management stating that tourism companies who acknowledge change and adapt accordingly will make it through the crisis. Therefore, as the first objective of my case study, I will explore the potential of companies with a high level of organizational resilience and flexible business operations to recover faster, thus mitigating financial losses.

Biggs et al. (2015) define an object as resilient when it can reclaim its original shape after deformation. Applying this definition to ecosystems as complex adaptive systems (Levin, 1998) with multiple stable states (Holling, 1973), an ecosystem remaining within its stability domain presents ecological resilience (Berkes et al., 2003). According to Holling (1996), inevitable change in natural systems requires ecosystems to withstand shock and maintain critical relationships through continuous learning processes, diversity, and flexibility (Holling, 1973). Over the past years, researchers applied the concept of resilience – used typically in environmental science – in the context of tourism because the industry's development points to an urgent need: improving the ability of tourism destinations to cope with change resulting from tourism development, thus increased visitation, or disasters or conflicts that eliminate or reduce tourism unexpectedly (Butler, 2017) – as was the case with Covid-19 in March 2020.

Since anticipating future change resonates with the need for sustainable development, I will briefly address the impact of Covid-19 on sustainability within the hospitality industry. Tourism scholars fear a decrease in companies' commitment to sustainability initiatives because they may use their financial resources to keep their core business alive and to return to business as normal (Jones and Comfort, 2020). Henry Kuokkanen shares that "Covid-19 will wreak havoc in the hospitality industry and some operators will cut all non-essential operations to survive" (Hospitality Net 2020a). Since the world's major hotel groups tend to favour economic growth over 'non-essential commitment to sustainability', Jones and Comfort (2020) call on these tourism brands to acknowledge their role in navigating the industry's transition towards sustainable consumption. To support their call as the second objective of my case study, I will prove how tourism companies' continuous commitment to their sustainability strategy can set them apart from their competitors post-Covid-19.

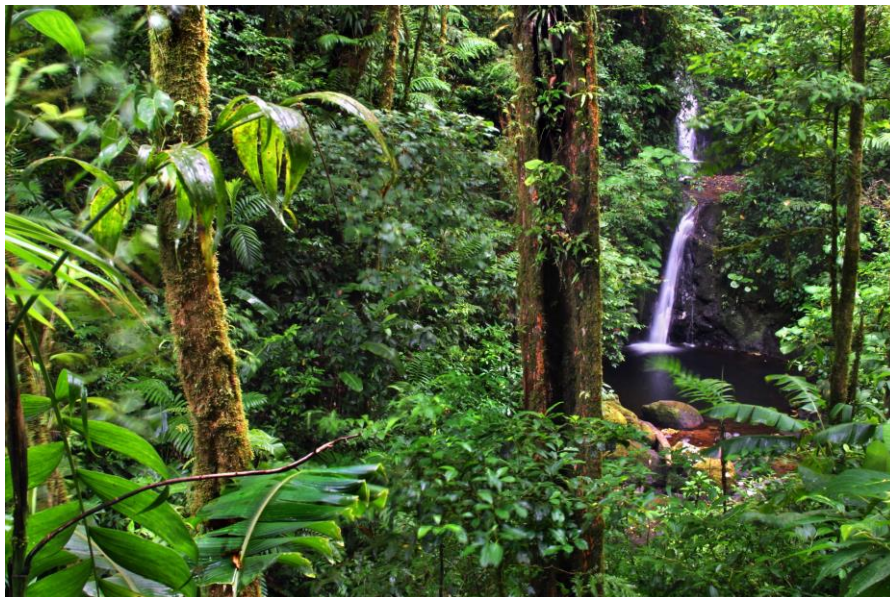
The Innovation

Case Context

Costa Rica, the small Central American country only covering up 0.03% of the earth's surface (ICT, 2016), is a popular destination for tourists from North America and Europe who want to immerse themselves in nature and discover the country's many national parks or protected areas. The tourism industry as the second largest contributor to GDP (BCCR, 2016) was hit hard by the government's decision to close borders to all foreign travelers between March 18 and July 31, 2020.

The town of Monteverde with Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve (see Fig. 1) is one of the most visited nature-based destinations of Costa Rica. Since its foundation in 1972, the reserve has been of interest to scientists and ecotourists alike. Due to its unique micro-climate condition, visitors can discover 2.5% of the biodiversity of the entire planet during nature walks, bird watching, and interpretive tours.

Fig. 1: Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve



Source: <https://www.sendamonteverde.com/photo-gallery/>

In the town of Monteverde, the strong and interconnected network of tourism providers stimulates economic development through promoting ecotourism experiences. However, destinations which heavily rely on foreign visitors' spending remain quite vulnerable in situations where tourism is reduced very suddenly. In March 2020,

many tourism businesses in Monteverde shut down completely to decrease their operating expenses, which is one way to address the crisis. To illustrate a different approach, the next abstract introduces Cayuga Collection.

Stakeholders Involved

As a company with a high level of organizational resilience, flexible business operations, and a continuous commitment to their sustainability strategy, I present Cayuga Collection as a luxury ecotourism brand applying new and innovative ways of adaptation in times of crisis all while preparing to address future change ahead.

Cayuga Collection is a management company which operates seven independently owned hotels in Central America. Since 1999, owners Andrea Bonilla and Hans Pfister apply a triple bottom line in the collections' operations (Cayuga Collection, 2020). According to Pfister, the company's commitment to environmental and social sustainability let Cayuga outperform its local competition by approximately 10-20% pre-Covid-19 (personal communication, March 26, 2021).

Hotel Senda Monteverde (see Fig. 2) opened in December 2018 and offers 28 guest rooms, a restaurant, a bar, internal trails, as well as complimentary access to a private nature reserve for guests. Travelers staying at Senda engage in nature-based activities since a visit of the Cloud Forest is the main reason to come to Monteverde.

Fig. 2: Hotel Senda Monteverde



Photo by Mike Dell, 2019

Cayuga's management philosophy and organizational culture are reflected in the hotel's daily operations as well. Environmental sustainability contains efforts on efficient water usage and effective wastewater management. Further, Senda supports various projects on wildlife conservation and staff regularly participates in forest clean-ups. Since its opening, gardeners planted over 5500 native plants on property to attract local wildlife. In February 2020, Senda employed 50 local staff, with 85% of them coming directly from the town of Monteverde. Everyone working for the hotel is guaranteed social benefits and an employment security which guards against lay offs during low season. Initiatives such as cross training, participation in English classes, and career planning allow for personal and professional development within the company.

To conclude, Cayuga presents an industry example of the growing luxury ecotourism segment which – together with brands such as Six Senses, Inkaterra, or 1 Hotels – reflects the relationship between the hospitality industry and the environment and therefore applies a triple bottom line in its business operations.

Approach Used and the Impact

To approach my first objective of exploring the potential of companies with a high level of organizational resilience and flexibility to recover faster from crisis, I will introduce four principles for building resilience. I am going to exemplify these principles through presenting Cayuga's company culture and management actions.

Principles for building resilience

1st principle: Diversity

According to Biggs et al. (2015), the first principle for building resilience is diversified operation, thus 'not putting all of your eggs in one basket'. The principle implies increasing the number of system components. Cayuga as the management company of seven independently owned hotels excels this strategy since all hotels await with a unique location and diverse offerings, thus attracting slightly different target markets. Because the hotels offer different types of accommodation at different price points, Cayuga's portfolio captures a broader market segment regarding tourists' spending power as well. Finally, diversified seasonal visitation ensures all-year-round revenue streams.

2nd principle: Connectivity

Connectivity as the second principle refers to links between the elements of a system. Tourism as one of such systems requires networked structures to improve coordination, deal with uncertainty, and sustain business operations in times of crisis (Obrenovic et al., 2020). Cayuga as a management company established connectivity and transparency as a fundamental value regarding relations with hotel owners, employees, local

suppliers, amongst others. Connectivity also comprises using guests' feedback to improve service quality or corporate staff organizing workshops and meetings for managers and employees to improve daily operations. All sustainability and guest experience managers of the collection gathered for an interactive workshop at one of the hotels in 2019 to jointly map out the future of Cayuga's sustainability efforts and related activities offered to guests. Further, the company encourages employees to take part in cross trainings which relates to promoting an organizational culture where well-trained employees embrace leadership responsibilities and respond to change in times of crisis (Ibid., 2020).

Connectivity also plays a vital role in establishing reliable relationships with local suppliers and producers. Since all hotels serve locally sourced meals to guests, restaurant corporate staff prioritizes creating reliable supplier networks. Cayuga's adaptive and short supply chains not only allow for flexibility in purchasing supplies and produce, but also sustain operations in challenging times through maintaining trust-based relationships.

3rd principle: Experimentation and learning

Experimentation and learning constitute the third principle for building organizational resilience. Drawing on insights from ecosystem management, we can understand ecosystem processes through learning and accumulating ecosystem knowledge (Olsson, 2003). Hereby, the ability to deal with uncertainty and surprise improves over time which results in increased capacity to address future change (Ibid., 2003). Similarly, companies can increase their capacity to deal with change through learning and knowledge sharing, thus applying new insights to future decision-making (Reed et al., 2010). Cayuga corporates, employees, and owners come together in online meetings to discuss the newest development and future management actions. To conclude, Cayuga's knowledge acquisition matches what Folke et al. (2003) describe as a dynamic learning process shaped by the company's members.

4th principle: Participation

The last principle for building resilience I will address in this case study is participation – the simple process of bringing together stakeholders and experts to exchange different points of view. Ruiz-Ballesteros (2017) notes that diverse information sources lead to overall better decision-making. To exemplify, Cayuga's owner Pfister took part in zoom-meetings and webinars with industry experts to share Cayuga's crisis management actions and adaptations to future challenges for the hospitality industry.

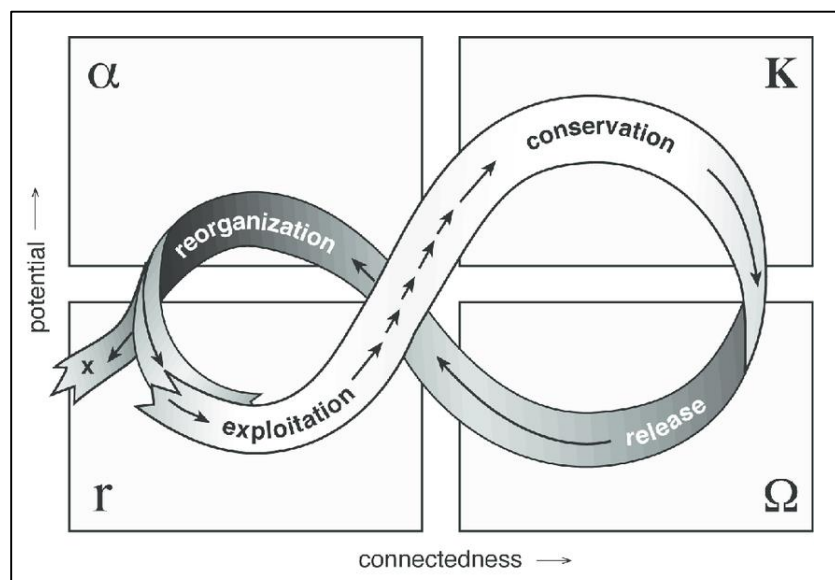
To conclude, Cayuga embraces diversity, connectivity, learning, and participation as principles for building organizational resilience. According to Obrenovic et al. (2020, p. 18), "[o]rganizations detached from a

traditional, effective-based hierarchical model toward nurturing the culture of flexibility, agility, and resilience find it easier to adapt to changes and recognize their resources in times of crisis”.

The Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model

To further explore how these principles and Cayuga’s company culture allow the organization to recover faster in times of crisis, I will introduce the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model visible in Fig. 3. According to Olsson (2003), ecosystems are dynamic and hierarchically scaled. Hereby, the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model explains how systems undergo periods of consolidation and growth as well as periods of breakdown and reorganization. In a resilient social-ecological system, disturbances can stimulate development and innovation (Ibid., 2003). The higher the system’s capacity to self-organize, learn, and adapt, the higher the system’s social-ecological resilience (Carpenter et al., 2001). To reflect dynamic ecosystems, the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model consists of four stages, namely exploitation, conservation, release, and reorganization (Butler, 2017).

Fig. 3 The Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model



Source: Gunderson and Holling (2002), p. 34

To understand how tourism companies’ continuous commitment to their sustainability strategy can create a competitive advantage as the second objective of my case study, I will apply the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model to hotel Senda’s development. Hereby, my case study situates principles for building resilience within the model’s stages. I will support my argumentation through my own insights into the company’s culture, an interview with Pfister, and personal communication over a period of six months.

1st stage: Exploitation

High fluidity characterizes exploitation as the first stage since the system's elements are loosely connected and capital is not tied up (Ibid., 2017). Hotel Senda opened in December 2018 and became part of Cayuga. When business operations started, the focus was on providing sustainable and luxurious vacations to guests while also embracing the principle of connectivity through establishing relationships with stakeholders, thus creating a networked structure within the local community. To exemplify, Senda started to cooperate with tourism providers to offer activities and excursions to the most popular attractions of Monteverde like ziplining, coffee tours, or nature walks. However, within the hotel's starting phase, the main task for management clearly was to meet guests' expectations of staying at a luxury Eco lodge through allocating capital to training programs.

2nd stage: Conservation

Following the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model, the exploitation phase slowly transitions into the conservation stage where certain possibilities are discarded and specialization develops. The networked structure between the individual elements of the system becomes better defined which results in economic and social capital building (Ibid., 2017). Applying these insights to hotel development, the individual accommodation providers or the brand managers choose among all the possibilities for developing their property. When Senda became part of Cayuga, the hotel already reflected the company's mission on creating an ultimate symbiosis of luxury and sustainability (Cayuga Collection, 2020) during the exploitation phase. Entering the conservation phase, management started to develop strategic plans on how to position Senda within the collection. The main branding focuses now on nature-based tourism, wildlife watching, and cultural tourism. To cater the needs of Senda's target market, one goal was to curate unique Experience-Learn-Connect-Relax (ELCR) experiences for the destination Monteverde. Since the town has a long history of cheese production, the hotel initiated a cheese-making class. Further, guests can learn more about Senda's conservation efforts in the hotel's unique Sustainability Tour while taking part in various hands-on activities (see Fig. 4). The increasing networked structure necessary for carrying out ELCR activities in-house, thus not outsourcing visitor experience to other tourism providers, presents Senda's approach of creating diversified revenue streams. Further, the hotel also continues to build social capital through training employees in visitor experience creation and leadership.

Fig. 4: Tree planting activity during Senda's Sustainability Tour



Photo by Mike Dell, 2019

3rd stage: Release

According to Butler (2017), disturbances pushing the system out of its 'safe operating space' initiate the release phase. At the beginning of March 2020, Cayuga considered taking precautionary measures, but the rapid developments forced the company to go from contingency plan 'yellow' to 'red' within nine days. Canceled flights, closed borders, and quarantine orders made the world stop traveling. It seemed that within a short time, Covid-19 has forced tourism businesses worldwide to leave their 'safe operating space'. Confronted with sudden change and uncertainty, Pfister wrote in one of his online blogs that the ones who adapt the fastest will make it through the crisis (Cayuga Collection, 2020). All Cayuga hotels went into hibernating mode while maintaining a strong, centralized reservation team in the head office in San José and core teams at the hotels. In an interview conducted in 2020, Rolando Gúzman, manager of hotel Senda, describes core teams as a "strategy [...] to keep key staff and leaders in every department". Once the hotels welcome guests again, the

core teams (see Fig. 5) can “react quickly and in short time be able to offer the same quality, service, and experience as before” (Ibid., 2020).

Fig. 5: Senda’s core team on 25 March 2020



Source: <https://www.cayugacollection.com/believe-with-us-in-a-future-of-extraordinary-travel/>

However, Cayuga had to let go 30-40% of current staff who received a solid severance pay. The remaining core staff accepted a temporary pay cut of 50% (Cayuga Collection, 2020). Through the lens of the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model, letting go employees presents broken bonds and a release of human capital.

4th stage: Reorganization

Within the reorganization phase, pieces of the system coalesce again and rearrange in new configurations which results in innovation and novelty (Butler, 2017) and links to systems’ transformative capacity (Olsson, 2003). Regarding environmental sustainability, Senda’s core team continued to work on the native plant garden and wildlife conservation projects. To exemplify resulting advantages, planting native flora (see Fig. 6) greatly supports multiple ecosystem services such as soil and water conservation while further attracting local wildlife on property. In the future, Senda could offer interpretive tours on property, thus creating further ELCR experiences to secure additional revenue streams.

Fig. 6: Andrey taking care of Senda's native plants garden



Photo by Hans Pfister, 2020

According to Folke et al. (2003), the reorganization phase allows for self-organization and calls on individuals' social memory. Because cross training, leadership development, and adaptive capacity building are part of Senda's social sustainability strategy, well-trained members of the hotel's core team engaged in infrastructure and maintenance work while also attending regular training sessions on decision-making, emotional intelligence, and 'I am Service – Soy Servicio'. Employees can apply these skills in the future and take over leadership roles and new responsibilities while also climbing up their personal career ladder. Learning and connectivity as two principles for building resilience are crucial within the reorganization phase wherefore Pfister participated in Zoom webinars with travel advisors, ecotourism professionals, and leaders in sustainable hospitality to exchange crisis management best practices. Through facilitating dialogue and knowledge co-production, Pfister further strengthens Cayuga's networked structure. Regarding Costa Rica's strategic goal to sustainably develop nature-based tourism, Cayuga could play a central role in advising the country's tourism organization in their future decision- and policymaking.

To maintain relationships and networked structure with the local community, outreach programs to educate Monteverde residents on how to protect themselves and others from getting the virus took place. Further, hotel Senda prepared basic food care-packages which employees delivered to former teammates and the local food bank. Pfister (Cayuga Collection, 2020) emphasized the importance of maintaining relationships with the

local community since every hotel of the collection depends on an intact, social environment. An active networked structure and trustful relationships with local suppliers facilitated reopening hotel Senda once tourists were coming back to Monteverde.

In preparation of opening the hotels again, Cayuga developed and implemented sanitation protocols (see Fig. 7). The 'Cayuga Safety Seal' indicates that a specific room or an area has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Senda designed a 'touchless' check-in system and eliminated all printed menus which further reduces physical touchpoints. Thoroughly implementing and communicating these safety measures will comfort guests who want to keep their exposure to risk at a minimum while traveling in post-Covid-19 times.

Fig. 7: Sanitation protocols implemented at hotel Arenas Del Mar



Photo by Hans Pfister, 2020

To address the collection's economic sustainability, Cayuga implemented its 'Zero Risk – Zero Hassle' prepayment policy. The company waived all prepayment and cancellation policies for new bookings until December 2020, thus allowing guests to be flexible in their vacation planning since new travel restrictions or policies are released on a constant but unforeseeable basis. Cayuga also created 'The Green Futures Bond', a safe, low-risk investment towards guests' future stay. If guests purchase a \$750 US dollars' bond, they will receive \$1,500 US dollars towards their stay and a tree will be planted in their name. Hotel Senda welcomed

back the local market on June 5, 2020. To generate revenue while keeping costs low, the hotel only opened during weekends. Although the local market had access to discounted rates, Senda decided to not offer reduced rates to international travelers. While the hotel generated revenues of \$195,000 and \$224,000 US dollars in January and February 2020, respectively, Senda's managers reported revenues of \$40,000 and \$41,000 for January and February 2021, respectively. However, due to high efficiency, these revenues still present an operational profit. Pfister (personal communication, March 26, 2021) notes that international tourists returning to Cayuga hotels are less price sensitive and willing to pay premium rates. Further, the collection's properties Kurà and Isla Palenque with 70-80% occupancy in March 2021 reflect an increased demand for luxurious, sustainable vacations.

To conclude, Cayuga's sustainability strategy with continuous conservation efforts and investments into staff training and community well-being established a competitive advantage which, as of this case study, results in increased demand and revenue, thus future economic prosperity.

Implications & Lessons learned

Following the Panarchy Adaptive Cycle Model, a new growth phase would follow reorganization. However, with the unpredictable future development of the crisis, one implication of my case study is a lack in describing and analyzing the new growth phase due to timely constraints. To mitigate this limitation, I will highlight the importance of organizational resilience to reduce future vulnerability and stimulate transition towards sustainable consumption (Chapin et al., 2009) in the reminder of my case study. Hereby, I link insights from scientific literature to Cayuga's principles for building resilience. Reflections of Senda's manager Gúzman will underline best practices of crisis management while also situating my findings within a broader industry context. Resilient and diverse ecosystems are less vulnerable to natural hazards in comparison to modified landscapes or monocultures. Transferring these insights from ecology to a tourism context, minimizing known stress and preparing to adapt to novel hazards reduces the system's vulnerability (Ibid., 2009). Drawing on diversity as one principle for building organizational resilience, luxury ecotourism brands like Six Senses, Inkaterra, or 1 Hotels maintained their portfolios during the pandemic while also innovating offerings. Anna Bjurstam, Six Senses Wellness Pioneer, initiated "At home with Six Senses" where she adapted the brand's wellness programs for online content in March 2020. When she recognized that "[w]ellness, connection, nature, sustainability, quality of life, love, and collective consciousness have suddenly become more and more important" (Hospitality Net 2020b), her team created videos and tutorials on mindfulness, active lifestyles, and

well-being. In December 2021, Cayuga ran an internal innovation contest where employees could contribute their own ideas to further ‘green’ the hotels. Next to raising Tilapia in the hotel’s pond and serving it as catch of the day, employees also proposed a garden picnic experience and a Monteverde culture and history tour (Cayuga Collection, 2020). To conclude, Six Senses and Cayuga continuously innovate their offerings to adapt to current trends and to diversify revenue streams without compromising on their sustainability philosophy. For Inkaterra’s owner Koechlin, “[t]he global situation we are living nowadays poses challenging times for us all” while reminding to “rest assured that we will thrive through solidarity, innovation, and resilience” (Hospitality Net 2020a). His statement reflects the importance of connectivity and transparent information sharing. Gúzman (2020) outlines that Senda’s “work environment encouraged us to stay positive, communicate transparently, and make the best decisions possible with the most current information available”.

Further, the pandemic highlights the importance of organizational learning and experimentation. Gúzman (2020) points out that Cayuga’s “mission to be world leaders in sustainable tourism kept us busy learning, training, [and] developing new procedures. [W]hen the time came to open the hotel again; we were more than ready. [...] Our concept of sustainability has always been innovative and sets us apart, it is a fundamental part of our philosophy and core values”. Shaping system operations to match change also implies learning to live with uncertainty as one of the best practices of adaptive management (Olsson, 2003). Senda’s manager Gúzman shares that Cayuga “adapted everyday to new changing realities. What [management] planned in early March, did not work a few days later [...]” (Gúzman, 2020). Similar luxury ecotourism brands share this flexibility and commitment to experimentation which differentiates them from major players in the tourism industry whose conventional business models are slow to adapt to future change. Since their focus solely remains on economic growth (Jones and Comfort, 2019), these major players forego the opportunity of aligning organizational learning and commitment to sustainability with their recovery plans.

Various industry experts embraced participation as the last principle to build resilience through participating in round tables with colleagues, tourism organizations, and scholars. One example is Cornell University’s round table discussion on “Sustainability in the era of Covid-19” in February 2021 where participants addressed the crisis as an opportunity to strengthen sustainability efforts to prepare for reopening (see Cornell University, 2021).

To mainstream sustainability as a means for business recovery, I will conclude my case study by outlining further industry best practices. Tourism businesses that reflect the relationship between their industry and the environment in business operations highlight the importance of sustaining natural and social capital –

especially in times of crisis – as José Koechlin, owner of Inkaterra Hotels, emphasizes: “The Covid-19 outcome reminds us how essential it is to manage sustainably all the natural and cultural resources that define each destination – main assets in the hospitality industry” (Hospitality Net 2020a). Since 1975, his seven hotels and lodges in Peru combine ecotourism with luxury hospitality with the goal to advance sustainable development. Six Senses, another luxury ecotourism brand, also decided for continuing sustainability initiatives during the pandemic. As Jeff Smith, Vice President of Sustainability, announces: “I’m happy to report that despite the pandemic, our sustainability initiatives are all on track, including Zero Waste, Plastic Free 2020, Earth Lab, Supplier Engagement, and localized projects supporting healthy ecosystems and communities” (Hospitality Net 2020b). While major players in the tourism industry regard ‘returning to normality’ and committing to sustainability as mutually exclusive (see Jones and Comfort, 2020), I argue that brands like Cayuga, Inkaterra, or Six Senses which sustained their natural and social capital while preparing for reopening will find themselves in advantageous positions after the pandemic. Regarding Cayuga’s outlook, Gúzman (2020) shares that he believes “we are a few steps ahead [of] competition, and we will keep pushing and innovating in [the area of sustainable tourism]. [O]ur type of hotels and locations are ideal for tourism during a pandemic. We are surrounded by nature, located in small and resilient communities, [...] and we always strive to create unique, high-quality, and personalized experiences”. To highlight Cayuga’s successful crisis management, Gúzman (2020) concludes that “we try to stay strong, maximize our strengths, and adapt quickly to [...] new changing scenarios. [As] world leaders, [we strive to] make the best out of every scenario. ‘Strong today, Extraordinary Tomorrow’ is our motto”.

As of this case study, the future development of the Covid-19 crisis is still uncertain. Industry experts fear that even when travel bans are lifted, demand may be slow to recover as the crisis might trigger a global recession (World Bank Group, 2020). For the local-global tourism industry, there are even more uncertain and challenging times ahead: future shocks, political instabilities, uncertainties associated with environmental hazards, biodiversity loss, climate change, and resource depletion present potential risks.

In a context of projected changes, climate change especially demands for the tourism sector’s transition towards sustainable consumption (Jamal, 2013). Companies such as Cayuga that conduct business operations all while considering the triple bottom line, imply principles for building resilience, and embrace flexible but effective crisis management are the ones that navigate the transition of an entire industry. Based on my research, I argue that companies with a high level of organizational resilience and flexible business operations will recover faster from future crisis. Further, continuous commitment to sustainability strategies will be central

to maintain competitive advantages. Therefore, I call on tourism companies to acknowledge that the time is now to prepare for future change ahead.

Presenting a timely and unique contribution to discussions on the importance of organizational resilience in today's time, my case study also points to the need for future research. Tourism academia could analyze and compare luxury ecotourism brands' growth phases post-Covid-19, thus providing further evidence for organizational resilience and continuous commitment to sustainability leading to faster recovery and the creation of competitive advantages.

Finally, I would like to call on tourists since our choices also navigate the transition of the tourism industry towards sustainable consumption. This crisis is our opportunity to make a change.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe organizational resilience through the lens of adaptive system thinking?
2. Which principle for building resilience do you consider most important regarding the future threat of climate change with its implications for the tourism industry?
3. Why is it important for tourism companies to adhere to their sustainability strategies in times of crisis?
4. How do you rate the complexity of implementing proposed strategies to build organizational resilience within the tourism industry?

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Finding their Way Through the Weeds: How Festivals Navigated Legalized Cannabis

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Chapter Summary

Tourism businesses operate within a broad social-political context and are subject to the laws and regulations within their jurisdictions. When laws change, tourism businesses must react in order to remain relevant and comply with the changing social and political environment. Governments globally have been re-examining the legal status of drug consumption (Stevens & Hughes, 2019). In Canada, a move away from prohibition to careful regulation of Cannabis has been evolving for decades (Hathaway & Erickson, 2003). Since the October 2018 legalization of cannabis in Canada, the tourism industry has been navigating changes to the drug consumption landscape. Although the Cannabis Act is a federal legal framework, each province and territory is responsible for setting regulations related to how cannabis can be sold. Provinces and territories maintain the flexibility to add restrictions around possession limits, minimum age, location of use, and personal cultivation (Government of Canada, 2019). This requires that tourism and related business ensure they understand the unique implications within the regions they operate.

The concept of cannabis tourism has been evolving from early links to “tramping, drifting, and backpacking” (Belhassen, Santos, & Uriely, 2007), to intentional travel to a destination, with the intention of procuring and consuming cannabis legally (Gould, Donnelly, & Innacchione, 2019; Keul & Eisenhauer, 2019). With the emergence of legalization, the definition of the cannabis tourist has become multidimensional, evolving to include those who choose to purchase and consume cannabis, but not as the primary purpose of their travels (Taylor, 2019). This broad definition suggests that environment may impact the tourist’s choice to consume cannabis, which is relevant to diverse segments of the tourism industry including festivals and events. As staple attractions for tourism, festivals and events occupy a unique position where, despite legalization of recreational cannabis, most would not consider themselves as part of the cannabis tourism industry. However, the evolution of the definition of cannabis tourism is relevant for helping festivals frame policies within and across the differing provincial and territorial regulatory contexts.

With the recent change in public policy, the purpose of this multi-case study is to better understand the implications of cannabis legalization for festivals, including how changes in legislation are affecting policy development and implementation related to cannabis use by attendees, volunteers, and staff. By exploring the approach taken by multiple festival organizations, the diverse issues that need to be considered by organizers are highlighted. While the cases are festivals, the considerations are relevant to diverse tourism attraction that must consider how legal changes affect their policies and operations.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discover the intersection of federal legislation, provincial regulation, and festival policy-making with regards to cannabis legalization.
2. Summarize barriers to effective policy change at the festival level and formulate a way for organizers to overcome these barriers.
3. Consider the impact of social norms on festival policy-making.
4. Analyze how a harm reduction approach and the risk environment can guide policy in festival and tourism attraction contexts.

The Issue, Opportunity or Trend

Governments globally have been re-examining legislation of drug consumption, most specifically as it relates to the historically predominant views of cannabis as a dangerous narcotic (Abalo, 2019; Stevens & Hughes, 2019). In Canada, a move away from prohibition to careful regulation of cannabis has been evolving for decades (Hathaway & Erickson, 2003). The recently implemented Cannabis Act is a federal legal framework, where each province and territory is responsible for setting regulations related to how cannabis can be sold, with flexibility to add restrictions around possession limits, minimum age, location of use, and personal cultivation (Government of Canada, 2019). This has created a diverse landscape for developing, testing, and applying policies that both maximize the opportunities to embrace change, but minimize potential public health harms in the emerging environment.

Since the October 2018 legalization of cannabis in Canada, festivals and events have had to consider the implications of changing laws, social norms and the experiences offered. Cannabis reform provides a unique opportunity to examine strategies to integrate recent policy and legal changes into tourism settings. Prior to these changes there were key concepts used to inform the issue of drug use in communities. These concepts provide insight into considerations relevant to the tourism and festival context. First, how cannabis consumption is normalized will be discussed, next public health approaches to cannabis consumption will be described. Finally, the important role of the risk environment will be presented.

Normalization

Within the newly legal cannabis landscape in Canada, the stigma surrounding cannabis use appears to be diminishing. Normalization, the process by which drug use becomes less stigmatized and more accepted as normative behaviour in the general population over time (Sznitman & Taubman, 2016), has likely contributed to the relatively simple transition to legalized cannabis in Canada. The concept of normalization views drug use as an unavoidable, widespread social activity that continues to exist despite broad attempts to eradicate it (Hathaway & Erickson, 2003). The degree to which normalization has occurred in a society is an important consideration when developing and applying policies. In their examination of potential harms resulting from cannabis legalization in Canada, Windle et. al (2018) suggest that social normalization and increased use of cannabis had already occurred prior to legalization, which strongly influenced policy and planning and the federal, provincial, and local levels.

Normalization does not mean that society is accepting of all drug use, in all locations, and all associated outcomes. In their systematic review of drug use normalization, Sznitman and Taubman (2016) identified several overarching themes within normalization research. One such theme, assimilative normalization, found that conscious decisions around time, place, and amount consumed was key to the acceptability of drug use. While these boundaries depended on social norms, generally, drug use was seen as acceptable if it did not interfere with mainstream responsibilities. Similarly, in a survey of recreational drug use in clubs, most people felt that those who used drugs did not ‘cause problems’ or ‘annoy other patrons’, but they did perceive addiction or ‘chaotic’ use as unacceptable, despite general acceptance of recreational drug use (Duff, 2005). In a study of stigma and risk associated with cannabis use, Hathaway (2004) found high tolerance of cannabis use in moderation, noting that context of use was key, suggesting that the circumstances of use are more important than the use itself. This increased social accommodation of recreational drug use and greater tolerance by non-users are key elements of normalization theory. The concept of normalization is pertinent for many festivals or events as they review the implications of newly implemented policies and how they will evolve, especially for those where cannabis use has long been accepted, such as music or some cultural events.

Harm Reduction

Public health has embraced harm reduction strategies to reduce the negative implications of drug use. Harm reduction is embedded in a social justice framework and seeks to “ensure that people who use drugs and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them” (National Harm Reduction Coalition, 2020, principle 5). These policies acknowledge that individuals will use drugs for various reasons, and aim to minimize both the negative social and physical implications of drug use or other behaviours. (Hathaway & Erickson, 2003; Mathre, 2002). Canada’s public health approach to cannabis legalization has intentionally aimed to minimize both health and social harms (Crepault, 2018).

These strategies have been used in public health for decades to reduce the negative implications of drug use, but there is no consensus in the literature as to their applicability to low risk drug use, such as cannabis, and general festival environment (Hyshka et al., 2019; Mema et al., 2018; Ruane, 2015; Vitos, 2017). Though harm reduction strategies have been employed in some leisure contexts such at concerts, raves and festivals (Dance Safe, 2019), there is little research that examines the appropriateness of harm reduction frameworks for policy-making related to drug use during tourism and leisure, particularly in a festival environment.

Harms related to cannabis consumption generally fall into the broader public health umbrella, which could benefit from a harm reduction approach similar to that used for alcohol. Although regulated differently than alcohol, there are many lessons that can be learned from festivals’ alcohol use policies. Using alcohol as a proxy for cannabis, we understand that excess consumption may cause a person to make decisions that they might otherwise not, thus increasing their chance of harm (Alwyn & John, 2012). However, understanding excess consumption of cannabis is complicated by the lack of standard dose, unlike alcohol, where a standard drink can be defined as 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. wine, 1.5 oz. liquor (Parnes, Bravo, Conner, & Pearson, 2018). Despite their different effects, patterns of consumption, and prevalence of use, there is value in examining alcohol-related harms when developing cannabis use policies (Mader, Smith, Smith, & Christensen, 2020).

As both cannabis and alcohol consumption are legal in Canada, from both a policy making and a public health perspective, it is important to help minimize the harms of both. In Canada, alcohol use is a known cause of mortality and morbidity, resulting in close to 15,000 deaths per year and more hospitalizations than for heart attacks (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), 2019). Despite this, Canadians drink approximately 50% more than the global average (Shield et al., 2013) with 78% of Canadian adults reporting consumption in the past year (Health Canada, 2019). When looking at alcohol in the festival setting, Toomey et al. (2006) found that attempts to implement policy changes to minimize harms at festivals were difficult because of social norms and low perception of risk. This suggests that as social acceptability of cannabis increases, it will become more difficult to implement policies to reduce potential harms and that early stages of legalization may be particularly important for healthy public policy implementation.

Beyond alcohol, much of the festival and substance use literature focuses on the use of illegal drugs and their increased potential for harms (Dance Safe, 2019; McCrae et al., 2019; Mema et al., 2018; Ruane, 2015) with cannabis rarely featured in harm reduction discussions, likely due to the relatively low physical health risk posed by cannabis use when compared with other drugs studied. A number of festivals in different countries have adapted public health strategies to reduce the negative implications of recreational drug use and to protect festival attendees from such harms as tainted drugs, bad trips, overdose or other physical impacts. Ruane's (2015) balanced critique of harm reduction at festivals, highlighted different levels of support for this type of approach depending upon current local/national drug policies, stigma surrounding drug use/users, the medical model approach, and punitive drug policies, all potentially creating barriers for harm reduction. A harm reduction perspective was studied at a Canadian music festival to better understand options for drug checking. Attendees were provided with a suite of services that included opportunities to test the content of their drugs without fear of legal repercussions (McCrae et al., 2019; Mema et al., 2018). While the focus of these studies is broader than cannabis, many identify a lack of education of those responsible for implementing policies as a potential barrier to effective harm reduction.

As the prohibition on cannabis has lifted, conversations around harm reduction have ensued. Harm reduction strategies related to drug and alcohol consumption have been employed in some leisure and tourism contexts such as concerts, raves and festivals (Dance Safe, 2019); however, little research exists that examines the appropriateness of harm reduction frameworks for understanding drug use during leisure. Cannabis reform provides a unique opportunity to explore how harm reduction strategies can be integrated into leisure settings.

Risk Environment

The scope of much of the harm reduction discourse remains focused on individual choice and behaviour, which has many limitations and ignores the environment of use. Zinberg's (1984) work on drug, set, and setting, highlights the impact that the social setting has on the behaviour and decision-making around drug use. In this sense, it is impossible to ignore the festival environment when looking at festival cannabis policies. Festivals offer rich social and physical environments away from our everyday contexts (Van Winkle & Bueddefeld, 2016). The unique time and space of festivals enable an escape from daily pressures and the communal context of festivals are key aspects of the experience (Rodriguez-Campo et al., 2020, Van Winkle & Bueddefeld, 2016). Drugs and alcohol are common at many festivals and events, impacting both attendees, in terms of health and safety, and the event itself, including its overall success (Dance Safe, 2019). Understanding social spaces and situations, where various factors intersect, plays a role in the potential for increased or mitigating the risk of harms.

The concept of the risk environment as outlined by Rhodes (2002) looks at both the type of environment and the level of environmental influence. They suggest that the four types of intersecting environments within risk reduction research are physical, social, economic, and policy. Each of these are influenced at different levels of the risk environment, the micro and the macro. As it applies to the examination of festivals' and events' adaptations to the legalization of cannabis, the macro environment could be identified as the changes in the regulatory environment, over which festivals have no control i.e. federal and provincial laws. The micro level could therefore consider the space where festival decision-makers have some level of control over the physical, social, economic and policy environment. Using this as a framework could help to maintain scope, and focus responsibility policies away from solely an individual responsibility to one that is shared with the institutions that could have a role in harm production (Rhodes, 2009). By shifting the focus from the individuals within a specific environment (attendees), to the environment itself (the festival or community), festivals would be better positioned to maximize risk reduction, through both situational and structural interventions.

The Innovation

Case Context

A multiple festival case study examined the shift in cannabis legalization within the Canadian Province of Manitoba, Canada. Cannabis was legalized in Canada in 2018 for recreational use. While federally legalized, the specific regulations around cannabis consumption and distribution was left to each province to determine. The Province of Manitoba is geographically located in the centre of Canada and is known for its flat landscape, numerous lakes and rivers, long cold winters and short hot summers. Approximately three quarters of the population live in the capital city of Winnipeg, but there is a vibrant summer festival season across the Province. Provincial cannabis regulations are more restrictive than in many other Canadian provinces. A robust distribution system, and restrictive consumption rules (including limiting use to private property only) were implemented at the time of legalization in the Country.

Stakeholders Involved

While the Canadian government legalized cannabis and each province determined the specific distribution and consumption regulations, communities had to address issues related to safe and appropriate cannabis use. As past research had demonstrated that attendees regularly consumed cannabis at some festivals prior to legalization, it seemed likely that that use would continue or increase with legalization despite public consumption being restricted. As such, festivals needed to consider cannabis use at their events. Given the increasing legalization of cannabis globally, festival organizers world-wide benefit from understanding how to regard cannabis use at festivals. Furthermore, better understanding normalization, harm reduction and the risk environment benefits festival attraction organizers who must continually review policies related to substance use.

To inform our understanding of the issues, a multi-case study of Manitoba Festivals was undertaken. The purpose of the research was to develop a fulsome understanding of the issues faced by festivals in addressing cannabis use at their sites. To understand festival organizers' perceptions and experiences, interviews were undertaken to encourage discussion of the festival organization's planning processes, their concerns, and their experiences. Festival organizers were approached by phone or email to solicit participants. Those who consented then participated in two in-depth phone interviews to share their personal opinions, experiences

and approaches to this shift in social policy. These in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The first interview occurred prior to their event, and helped ascertain their planning and preparedness for potential change in consumption patterns, and the second interview after their event examined their experiences and identify any planning or policy gaps.

In total, six senior festival organizers representing six festivals were interviewed for this study and five of the interviewees participated in a follow up interview. The participants included people who worked as a senior festival organizer either as full-time paid staff (3), a paid contractor (1), or volunteer (2).

Interviews were transcribed and sent back to participants to review. Once transcripts were approved, researchers used an inductive approach to complete a thematic analysis of the data. Three broad themes reflect the approach used to dealing with Cannabis legalization: 1) policy change and development, 2) guiding principles and 3) reviewing policies in practice.

Figure 1. Summary of festivals included in case study

Urban	Cultural festival with multiple locations	400,000*
Urban	Music and cultural festival with one primary location and various activities	100,000*
Urban	Street festival with one primary location and various activities	40-60,000*
Rural	Festival with one primary location and various activities	50,000
Rural	Outdoor music festival with multiple stages	75,000
Urban	Music festival with variety of venues (interview focus on free outdoor stage)	5000

* Denotes number of visits rather than unique visitors

Approach Used and the Impact

The ultimate driver of policy changes for festivals was the legalization of cannabis in Canada. Since October 2018, cannabis use has been broadly regulated by the Cannabis Act, a legal framework that controls the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis (Department of Justice, 2019). Within this overarching federal legislation, provinces and territories are responsible for regulating the distribution and sale of cannabis and have flexibility to add restrictions, such as legal age and locations for public consumption.

For the first time, many festivals and events across Canada had to contemplate the impact of legal cannabis on their employees, volunteers, and attendees. Differing provincial and territorial controls likely contributed to varied patterns of use across the country and increased the complexity of effective policy development

within this novel regulatory environment. Given that the Province of Manitoba has some of the more restrictive legislation, this provided a fairly rigid foundation for policy development by festival organizers. Most of the festivals interviewed acknowledge that due to the regulations prohibiting public consumption in Manitoba the festivals now had a responsibility to inform attendees, staff and volunteers that cannabis use was not allowed on site despite its legal status. However, existing social norms related to cannabis use at various festivals also appear to have influenced development and implementation of policies. For example, festivals that have historically had a more permissive culture of recreational drug use were more likely to incorporate implicit understandings of cannabis use to inform policies beyond the legal framework. This reflects the process of normalization that had been underway for decades. One festival organizer noted “...it was normalized 20 years ago, you know, now the world's caught up with it.”

Policy Development

Apprehension was evident for some festival administrators as they initiated discussions and planned to update policies. Several noted that they engaged law enforcement and lawyers at the outset, but all festivals noted the underlying importance of meeting the needs of festival attendees through respectful relationships across the spectrum.

“I mean people are quiet about it and they behave... you know... decently so we don't make a big deal about it.”

— Senior administrator of a rural festival

For the most part, festival cannabis policies appear to have been guided by the legislation and held up well when put into practice by the festivals. Pre-festival interviews revealed that legal and regulatory issues dominated policy discussion and policy-making by festival administrators. Several festivals noted that they had not felt the need to develop specific cannabis policies because of the strict laws, while others felt that the laws made policy-making very simple.

“I think that it's great that there is a provincial law that says, you can't do X, Y, Z because for us that just covers a lot of things right?”

And in a follow-up interview, one senior festival administrator noted that the laws restricting public consumption made it easier to keep the festival space safe.

“What I think would have changed things is if it was legal, and we had to worry about establishing spaces for it... that had to be monitored, and then you have to be concerned about the people who are monitoring this space, and the fact that they'll be around the smoke all the time... that was going to be much more of an issue for us. That's what I was nervous about.”

The most commonly discussed policy area to have been impacted was related to intoxication. Most festival administrators noted that they had broadened their intoxication policies for staff and volunteers to include cannabis.

“I mean we have an impairment policy so it's not specific to cannabis, but includes cannabis and that's basically you cannot be drunk or high while you're doing your job.”

Some festivals required volunteers to sign a code of conduct agreeing that they will not be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol, while others were more focused on the individual's ability to perform their tasks. Regardless of the level of policy development and implementation, in follow-up interviews, all interviewees stated that they had no cannabis-related issues at their 2019 event.

"It just wasn't a thing. It wasn't a problem. You weren't seeing an increase in issues like we didn't have any disciplinary issues at the festival this year... Despite having a policy in place and being ready for it."

Guiding Principles

Embracing a harm reduction approach appeared to guide all festivals' planning. Even if it was not explicitly stated in each interview, administrators seemed to understand that individuals may choose to use a variety of substances for many different reasons. Their goal was to ensure that any possible negative consequences were minimized.

"I'm not more worried about the actual public than I am with them drinking too much, right?"

– Volunteer administrator of an urban festival

When delving more deeply into underlying guiding principles, specifically focussed on attendee experience, most participants appeared to have an implicit understanding of the impacts of drug and alcohol use broadly and had strategies in place to minimize harms.

"I think it would always be a matter of just protecting people on the other side, you know. And making sure that people are safe should they consume and then come (to the festival)."

Many of the festival organizers recognized the importance of relationships and education, key elements of a harm reduction approach.

"You know, we, we have all the usual safety protocols, whether it's cannabis or alcohol or otherwise.... we did actually have a volunteer group handing out information about a range of drugs, including cannabis. So we were happy to have them provide that information at our event."

One festival created a safe space for people feeling overwhelmed by their festival experience, whether due to intoxication, mental health distress, or other situation.

"Sometimes people are just freaked out, right and they just want to get somewhere where they feel they're feeling safe again, and that is the purpose."

To varying degrees, all participants agreed that drugs and alcohol played a role in their attendees' festival experience. Their key concerns revolved around maximizing the safety of their attendees while they take part in the festival events.

Reviewing policies in practice

At the end of the day, policies were in place as a precaution in the face of the unknown. When festivals put policies into practice and dealt with the human side of the equation, all administrators noted that there was no change to their practice.

"This has been a whole lot of hullabaloo over not much impact. Right? The whole the legalization of marijuana has just been so unimportant in the grand scheme of things."

– Senior administrator of an urban festival

During initial interviews, much of the conversation around cannabis centred around minimizing risk for the festivals, including fines, and concern about grey areas in the legislation.

“...until the act and the provincial legislation is clarified, nobody wants to take the risk.”

There was also some discussion of the risks being taken by individuals who choose to use cannabis in public despite the laws prohibiting this.

“...it was against the law before, it's against the law now. So people- anything people do it's really doing it at their own risk.”

However, in follow-up interviews, all festivals noted that they had not encountered any issues with cannabis, suggesting a high degree of normalization

“I think that people who would partake would partake prior to it being legal and people who are partaking now that it's legal are likely the same people... I think that's all it's done is just remove fear from people.”

Several administrators pointed to broader society and the general acceptance of cannabis use since legalization.

“After marijuana became legal, I didn't notice any change in society. I don't know about you, but I didn't. There was “It's legal”. And that was it.”

Implications & Lessons learned

Festivals provide a unique space for residents and visitors to gather together in a social environment. To date, there is little in the way of literature on legalized recreational cannabis particularly as it pertains to festival policy. This case study sought to better understand the implications of cannabis legalization for festivals in Manitoba, Canada and explore the policy drivers, guiding principles used, and implications of policy change. Since legalization in Canada, festivals and the tourism industry across the country have been navigating the substance consumption landscape with very little support in terms of guiding principles or frameworks. Inter-provincial sharing of best practices is also difficult, as each province has managed legalization differently with variation in such areas as distribution, advertising, and public consumption. Further, this landscape continues to evolve with cannabis edibles gradually entering the market in October 2019.

The newly legal context for cannabis in Canada, offers insights into ways that festival organizers are navigating cannabis laws, as well as how they are ensuring the health and safety of their patrons, staff, and volunteers. Although cannabis is not the central theme for most festivals and events in Canada, this does raise the question of whether legalization created barriers for policy-makers. In this emerging regulatory environment, for the most part, festival administrators appear to be relying on legal status to inform policy and used common principles to minimize harms to their staff, volunteers, and patrons. A number of interviewees identified that there were some “grey areas” in the provincial regulations, but were erring on the side of caution, which may also contribute to the predominant reliance on legal rather than health principles.

Despite the heterogeneity between provinces, and between Canada and other countries contemplating legalizing cannabis, what has emerged from this study is a practical approach to the unknown. In Manitoba, with some of the most restrictive laws, festivals initially approached policy development and implementation with caution and perhaps some trepidation. It was evident that discussions and planning were important to clarify each festival's position in relation to the regulatory changes. However, meeting the needs of both festival attendees and regulators was much less onerous than thought at the outset.

While none of the festival administrators named harm reduction as a factor in their cannabis policy-making, many highlighted the desire to ensure that patrons were safe and several included an element of education in their policies. This was increasingly evident in post-festival interviews, where the study participants appeared more willing to discuss elements of policy implementation that included very little in terms of enforcement, and focused much more on relationships. This was also likely influenced by underlying shifts in social norms that brought about legalization in the first place. This was particularly evident in festivals that had experience with cannabis or other recreational drug use by patrons, as their tacit understanding of harms and risks would influence any changes in policy.

Regardless of their policies and their preparation for cannabis legalization, in follow-up interviews, festivals did not identify any issues related to cannabis consumption among staff, volunteers or attendees. The overall positive experiences reported by festivals suggests that the roll-out of cannabis legalization has reduced stigma, which continues to build normalization. Examining how festivals adapt, evolve, and implement policies provides insight into broader changes in the tourism industry across Canada.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the Canadian laws and regulations in place in different Provinces could impact the planning and policy process at festivals?
 - a. See <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cannabis/> for more detailed information about Canadian Cannabis laws
 - b. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/laws-regulations/provinces-territories.html> for more detailed information about Provincial Cannabis regulations
2. What role should leisure service organizations have in legislation that impacts their events?
3. What are some key relationships that festivals rely on to ensure the safety of their event?
4. How does cannabis policy differ from that of other legal substances such as alcohol or cigarettes in leisure settings?
 - a. See <https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-approach-legalization-regulation-and-restriction-access-cannabis>
 - b. See <https://www.cpha.ca/harm-reduction-health-promotion-and-cannabis-screening-tools>
5. What are some similarities/differences in festival policies for illegal substances? Why?
 - a. See <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy.html>
6. Why do changes in legislation have the potential to impact festivals and events differently from impacts on individuals or other tourism organizations?
7. How can the experience of festival organizations be used to inform other tourism and hospitality businesses?
 - a. Consider normalization, harm reduction and the risk environment

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