

Shaping the future of tourism through local community collaborations

Why it's key - and other exciting
global trends that can add value

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About

Entrepreneur, place developer, marketer

- Worked with leading brands, startups, and places
- Location-independent and full-time traveler since 2016
- Strategies and marketing that support local communities
- Consults, coaches, teaches (places, businesses and universities)

From Brazil
Colombia,
Spain, Bosnien
& Herzegovina
to Scandinavia
m.m...



Key takeaways to look forward to



- Why it's key to involve local communities
- How to make local engagement a natural part of your strategy
- Creative partnerships that will help
- The power of authentic storytelling to differentiate your destination and brand
- Common mistakes to avoid
- Exciting global shifts that can add value



Why it's key to involve local communities in the development of tourism

Tourism doesn't exist in isolation - it works best when it reflects the identity, culture, and values of the community it's part of.

*It's about ensuring tourism **improves the place for everyone** without losing its roots.*

Consumer Habits

How Authentic Experiences Shape the New Tourism Economy

Airbnb data reveals people are looking for travel away from hotspots

By [Airbnb](#) · 28 February 2024 · [Destinations](#), [Product](#), [Stays](#)



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The evolving role of experiences in travel

September 17, 2024 | Article

The tourism industry is evolving, people want more meaningful experiences...

- **67% of travelers consider authenticity a key factor** when choosing a destination (Skift Survey)
- **80% of travelers want to learn about local culture** (Booking.com Sustainable Travel Report 2023)
- **64% of travelers are willing to explore less-popular destinations** to avoid crowds and **support sustainable tourism practices** (Booking.com Sustainable Travel Report 2023)
- **42% of travelers prioritize supporting local businesses**, actively seeking experiences contributing to the local economy (World Economic Forum)
- **More travelers start to value immersion, cultural insights, and personal connections** over traditional tourism

A few key benefits of local engagement



Contributes to a stronger identity & better life quality



Builds resilience & helps solve local challenge



More meaningful business & community support

It also helps differentiate your business, support lasting impact, boost innovation, growth, and upgrade your marketing...



Locals can become your most loyal supporters

With upsides like:

- Visits throughout the year
- Spread the word
- Valuable insights and network
- Make your days more charming

*When **locals** feel **valued** and included, their support **strengthens the destination** and **sets it apart**.*



It's often easier said than done

- **Requires a mindset shift and new metrics:** From volume to local value
- **Needs to be a part of your strategy:** Not just a little side project
- **Challenges traditional ways and communication:** Changing the stories we tell
- **Community engagement can look very different:** No one-fits-all-solution

(but the long-term benefits make up for the challenges)

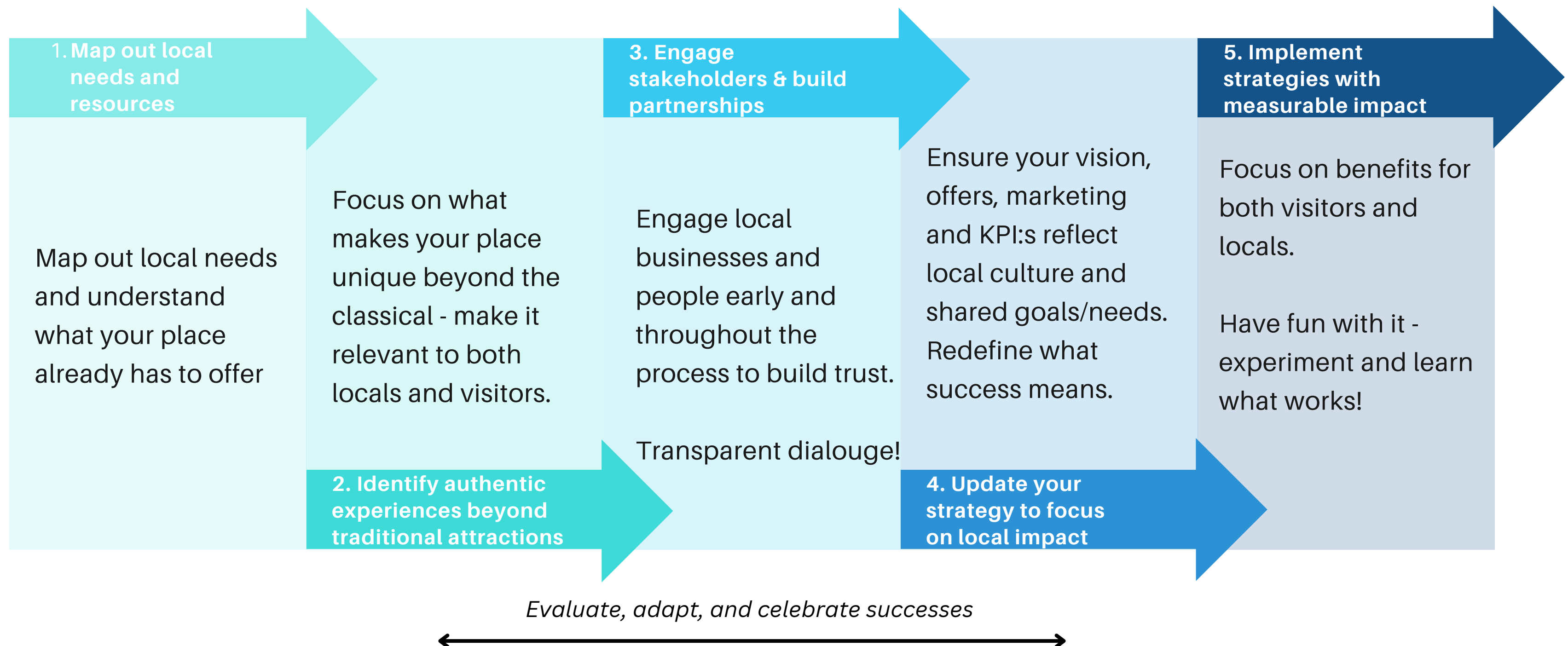
A person wearing a brown hat, a blue shirt, and jeans stands on a dirt path, pointing their right arm towards a large, forested hill in the background. The path is surrounded by tall grass and some trees. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Clarifying "What's in it for me?" is how you unlock engagement

Ask: How can we support what locals already care about?

HOW TO MAKE LOCAL ENGAGEMENT A NATURAL PART OF YOUR STRATEGY

A simplified process





Map out local needs and understand what your place already has to offer

- **Align tourism with local needs** and long-term goals for lasting impact
- **Identify and tap into authentic experiences** beyond traditional attractions
- **Offer unique experiences connected to culture**, seasons, gastronomy & more



Valuable ways you can engage the local community

- **Collaboration & co-creation:** Gather ideas, work with local organizations, support local talents and existing initiatives
- **Design experiences with locals in mind.** Ask: How can I be a destination for locals too?
- **Education and authenticity:** Inform and inspire society, reward engagement, and ensure traditions are presented accurately
- **Recognition and standards:** Offer certifications and incentives that encourage participation and sustainability
- **Storytelling and promotion:** Let locals share their culture in ways that matter to them. Use different channels to improve distribution

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From classical attractions to **shared experiences**

Meet the makers



Workshops & skillsharing



Community-run initiatives,
events and pop up experiences
(from volunteering to live music,
sports, culture and food festivals)



The charm of the everyday



Storytelling tours





Building authentic partnerships is key

- **Identify the right partners** in the community (instead of re-inventing)
- **Co-create initiatives** that benefit visitors and locals
- **Ambassador programs** with locals who already love Vuokatti
- **Incentivize participation**; training, events, recognition, discounts
- **Support community projects** that align with your values
- **Trails that connect** places and people, ex: “Taste of Vuokatti”

The power of authentic storytelling to differentiate your destination and brand

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Tell stories those you want to reach can relate to

What is a North Alabama Ambassador?

A North Alabama Ambassador is someone who represents our region well through their photos, videos, and blogs on social media. It's someone who explores, seeks adventure, captures the beauty of north Alabama, and shares it with the rest of us. It's someone who ultimately makes us want to go out and explore for ourselves.



the hoxton

OffersHoxShopGift VouchersBauwerkWhat's OnThe Loc...

+ Select Location

A series of open-house hotels inspired by the diversity and originality of the streets and scenes that surround us.

Get right to the heart of West Sweden with Meet the Locals

Take a ride with a horse and cart or in a classic Oldsmobile. Meet a Guinness World Record holder, learn to bake some Swedish Fika, or swap gardening tips with a like-minded enthusiast.

Meet our Locals



**Göta Canal and Sjötorp
with Alf as your guide**



**13 trees on 50sqm, Gun
invites you to her garden**



**Master Indian Cooking or
Fika: A Culinary Journey in
Mölnlycke Råda Säteri**



**Inger shares her joy of
growing. She grows
vegetables, flowers and
her own cardigan.**

How does meeting a local work?

Meeting a local is simple and fun. An exciting way to get inside daily life in West Sweden.



Find a local

Search among all locals for an activity you find extra interesting.



Send request

Send a request to meet and share a little bit more about yourself.



Find a time

Communicate securely through the website and find a time that suits you both.



Meet

The highlight. Get to know another exciting person and share an experience together.



TOURISM STRATEGY 2030: HOME



The new strategy is setting out the direction of travel and our goals for Faroese tourism over the coming years. It's the result of thousands of conversations, hundreds of meetings, and masses of inspiration from our international colleagues. A revolutionary 'bottom-up' strategy was applied, the first of its kind to be done in the tourism sector worldwide.

HOME

Find yourself at one of the four corners of the Earth.

Fogo Island Inn sits on an island off the Northeast coast of Newfoundland. Every one of our 29 one-of-a-kind guest rooms and suites overlook the wildest and most powerful ocean on the planet.

Away from the everyday yet closer than you think, the award-winning Inn is built on principles of sustainability and respect for nature and culture. The Inn is a community asset, and 100% of operating surpluses are reinvested into the community to help secure a sustainable and resilient future for Fogo Island.





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Share Vuokatti with the world

- Build a content series showing people, traditions, and initiatives
- Ambassadors representing target audiences
- Incentivize participation by offering training, recognition, or discounts
- Encourage visitors to take part

What other ideas do you have?



**How do you balance
ambition with reality?**



- **The SMART framework:** Is the goal specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound?
- **Understanding of the current situation and challenges:** What works today and what needs to be improved? Do we have enough resources to achieve this? Does it fit the size of our organization?
- **Use of milestones and ambition levels:** What does it really take to reach this goal? How can we break it down into smaller steps? What is our minimum level to realize this goal, even if it feels ambitious?
- **Learning and improvement:** What can we learn and improve as we work toward this goal? It's not just about reaching the goal, but the journey 😊



3 quick actions to get started

- **Take a look at your role:** What part do you play in the local economy or community?
- **Tap into your existing network:** Whether a local business you admire or a community group
- **Start small:** Test out your ideas with a pilot project or a small-scale collaboration



Common mistakes to avoid

- Making locals feel exploited rather than genuinely involved
- Failing to follow up or measure the impact
- Trying to do everything alone instead of collaborating
- Prioritizing one group over others

Global shifts that can add value

- **The rise of new target groups that blur lines between locals and tourists:** Remote workers, digital nomads, etc.
- **Increasing interest in wellness and personal development:** Digital detox, holistic health, and meaningful experiences
- **Growing demand for regenerative and inclusive practices:** You can set the example for other places to get inspired by
- **Slow travel, solo travel, and off-season experiences:** Every season spoils you with different experiences
- **Food and culture:** From traditional to fusions
- **AI as a way to personalize recommendations**





The opportunities of remote workers and digital nomads

- The digital nomad community is more diverse than most people imagine; from solo travelers and couples to families, friends and teams
- Often stay longer, visit off-season, like to integrate with local life
- If they fall for the destination, they often return
- Can lead to other benefits like investments, innovation, and more

What are they looking for?

It depends, but here are some of the basics:

- **Basic infrastructure** for working travelers
- **Good accommodation** options suitable for longer stays
- **A welcoming atmosphere** and culture
- **A community** of locals and other nomads
- **Events**, from business meet-ups to concerts, sports, food, and cultural festivals
- **Information about local life** and happenings

Some only go where there are established nomad communities, while others are open to lesser known spots.





Kiitos!



Summary

- Regenerative and local engagement is the future, although not always so simple
- Requires a mindset shift and new ways to develop places and businesses
- Several challenges - but also opportunities!
- Collaboration is key to scale progress
- Transparency, communication, courage, experiments and continuous follow up help you get results

Stay in touch

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