

Local Community Support in Tourism Development

Lisa Elmes-Bosshard

In this session, Lisa Elmes-Bosshard explores the essential role of local communities in building more sustainable, resilient and authentic tourism models. Drawing on international experience and practical examples, she highlights how community involvement can enhance tourism value, strengthen local economies and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Presentation script (introduction, objectives...conclusion)

Introduction

The session introduces the importance of placing local communities at the centre of tourism development. It highlights how tourism can generate significant economic and social benefits, but also the risks when communities are not actively involved, including loss of local value and reduced social acceptance.

It also emphasises current trends in tourism demand, where travellers increasingly seek authentic, locally rooted experiences, making community engagement a key competitive factor for destinations and businesses.

Main Content

The presentation explores how local community involvement contributes to more sustainable and resilient tourism systems. It shows how active participation of residents helps retain economic value locally, preserve cultural heritage and create more meaningful visitor experiences.

A central focus of the session is the role of awareness campaigns in connecting tourism with heritage protection and climate action. It presents practical frameworks and strategies to design effective campaigns, including engaging local stakeholders as co-creators, identifying authentic stories and using digital tools to amplify impact.

The session also provides a structured approach to campaign development, from community listening and partnership building to content creation, impact measurement and continuous improvement. In addition, it highlights key success factors such as focusing on a clear message, using storytelling, ensuring consistency over time and including a strong call to action.

Conclusion

The session concludes by reinforcing the idea that sustainable tourism must be built with and for local communities. Awareness campaigns play a key role in making heritage and

climate challenges visible, engaging both residents and visitors, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

By integrating community voices, storytelling and collaboration, tourism businesses and destinations can create more meaningful, resilient and sustainable models that generate long-term value for all stakeholders.