

Book review: “Responsible tourism: inspiring results!”

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Introduction

Responsible tourism has emerged as a significant theme in global tourism discourse, particularly as awareness grows about the environmental, cultural, and economic impacts of conventional tourism models. As early as the 1970s, discussions on sustainability were taking shape, eventually gaining prominence at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. It was at this point that the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) formally defined sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005, p. 11).

This notion laid the foundation for responsible tourism, a related but distinct concept that emphasizes ethical action and accountability. As articulated in the Cape Town Declaration, responsible tourism is guided by principles that prioritize the well-being of host communities and aim to make “better places for people to live in and for people to visit” (International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, 2002, para. 1). Harold Goodwin later reinforced this view, stating that responsible tourism “puts the interests of resident communities first” (Goodwin, 2023, p. 3).

It is within this evolving conceptual landscape that the book *Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results!* finds its place. Written by four Brazilian professionals with solid academic and practical backgrounds in tourism, Marianne de Oliveira Costa (founder and CEO of Grupo Vivejar), Ana Rosa Guimarães Bastos Proença (Director of Instituto Vivejar), Karina Toledo Solha (professor and researcher at the Center for Tourism and Social Development Studies) and Gustavo Pereira Pinto (member of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism), the book blends theory and practice to explore how responsible tourism can be implemented at the grassroots level.

Published by the Inter-American Development Bank in 2024, the book combines theoretical reflections with real-world case studies from Brazil. It is aimed at students, researchers, tourism professionals and stakeholders seeking practical strategies to make tourism more responsible and community-centered, with alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guiding framework. Its main contributions lie in its pragmatic focus, community-driven examples and its potential to inspire a shift toward more ethical and sustainable tourism models within both academic and professional fields.

Summary

The book *Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results!* is structured into five chapters, each building on both theoretical foundations and applied experiences. The first chapter presents the



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principles and historical background of responsible tourism. The second outlines strategies for integrating responsibility into tourism activities, including advice on goal-setting and prioritization. The third introduces the results of a national contest on responsible tourism practices, which received over 1,000 submissions. From these, 20 initiatives were shortlisted based on evaluative criteria and 10 were ultimately selected as case studies. The fourth chapter explores those ten examples in depth, covering diverse Brazilian contexts such as the Amazon region and urban centers. These case studies were evaluated through four analytical dimensions: governance, community, environment and communication. The fifth and final chapter reflects on broader challenges of responsible tourism in Brazil, provides implementation tips, such as maintaining a notebook to document planning, and concludes with an invitation to sign the Responsible Tourism Manifesto.

The book's visual appeal, including colorful design, diverse font choices and relevant illustrations, enhances its accessibility. It adopts an encouraging tone, directly addressing the reader with actionable advice and inspiration. It also presents measurable indicators and external resources to support further exploration. Core themes include community empowerment, ethical supply chains, tourism diversification and SDG alignment, making the book both instructive and motivational.

Critique

Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results! is an educational and engaging contribution to both academic and professional discussions on responsible tourism. Its main strengths include accessible language, a direct and intimate tone, and appealing visuals, illustrations, color schemes and varied typography that make the content approachable.

The real-life case studies are particularly compelling. They show how responsible tourism principles can be applied in diverse contexts, from the Amazon to urban areas, and offer insights into the social, cultural and environmental impacts of these practices. The selection of ten cases followed a rigorous multi-phase process involving over 1,000 participants. Initiatives were evaluated according to four dimensions – governance, community, environment and communication – and chosen for demonstrating measurable results.

However, the book would benefit from a more robust discussion on financial and economic dimensions. While it offers guidance on accessing financial support and mentions business models (like revenue from visitor services), it lacks deeper analysis of initial funding sources or long-term viability. This may limit replicability for new entrepreneurs or nonprofits facing structural challenges. Compared to other literature, such as Harold Goodwin's work or community-based tourism economics publications, the book engages less with quantitative outcomes or cost-benefit perspectives.

Despite this, the book offers a meaningful and practice-oriented reflection on tourism as a transformative force. Its emphasis on ethics, inclusion, SDG alignment and stakeholder empowerment aligns with current academic and policy trends, making it a timely publication.

Recommendation

Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results! is a relevant contribution to the field. It stands out for its practical orientation, visual design, clarity and authenticity of case studies. The book is particularly relevant for students, early-career researchers, tourism professionals, community leaders, entrepreneurs and public sector actors interested in ethical tourism practices rooted in local contexts.

The authors present complex issues in an accessible manner, making the book an excellent starting point for newcomers and a reflective tool for seasoned practitioners. Its focus on community empowerment, cultural integrity and environmental responsibility makes it a valuable reference for sustainable development discussions. Tools such as indicators, planning suggestions, and motivational strategies add practical value.

Future editions could be improved by including deeper analysis of economic viability and more diverse international case studies to enhance global applicability.

Overall, this book is highly recommended for its originality, relevance and potential to inspire change in tourism thinking and practice.

Conclusion

Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results! makes a relevant contribution to literature on sustainable and responsible tourism. While many works offer theoretical or top-down frameworks, this book adopts a bottom-up approach based on community-led initiatives from Brazil. Its clear language, structured chapters and rigorously selected case studies make it both accessible and inspiring.

What sets it apart is its emphasis on ethics, responsibility and inclusion as guiding principles. It moves beyond abstract sustainability and shows how it can be translated into action through locally driven strategies. In doing so, it offers a pragmatic roadmap that connects theory to practice in culturally specific contexts.

Although it could benefit from broader international scope and stronger economic analysis, its authenticity and grassroots perspective are clear strengths. For those interested in moving tourism beyond rhetoric, this book offers both inspiration and replicable models.

In summary, *Responsible Tourism: Inspiring Results!* is a valuable resource that challenges conventional paradigms and encourages a shift toward more conscious, inclusive and community-centered tourism practices.

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