

Experiential tourists embracing sustainable tourism

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Resistance to the negative impact of tourism, such as price inflation, is rising across the world. Simultaneously, tourists are getting off the bus as the trend towards experiences grows.



Image Source: [Africa's Travel Indaba](#)

Responsible tourism embraces the move towards a more sustainable and less harmful industry and was the subject of discussion by one of the business conversations hosted at Africa's Travel Indaba.

"The new experiential tourist is looking for what makes people tick so they want to eat the food of the locals and live how they live. It is about the five senses," says Sadia Nanabhay, who has worked extensively in responsible tourism and is involved in the African Responsible Tourism Awards.

Boosting responsible tourism benefits

Responsible tourism boosts the benefits and mitigates the negatives of tourism and there are different ways to achieve this. "Some places, such as Florence, have taken a hard-line and penalise tourists for bad behaviour, while other places appeal to people's good nature and encourage good behaviour."

Nanabhay mentions that research shows that the most effective way to change peoples' behaviour, which responsible tourism strives to do, is the 'keeping up with the Jones' scenario. "For example, a hotel will have a sign in your room stating that the last guests had no towel changes and then challenges you to do the same or better."

However, Nanabhay believes it takes several different strategies, not just one, to achieve the change in peoples' behaviour that responsible tourism encourages. She suggests businesses start small and work towards a holistic sustainability.

"The millennial traveller is on trend when it comes to travel as this group is looking for offbeat, authentic experiences and this is core to responsible tourism," says panellist Jane Edge, a board member of Fair Trade Tourism (FTT).

“ *"The millennial tourist is very much on track when it comes to [#responsibletourism](#)... They want authenticity, local experiences..." ~ Jane Edge [@FTTtourism #Indaba2018](#)
[@SATravelTrade @sisantshona pic.twitter.com/duUYI2TqF7](#)— Meruschka (@MzansiGirl) [May 9, 2018](#)* ”

Morongoe Ramphela, deputy director general: tourism sector support services, also a panellist adds that government defines responsible industry through the triple bottom line. "When I say this, I am talking about respectful economic growth, environmental integrity and ensuring communities are not infringed on in terms of what they value and subsist on."

Tourism industry to lead by example

Here South Africa is a leader, with its Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism (SANS 1162), says Ramphela. "We might be the first in the world to have come up with this kind of standard in terms of responsible tourism."

The panel, moderated by CEO of South African Tourism, Sisa Ntshona who said: "Tourists are often also looking for guidance on how to behave. The industry needs to provide this guidance."

Ntshona adds: "We want to promote responsible tourism and do it in the best manner possible, while being consistent in this space and protecting the tourism environment. To do this, we all need to collaborate and work together to position South Africa. When it comes to tourism, if we only focus on profit, then we will miss out on the bigger picture."

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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