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Enhancing the sector's sustainability through shared responsibilities

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Session II: The imperative of advancing Tourism for All

This session will address the importance of facilitating Tourism for All so as to enable all people, whatever their abilities or socio-economic circumstances may be, to experience travel and tourism. The initiatives to be showcased will illustrate how Tourism for All, besides being an issue of human rights and equality, also entails major economic opportunities for tourism destinations. Inclusive tourism environments, products and services that cater for a wide spectrum of customers' needs attract more people with disabilities, families with children or the ageing population on the rise. Similarly, an inclusive and diverse work place can make tourism businesses more innovative, and therefore more competitive, by bringing in new perspectives of the market trends emerging within our societies.

General questions

1. "Tourism for All" has significantly evolved as a concept over the last decades. What does "Tourism for All" imply in your opinion?
2. There are many challenges in travel planning process which may create confusion among customers with disabilities and specific access requirements, including senior citizens and families with young children. How can all stakeholders work together to remove the barriers in the sphere of information provision and communication?

During the recent global economy crisis many families and individuals have been deprived of enjoying tourism and leisure activities. Has INATEL observed any new trends in social tourism in Portugal and the profile of its beneficiaries in the last 10 years?

For State/Government

- Defining policies that facilitate the development of an inclusive and responsible social tourism, combining social, educational and cultural goals.
- Public policies that promote conditions of attractiveness of regions targeted by desertification and the aging of the population, promoting regional / national cohesion and enhancing their endogenous resources.

For Tourist/Citizen

- The right to access to leisure and tourism activities, independently of the different culture or age group, disabilities, lack of economic resources, or because they live in less-developed regions.
- The duty of being aware of social cultural aspects of the places visited, knowledge and respect for preserving local destinations and cultures, friendly with other tourists and local populations.

For Territories

- Importance of new forms of cooperation and association, considering that tourism requires active participation of the various partners in the field (value chain approach) - small and medium-sized business, training and education providers including universities, culture and sport associations, environmental organizations, etc.
- Openness to new patterns of behaviour and new habits of consumption of tourists and capacity to develop new products that match the new trends.
- Ability to maintain the authenticity of the destination in terms of material and immaterial resources (avoiding the so called “fake tourism”).

Removing Barriers Regarding Communication and Information

How can all stakeholders work together to remove the barriers in the sphere of information provision and communication?

- Developing collaborative marketing within networks (including different stakeholders) - joint marketing initiatives could be a useful way of facilitating communication
- Establishing partnership agreements with local councils and other organisations in order to identify potentialities and specificities that match specific needs in each region
- Making more visible different information platforms/internet portals at European and national level (the Turismo de Portugal platform for Accessible Tourism - TUR4All - is a good example)
- Organizing workshops directed to different types of stakeholders, namely main tourism operators (hotels, tour operators, transport, etc.), students (tourism for all just recently is spoken in schools), local citizens, as a way of awareness of different needs.

Taking Down Barriers – Concentrated Efforts From all Stakeholders

In order to make "Tourism for All" a reality, it is necessary to:

1. A differentiation of rates accordingly to the household income;
2. Networking with travel agencies;
3. Close efforts with social institutions to more accurately identify participants to whom Social Tourism programs are targeted;
4. A sturdy involvement from government;
5. Collaboration with tourist stakeholders, amongst hotels, restaurants, transportation, museums and so on;
6. Differentiated set of communication tools for each target-group, in light of an independent customer profile, which impairs any attempt to mix them.

Social tourism in Portugal tends to...

- include activities that increasingly contributes for economic and environmental sustainability of the territories (in particular the ones targeted by peripheral exclusion or regional desertification), and enhancing the interaction between tourists and local communities (different publics and social groups) – exploring new tourism programs.
- continue to be an instrument for social integration, enabling the mobility and participation of individuals in leisure activities that would otherwise be inaccessible to them – supported by new governmental programs.
- maintain tourism activities in medium and low season, avoiding the closure of hotels, guaranteeing jobs and some dynamic in transports and other supplementary activities, generating greater economic activity.
- increase the cooperation between tourism organizations and local entities (municipalities and associations) in the definition of tourism programs as well as in facilitating the access of locals to the programs - explore new forms of cooperation.

In 2013, the Portuguese government halted the endowments attributed to INATEL's social tourism programs: **Senior Tourism** (*Turismo Sénior*), **Health and thermal treatments for seniors** (Saúde e Termalismo Sénior), **Opening the Doors to Difference** (Abrir Portas à Diferença), **Solidarity Tourism** (*Turismo Solidário*) and **Untroubled Days** (*Dias Tranquilos*).

Consequences:

1. **A fall on the number of participants;**
2. **A decline of the number of the touristic stakeholders engaged in the execution of the programs;**
3. **A duly reshape of the income levels to the rates applied;**
4. **An overall increase of rates;**
5. **Laxer rules on the age of participants;**
6. **Adjustments on the programs and travel schedules to the financial availabilities.**

1. Despite the fact that INATEL beneficiaries of tourism activities still look for a reliable/trustable brand to organize the trip, they are **better informed** about destinies, programs and prices.
2. **Some changes** in INATEL Tourist profile **follow European trends**:
 - More sensitive to price changes;
 - More demanding regarding quality and safety;
 - More concerned about sustainability;
 - More concerned with health and wellbeing;
 - More interested in new experiences, including new destinations.
3. **Increasingly seeking for international destinations**, despite the linguistic barrier (some already have more foreign language knowledge)
4. Seniors continue to prefer group trips (seniors + 65 and less educated) with the maximum of services included (food, entrance in museums, spectacles, etc.), but there is a **growing segment looking for individual and family trips** (less than 65 and more educated)
5. More **active**, with **concerns about food and physical exercise**, and more educated in terms of information and communication technologies (online reservations).

INATEL Social tourism

- focusing on active workers and families, but also, leisure for seniors;
- support the use of thermal spas;
- tourism program adapted to people with disabilities;
- programs to enjoy the culture and the national territory;
- promotion of tourist offer in the interior regions, linked with local culture and organizations



New and renewed programs

- Nature programs (walking tourism; adventure tourism (trail running); cycling routes)
- Programs promoting intangible patrimony (Wine & Gastronomy Tours; Traditional Festivities (all over the country); Thematic routes (historical villages - fighting the desertification of the interior); Special Events – ex. Iberian Mask Festival (bringing together 2 countries)
- Tourism with specialist (Portuguese writers; gardens and palaces; industrial tourism, ...)
- Religious tourism (Catholic routes; Jew and Muslim routes ;)
- Tourism & Volunteering