



Tourism in the times of COVID-19

“Good practices on innovation and digitalization”

Introduction

With the objective to exchange experiences on the topic of how to cope with tourism in time of COVID 19, a webinar has been organized on 11.03.2021 with the two presentations by network members. The agenda of the meeting was as follows:

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

e+i | employment and
income network

Proposed Agenda

Webinar: Tourism in the times of COVID-19
“Good practices on innovation and digitalization”

- Opening remarks: **Short introduction by Lars Büchler, Team IED at SDC Bern**
- Presentation 1: **Experiences from the field**
Skills Development Project Cambodia
Learning how to cook...online?! – by Sonja Hofstetter
- Presentation 2: **Good practices on innovation and digitalization**
Overview of innovation and digitalization – by Adrien Rebord
- Q&A: **Clarification questions / What do you want to learn from Sonja & Adrien?**
- Closing remarks: **Short presentation by Lars Büchler, Team IED at SDC Bern**
- End of the event 11:15h

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Carsten Schulz
Moderator

Presentation 1: Experience from the field: Skills Development Programme (SDP) in Cambodia

The first presentation in this Webinar is focusing on a good practice using digitalization in TVET training in tourism.

As a result of the pandemic that hit the hospitality industry in Cambodia, with the decrease of almost 80% of tourists using the facilities of guesthouses and hotels, the TVET offer of international projects also had to cope with the situation.

The Skills Development Program (SDP) in Cambodia adapted its offer in close cooperation with some hotel kitchens around the country to offer online cooking courses...

LEARNING HOW TO COOK...ONLINE?!



- The students were given an **online cookbook, online assignments, and written assessments**
- Zoom for
 - **Theory** classes
 - **Instructions** for activities
 - **Demonstration** for practical sessions
 - **Students response** on assignments (showed their ingredients, preparations and finalised meal)
 - **Final assessment**
- Kahoot and **Mentimeter** for engagement and fun, quizzes and evaluations
- The trainer guided them and assessed their activities.
- Assessments were done at home and sent to the trainer for verification



Beside more details on the delivery of this online offer, Sonja Hofstetter who works as Chief Technical Adviser with her team based in Pnom Penh, has been mentioning some insights of organizing the online cooking courses as well as lessons learned.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PILOT



- Improved peer-to-peer learning and communication
- Learners became more active and self-motivated
- Practical learning: more flexibility and new opportunities
- Blended learning can help to save time and cost
- Especially true in a context of low ICT literacy of the trainers/teachers.
- **Not a panacea for disrupted training provision:** Quality TVET needs practice under qualified supervision

Presentation 2: Good examples at destination, business and customer level

The global pandemic refocused consumption around our home (domestic tourism) and disrupted the market to accelerate some already ongoing changes (digitalization, sustainable tourism). Such awareness raising and a shift in traveler behaviour (autonomy, looking for nature and less crowded places) is likely to remain on the long-term. Restoring confidence by overcoming the fear of uncertainty will be a priority to stimulate demand for a smooth recovery.

At **destination level**, there was a need of accurate information to manage the crisis. Policy makers and governments were trying to support SMEs, but they often lacked statistics on the ground reality. [Dashboards and real-time data](#) gained in importance for making informed decision, for proper steering and to monitor the actions taken.

The main question of 2020 for tourism actors was **how to attract domestic tourists**. The canton of Vaud develops [a digital marketing strategy supported by a travel voucher system](#), distributed by the biggest online sales platform of the region. Instead of developing a new tool, they identified an established actor already working on local market and benefited from its network. Other destinations had a similar approach for marketing by [partnering with bloggers and influencers](#) having an existing resident community.

Additional digital response to this disruption were observed at **business level** requiring more flexibility and adaptability for communication but also to share up-to-date information with customers, including [how Covid-safe measures were implemented](#). In the case of Lithuania, [part of recovery measures for tourism](#) were focusing on [the transformation of the sector](#) by promoting innovation, [digital technologies](#) and [new e-business models](#).

At **customer level**, [virtual reality maintained aspirations](#) to travel but also gave [a taste to attract domestic tourists](#). [Non-contact tourism](#) emerged out of the widespread social distancing. [Understanding motivational factors](#) and new consumption patterns ([more autonomous traveler](#), removal of customer touchpoints) were essential but technologies could not fully [replace the true travelling experience](#).

All three levels (destination, business and customer) of [the value chain need to be interlinked](#) as well-organised actors have a striking force for advocacy, to coordinate policy response and to propose alternative products to domestic tourists. [Connecting tourism players is a must for upselling/crossselling](#) as new and tailored products are required to attract indigenous visitors. Combining the organization of the tourism ecosystem with the emergence of a platform economy brings the possibility [to create an enabling digital tourism environment](#).

Conclusion and limits

Digitalization cannot bring tourists in when borders are closed. But it can support adaptation, customer relationship and the response to the new needs. As for tourism destination strategies and development projects, the global pandemic revealed the need to **better take into account local demand from the start**.