Empowering Indigenous Communities to Drive Tourism’s Recovery

Madrid, Spain, 21 May 2021 - The cultural diversity and knowledge of indigenous peoples can bring innovative experiences and new business opportunities for tourism destinations and local communities, and help them recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has partnered with the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WiNTA) on a set of guidelines, designed to ensure this type of experiences are respectful and led by the indigenous communities themselves.

The new UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide, Issue 4: Indigenous Communities, is the fourth set of guidelines addressing the socio-cultural impacts of COVID-19 issued by UNWTO. The partners call for placing Indigenous communities at the centre of recovery plans and for partnerships geared towards gathering accurate data on Indigenous tourism, and how it has been affected by the pandemic.

These recommendations draw on the partners’ expertise and set out solutions for the socio-economic empowerment of Indigenous Peoples through tourism. These include transitioning from “assisting” to “enabling” indigenous entrepreneurship, strengthening skills and building capacities, fostering digital literacy for running tourism businesses, and acknowledging the relevance of indigenous peoples by destination authorities and the tourism sector overall.

The Guide, launched on the occasion of the International Day of Cultural Diversity, builds on the decade-long partnership between UNWTO and WiNTA. The two organizations work together to enable indigenous communities untap their tourism potential and promote their success stories. The most recent collaboration, the Weaving the Recovery Project, focuses on empowering Indigenous women through responsible tourism experiences and indigenous artisanship in Latin America.

The recommendations also benefitted from inputs provided by the Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In recent years, the OECD has also significantly advanced its policy research and promotion of good practices and networks championing indigenous tourism within its Member countries.

UNWTO stands ready to support platforms which reinforce indigenous peoples’ networks, making them the ultimate decision makers of tourism operations affecting their livelihoods.
Related Links:

UNWTO: COVID-19 – An Inclusive Response for Vulnerable Groups

WINTA (World Indigenous Tourism Alliance)

UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide, Issue 4: Indigenous Communities