The power of youth travel

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Today’s generation of young people are more informed, more mobile and more adventurous than ever before.

Youth travel is one of the fastest growing and most dynamic markets of the global tourism sector. UNWTO estimates that around 20% of the 940 million international tourists travelling the world in 2010 were young people.

Yet the importance of this market goes far beyond the numbers. Young people have been recognized by the United Nations as a major force for development and social change. This is true also for tourism, with youth travellers leading positive change in the sector, investing in local tourism businesses and championing environmental protection. As such, youth travel is one of the most promising paths towards a more responsible and sustainable tourism sector.

Youth travellers – seeking to interact with and make a difference to the lives of local communities – have also been decisive in encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding between cultures, the objective at the heart of the 2010-2011 UN International Year of Youth.

The Power of Youth Travel provides an up-to-date overview of the major characteristics and trends of this exciting market, highlighting its importance to governments and business leaders worldwide. It also draws attention to the issues that need to be addressed to ensure that more and more young people around the world can continue to benefit from the enriching experiences that travel brings, for travellers and the communities they visit.

Bringing together the knowledge and expertise of UNWTO and the World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, the world’s leading youth travel organization and a UNWTO Affiliate Member, and counting on case studies from the tourism private sector, the report makes a timely and significant contribution to understanding youth travel. I would like to thank all Affiliate Members and other organizations who contributed to this report and I look forward to your continued engagement in UNWTO activities in the future.
The World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation (WYSE Travel Confederation) is a long standing Affiliate Member of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In recent years our cooperation has taken a variety of forms, one of the most notable being the joint production of the publication Youth Travel Matters – Understanding the Global Phenomenon of Youth Travel in 2008. This compendium of our combined research drew attention to the unique motivations of young travellers, and the compelling potential of this vibrant market segment.

Since then, the story has gone from strength to strength and earlier this year we came together again to develop an initiative to spotlight this potential to governments, official tourism organisations and business leaders. This report is the first step on that path.

In 2010 young travellers generated 165 billion USD towards global tourism receipts, affirming their financial value to the global tourism industry and local economies. The power of youth travel is not solely an economic story. The social and cultural benefits for the young traveller and the communities that host them are far reaching, long-term and measurably more sustainable than other forms of tourism. As the tourism industry itself goes through unprecedented change, it is youth travel that has the most to contribute through the innovation required of it by pioneering, heavy tech-using, socially and environmentally conscious customers, i.e. young people.

In this report you will find a collection of case studies from the private sector that reflect the knowledge and expertise of the industry in meeting the needs of their young, dynamic customers. There are also excellent examples from industry associations and agencies of how developing partnerships, creating joint strategies with government and tourism authorities and building the capacity for youth travel makes a demonstrable difference in both social and economic terms to global development.

WYSE Travel Confederation and UNWTO share the belief that there is great potential for governments and their economies to unlock the power of youth travel to significant mutual benefit. Whilst some have realized this opportunity, many could do more to factor youth travel into their long term tourism strategy. Following consultation at the World Youth and Student Travel Conference 2011 in Barcelona, we look forward to developing and publishing a set of specific recommendations to help governments, official tourism organisations and business leaders take the next step.

We would like to thank our colleagues at UNWTO and the many professionals and practitioners that have contributed their valuable insights to this report and our important agenda.
INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade youth travel has seen rapid development. As the industry matures more research is available to help fill out the picture of the motivations, needs and behaviours of young travellers and the industry that serves them. It is clear from the research undertaken by WYSE Travel Confederation and UNWTO that youth travel has moved beyond its original status as a specialised tourism niche.

The social, cultural and economic value of youth, student and educational travel is increasingly recognised by employers, educational institutions, official tourism organisations and governments worldwide. More than any other market segment, youth and student travellers are leading with innovation and paving the way for responsible tourism as they take responsibility for the impact of their travel ambitions on climate change. These multiple, distinctive impacts of youth travel have much broader relevance to the global tourism agenda and governments across the world are increasingly taking a more active role in developing youth travel policies, products and marketing campaigns.

Yet there is more that can be done. WYSE Travel Confederation and UNWTO believe that there is great opportunity for governments, official tourism organisations and business leaders to further their engagement with youth travel to the economic and social benefit of their long term tourism policies and strategies.

In this report we review the economic, social and cultural aspects of youth travel. We begin by looking at why youth travel is important to the future of travel. We explore the economic, social and cultural benefits and offer a suggested road map for developing youth tourism for stakeholders, including official tourism organisations and governments. The report concludes with a selection of inspiring case studies that illustrate the power of youth travel.
Young people are invariably at the leading edge of change and innovation – and the travel industry is no exception. Young people think outside the box, push boundaries and experiment with the new. In an era of unprecedented challenge for the travel industry, youth travel represents not just an important market segment, but also a vital resource for innovation and change.

The travel industry is itself undergoing rapid change. Traditional vertical distribution chains are giving way to a more complex value network involving a wide range of different suppliers from within and beyond the travel sector. Travel is no longer solely dependent on the infrastructure of the old economy – airline seats, hotel beds and travel agents’ shelves. We are entering a new, flexible, networked economy in which ICT, local culture and society, education, work and play become part of the tourism value chain. In fact, the inter-relationships between travel, other economic sectors and society as a whole have become so integrated that we might conceive of a ‘value web’ rather than the old value chain.

**NEW VALUE WEB**

In the new tourism value web, value is created by linking actors inside and outside the tourism sector in different combinations to create and exploit new opportunities. Young people are often at the forefront of such innovation, because they are willing to cross boundaries and make new links. As early-adopting, heavy users of new technology, young people are pioneering the use of social networking sites and mobile media in searching for travel information and purchasing products.

**TRADITIONAL TOURISM VALUE CHAIN**

![Diagram of traditional tourism value chain]

**NEW VALUE WEB**

![Diagram of new value web]

**YOUTH: THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL**

In an era of unprecedented challenge for the travel industry, youth travel represents not just an important market segment, but also a vital resource for innovation and change.

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL**

Youth travel has grown rapidly in recent decades as living standards have risen and the populations of developing countries are starting to travel for the first time. Indeed, these first-time travellers are often characterised by being young and comparatively affluent.
The global youth travel industry is now estimated to represent almost 190 million international trips a year, and the youth travel industry has grown faster than global travel overall. By 2020 there will be almost 300 million international youth trips per year, according to UNWTO forecasts.

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The youth market therefore represents a major opportunity for future growth in the travel industry. With effective development and marketing, the potential of the youth market can be increased still further.

**WHY YOUTH TRAVEL IS IMPORTANT**

Youth travel is important because it is a market for the future – not just for the future development of the young people themselves, but also the places they visit. WYSE Travel Confederation research shows that:

- Young travellers often spend more than other tourists
- Young travellers are likely to return and give more value to the destination over their lifetime
- Young travellers are a growth market globally, while the spending power of older generations in Western economies may decline in the long term
- Young people are less likely to be deterred from travelling by terrorism, political and civil unrest, disease or natural disasters
- Young travellers are the pioneers who discover new destinations
- Young travellers are at the cutting edge of using new technology
- Young travellers gain cultural benefits from their travel, and contribute to the places they visit

UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation are convinced that youth travel has moved far beyond its original status as a specialised travel niche to become an important element of the travel mix in any tourism destination. One of the reasons for this is that travel underpins many different aspects of youth lifestyles. For young people:

- Travel is a form of learning
- Travel is a way of meeting other people
- Travel is a way of getting in touch with other cultures
- Travel is a source of career development
- Travel is a means of self development
- Travel is part of their identity – you are where you’ve been.

Young people see travel as an essential part of their everyday lives, rather than just a brief escape from reality. This has far-reaching consequences for the places they visit. Because of the way they travel, the social and cultural consequences of hosting young people are becoming even more important than the economic effects. The added value to be extracted from youth travel lies in innovation, positioning, cultural links, international trade and exchange, social support, education, learning support for local communities, and so on.

The following sections explore the broader economic, social and cultural impact of the expanding world of youth travel.
The economic value of youth travel lies in the unique character of the market. Young people are more adventurous, are looking to make contact with other people and discover new cultures, and they want to develop their own knowledge. Because young people are often driven to travel more, for longer periods of time and they often visit areas not frequented by traditional tourists, they can be of particular value to destinations around the world. A number of key observations can be made about the value of youth travel:

1) YOUTH TRAVEL IS HIGH VALUE
Research by UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation indicates that the international youth travel market generated US$ 165 billion in 2010. Young people themselves are often money poor but time rich, which means they spend longer in the destination than other tourists. The last WYSE Travel Confederation New Horizons survey indicated that young travellers spent a total of US$2,600 on their main trip, compared with an average of US$950 per trip for international tourists as a whole. Because young people often take much longer trips than most other tourists, they end up spending more. Young travellers visiting Australia for a stay of six months or more spent an average of AU$21,228 in the country in 2009. This compares with an average international visitor spend of AU$3,313 per trip.

One secret to this greater spending power is being able to tap into the resources of their (often time poor but money rich) parents and the ability to work to earn additional money during their travels. For example a survey by Global Gossip in April 2009 indicated that 36% of young travellers were funded at least in part by their family. The idea of parents paying for travel is now being extended into commercial gap year and volunteer travel products, and extending into the work experience market. An example of this is the extensive press coverage in the US and UK this year about the growing number of parents willing to pay upwards of US$9,000 to secure work placements for their children.

The high value of youth travel also lies in the ‘lifetime value’ that young people deliver to destinations through their travel career. They often return to the places they have visited in later life. In Australia, for example, research has indicated that 54% of young travellers return there.

2) YOUTH MARKETS ARE RESILIENT
When the going gets tough, the young keep travelling. The recent economic crisis has underlined again that young travellers are relatively intrepid, and are unlikely to be phased by economic problems, political unrest or epidemics (WYSE Travel Confederation, Industry Review no.1: Youth and student travel market 2011). In fact, there is even anecdotal evidence to suggest that young people may be stimulated to take more long trips when the economy is poor – if there are fewer job openings, many young people consider taking a gap year or gaining some work experience until the economy picks up again. Many are also engaging in what WYSE has termed ‘funemployment’ – using their redundancy money or savings to have time out until a new job comes along. These trends are supported by the study from Global Gossip, which shows that although some young travellers shortened their trips in the downturn, just as many decided to stay away longer.

The result is that youth markets tend to be less volatile than the tourism market as a whole. Figures from the WYSE Travel Confederation Industry Review indicated that although the youth sector was affected by the crisis, it generally declined less and recovered faster than mainstream tourism.

3) AN ECONOMIC IMPACT FELT AT LOCAL LEVEL
Because they travel for longer periods, young people also tend to spend a greater proportion of their total budget in the destination. The WYSE Travel Confederation research indicates that around 60% of youth travel budgets are spent in the destination. In some cases the proportion is even higher. Recent research by Tourism Australia indicated that backpackers spent 68% of their total travel budget in Australia.

One of the biggest factors in the economic impact of tourism for local communities is the degree of leakage from the local economy. Particularly in smaller economies in the developing world the extent of leakage can be high, as international companies often cream off a

The money that educational institutions earn from international students makes a valuable contribution to the educational system as a whole, allowing the host country to support facilities that it would often not be able to afford otherwise.
large proportion of the revenue from tourism. Young travellers often try and avoid international chains and spend their money directly with local suppliers. This tends to increase the local impact of their expenditure, as leakages are reduced and more money ends up with local businesses.

4) **Youth People Make an Important Contribution to Other Industries**

Young people often travel to study and/or work in the places they visit. Student travel is now being recognised as an increasingly important economic driver and the mobile and flexible workforce supplied by young travellers is becoming almost irreplaceable in some parts of the world.

In 2008 the Australian overseas student industry contributed $15.5 billion in export income to the Australian economy, according to Australian Education International (AEI). The 623,805 international students visiting the US in 2007/2008 spent US$15.54 billion to support their education and stay. UK international students are estimated to generate around $15 billion for the UK economy, and support almost 22,000 full time equivalent jobs outside higher education. Around $4.5 billion is spent directly with universities themselves. The money that educational institutions earn from international students makes a valuable contribution to the educational system as a whole, allowing the host country to support facilities that it would often not be able to afford otherwise. WYSE Travel Confederation research shows that the global higher education market is growing rapidly and that education away from home is increasingly attractive to students from both established and emergent economies.

Research in Australia has also shown that young people on working holiday schemes generate more jobs than they take in the host economy. In 2008 working holidaymakers generated a total of 28,000 jobs: 8000 more than the jobs they occupied. The jobs they take are also difficult to fill with local labour, particularly in rural areas.

5) **Youth People Often Attract Others to the Destination**

Young people have an important role in attracting other visitors to the destination. In Australia, for example, it was estimated that each young visitor taking a course in higher education was visited by an average of 1.3 people during their stay, generating an additional AU$1.2 billion for the Australian economy each year.

Young people also add atmosphere and ‘buzz’ to destinations, attracting other visitors and businesses. This effect has now been recognised in many cities across the world, and there are growing numbers of projects to relocate university facilities in city centres to act as hubs for cultural and creative activities. The provision of student accommodation is often also an important feature of such schemes.

This brief review shows that it is important to take a broader view of the economic impact of youth travel. As we have seen, the economic impact is not just about daily spend levels or the price category of youth travel accommodation, but the implications of longer stays, more extensive travel, a desire to consume local services and the likelihood that young people will attract other travellers and return themselves in the future.

Greg Richards has been involved with the WYSE Travel Confederation research programme for the past 10 years. He has produced reports on the global youth travel market, youth travel accommodation, language travel, volunteer travel, backpacker travel and the cultural impacts of youth travel. He founded the ATLAS Backpacker Research Group and is co-editor of The Global Nomad study of the backpacker market.
Tourism provides the opportunity for millions of daily interactions between tourists and hosts to create diverse socio-cultural understanding.

Over the past year, news headlines have been occupied with the efforts of young people around the world to bring about social, political and economic change in their respective countries. Social networks and technologies such as smartphones have proven powerful tools in these efforts, as well as the desire to participate, the capacity to face challenges and put personal differences aside in pursuit of a greater cause. It is therefore unsurprising that young people worldwide have applied similar principles in organising and carrying out their travel plans.

At a first glance, demographics do not appear to favour the growth of youth tourism in the West because of an increasingly ageing population. While this may be so, the age range for youth travel has in fact expanded considerably. With the increasing affordability and accessibility of educational travel programmes, children as young as eight or nine years old are gaining close-up experience of other countries, languages and ways of living. At the other end of the scale, young adults in these countries are continuing to live a ‘younger’ lifestyle for longer, putting off the responsibilities of adulthood such as raising children or buying property until later and continuing to travel as a youth traveller for longer. Besides, the recovery of world tourism from the recent years of economic crisis has mainly been driven by an increase in departures from the emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia and China. Statistics from these UNWTO Member States suggest that young people represent a considerable proportion of these new departures.

Tourism is not just another sector of the economy. It is a human phenomenon that has social implications.

Those working in the field of youth tourism will be aware of the long-held view by destinations worldwide that young travellers are at best an added extra to more lucrative high-end visitors and at worst, an irritation. Given the encouraging trends described above then, surely now is the time to seriously consider not just the increasingly profound economic impact of young visitors but the importance of youth travel for the global community too, so that destinations can learn how to extend a warm welcome to those who could well make repeat visits in the future.

Firstly, having to gain the means to travel for themselves means that young people will aim to experience and appreciate their journey as much as possible. Seeking new, unique experiences means trying new ways of living, eating and sleeping, discovering unfamiliar cultures or joining other young people en masse at large-scale events. This desire to gather, share intense experiences and learn creates the conditions for young people to develop tolerance, cultural awareness and a better understanding of international relations. Many businesses are starting to realise the value of study and work-abroad programmes, recognising that if these are structured properly, they can produce capable, resourceful and globally-aware future employees, ready to work in an ever-more
globalised and interconnected world. This, for example, is one of the objectives of the ERASMUS programme which for the past 20 years has enabled university exchanges within the European Economic Area for nearly 3 million students.

**BENEFITS FOR THE HOST COMMUNITY**
So while the benefits for travellers themselves are increasingly being recognised by educational institutions, parents and future employers, what positive impact can young travellers make on host communities? There is still much research to be conducted in this area, however a number of direct and indirect impacts can be observed.

Firstly, there are now more opportunities than ever before for young people to engage directly in development assistance, some examples of which have been presented in the various case studies in this report. When this is well structured and young people go properly trained and with realistic expectations of what they can do, the benefits for the host community and individual can be numerous.

Secondly, the intrepid nature of experienced young travellers leads them to visit parts of the world that are ‘off the beaten track’ or even unstable and dangerous. As we have seen, they are the most likely group to buy goods and services from local, independent vendors. In this way, young travellers help maintain a vital contact with the outside world, and more importantly, a source of income for local communities.

Thirdly, facing their expeditions with an open mind, and without prejudice is what leads young people to continue travelling at a time of crisis (whether man-made or natural). Consider, for example, the well documented case of young travellers who continued to travel in the aftermath of 9/11, including young travellers from the US who in most cases changed their travel plans, rather than cancelled them all together. While not all-together crisis-proof, the determination shown by young people to depart once the basic costs of travelling are covered should be a source of hope and encouragement for many destinations.

**THE EFFECT OF THE INTERNET**
The power of the internet to facilitate all of the above must not be underestimated. Budget airlines, long tried and trusted by young travellers, were among the first major players to exploit the innovative methods of planning and booking travel that the internet presented. Hotels, budget accommodation, travel agents and other providers have seen their sales models revolutionised in a similar way. Aside from the providers, the internet has also multiplied the opportunities for social interaction through travel. Consulting friends’ photos of past trips on Facebook, seeking ‘hidden gems’ on TripAdvisor, arranging to stay with locals through Couchsurfing or getting insider tips on countless local blogs helps young travellers to connect before, during and after their trip to local people and their knowledge to make informed decisions that enhance their travel experience.

**CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS**
As we have seen, the reasons for promoting youth travel in terms of the benefits it can bring to the individual and to the host community are quite clear. However, it is too simplistic to assume that young peoples’ experience of travel is always positive and that the process of self-enhancement is automatic. Unfortunately, all too often young travellers are subject to stereotyping, suspicion and poor service. With their power to mobilise contacts, expose scams and poor service and ultimately vote with their wallets, young travellers can no longer be considered as passive consumers. Providers in the tourism and travel industry should recognise that investing in quality services and well-trained staff is not just essential because it is profitable. It is also essential because of the social importance of providing young visitors with positive travel experiences.

The travel industry as a whole has the responsibility to provide the right conditions for this transformation to take place. This means the public and private sectors working together to provide quality services that are well adapted to the needs, means and expectations of young travellers. Joining promotion efforts, sharing information about visitor profiles and training staff to a high level are among some of the efforts that will help destinations to ensure that their development will be truly sustainable and the young travellers of today will continue to visit long into the future.
Learning a language is not just a great excuse to travel. It means getting to know the culture in the country where the language is spoken, living with the locals and often forging links that last long into the future.

According to the Spanish Institute for Tourism Statistics (IET), in 2010 more than 700,000 foreign nationals travelled to our country to study (37% of these came from France, Germany and the USA). From January to July 2011 the number of study visitors increased by almost 18% while spending for this group increased by an impressive 49%.

For any country that welcomes these visitors, this type of tourism meets many of the objectives of tourism policy especially in terms of diversification, de-seasonalisation and increased profitability. If we talk about study tourism purely from a language perspective, it also means that our language is being projected around the world, itself a fundamental objective of language policy.

The work of the Spanish General Secretariat of Tourism in the field of language tourism has been in progress for some time now. Following our first landmark study in 2001, language tourism was given an extra boost when it was included in the Spanish Cultural Tourism Promotion Plan for 2009-2012, compiled jointly between several key government ministries. This Plan underlined the importance of continued collaboration with the Cervantes Institute (www.cervantes.es), a relationship which started over 18 years ago. This collaboration has taken the form of cross-promotion, with a commitment by Tourspain to promote centres accredited by the Cervantes Institute via a language tourism channel on www.spain.info, a service which allows users to search for Spanish courses across Spain.

For twelve years now, we have been working with the Spanish Federation of Spanish language Schools for Foreign Nationals (FEDELE). This November, the 2nd International Meeting of Spanish Teaching Centres will take place in Valencia with the aim of connecting the teaching supply of FEDELE centres with universities, business and training schools in Spain’s key markets. This connection will enable us to reach a large amount of potential visitors to Spain for study and for leisure.

Finally, under our advertising campaign “I need Spain”, we are carrying out a range of dedicated marketing activities specifically for the promotion of language tourism. As our research has shown, this marketing is most effective when we associate the high quality of Spanish teaching in Spain with the quality of the overall tourism experience. During the period 2008-2011, Tourspain carried out more than 200 activities including direct marketing, familiarization trips, media visits, attendance at international tourism fairs and publications via the Spanish Tourism Council’s overseas offices to promote language tourism. These events were attended by more than 1,000 travel agents, 150 journalists and have reached over 150,000 consumers.

Spanish is already spoken by over 400 million people around the world and we are noticing a considerable increase in the number of students who are learning the language. This encouraging data, the excellent image of Spain as a tourism destination and the high quality of its teaching centres make the outlook for this sector very promising indeed.

Spain wants to be a pioneer in the expansion and consolidation of teaching Spanish as a foreign language.

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We look forward to welcoming you to Spain again soon.

www.spain.info
The Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) is the peak industry body representing Australia’s AUS$ 24 billion export tourism industry. It supports the inbound tourism industry by building better business relationships for its members through B2B facilitation, education, policy development, advocacy and industry development.

The youth market to Australia accounts for 26% of inbound visitors, constituting a valuable economic contribution to Australia’s tourism economy. Recognising its importance to the overall sustainability of Australia’s inbound tourism industry, the youth sector has been high on ATEC’s radar for nearly a decade and we are committed to providing innovative and valuable business opportunities that foster growth, prosperity and sustainability for Australia’s youth industry. Testament to ATEC’s dedication is the formation of the ATEC Backpacker & Youth Tourism Advisory Panel (BYTAP) in 2004, a volunteer panel which represents the critical link between the ATEC National Board, the youth tourism industry, the federal, state and territory marketing bodies and state and territory Backpacker Operator Associations.

BYTAP meets on a quarterly basis to examine and discuss the latest trends, policy issues, challenges and opportunities and importantly, to develop strategies and implement initiatives that support, develop and educate the industry. Some of BYTAP’s activities include the delivery of regional industry forums, conferences and organizing trade missions overseas.

ATEC also leads a number of other initiatives, such as the Australian Youth Tourism Exchange (AYTE). AYTE is an international B2B event that brings together the best of the best of Australian youth, backpacker and student products and services to meet with international buyers from all over the world on home soil. ATEC also plays a critical role in the youth sector as an unyielding political advocate on a range of policy and resource allocation issues affecting the youth and backpacker industry such as the reform of the working holidaymaker program, taxation issues, simplification of visitor visas and industry standards.

We are committed to fostering growth in the sector and the country’s government tourism marketing bodies have certainly played a vital role in positioning Australia as one of the most desirable youth destinations in the world. However, the success and strength of Australia as a youth travel destination should undeniably be credited to the industry itself. Passion, hard work, resilience, excellence, determination and collaboration have been and will continue to be key elements to ensuring the expansion of Australia’s footprint within the global youth travel arena. The objective is to ensure that youth travelers of today and tomorrow have the opportunity to discover and immerse themselves in the exceptional experiences this country has to offer. “There’s nothing like Australia!”

www.atec.net.au
Quality work abroad programmes are transformational, life enhancing and a hugely positive experience for the majority of young people who participate in them, as well as the the communities that host them. The protection and ethical treatment of young people travelling and working abroad is therefore of utmost importance. Removed from the familiarity and relative safety of home, the experience of travelling overseas to live and work can leave a young person out of their depth and subject to mistreatment. Sadly, sometimes things can go wrong.

Late in 2010, an Associated Press investigation into rumoured abuses of the American J-1 visa programme revealed a series of serious cases of mistreatment. Significant media attention surrounding this assured that the cases were very well-documented. Essentially, numerous loopholes in the system and lax standards allowed for many abuses on both the sending and receiving end of the visa program.

The US State Department responded and created a “Pilot Programme” with a special set of rules for a number of Eastern European countries to better regulate the J-1 programme, close operating gaps and oversee employers to improve standards for the student traveller. However, the abuse issues and subsequent tightening of regulations also led to a series of overly restrictive rules, often resulting in the rejection of a given student simply because the potential employer possessed an Eastern European-sounding surname.

Given the importance of Russia for the international work abroad community and our passionate belief that young people should be able to travel to work abroad freely and safely, the WYSE Travel Confederation started a regional chapter this year, with a focus on work abroad issues in its founding agenda. Our purpose is to give a unified voice to our Russian agent members, to work with important stakeholders such as the US Embassy in Moscow and harness the significant expertise of the WYSE Work Abroad sector association community. In addition, we will implement and reinforce our code of conduct and guidelines of best practices and standards for vetted Russian members both new and old. In terms of our relations with the US State Department and the Moscow Embassy, we plan to closely coordinate our efforts with the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, an organization that represents US sponsor organizations.

In June 2011, at our inaugural meeting in Moscow, a leadership team was created and we elected our chair. We brought together local agents, companies and recruiters sending students to the United States to work abroad to discuss common problems and create solutions to improve the situation.

In particular, the guidelines established a strict code of conduct for the agents as well as for the Chapter itself, stating that Members shall conduct their affairs in a manner which:

- is ethical and professional
- is mindful of reliable insurance, providing health and safety for the clients
- is consistent with the notion of providing a special duty of care for the safety of young participants and other young clients.
- does not harm the reputation or good name of WYSE Russia Chapter and its Members
- meets the standards set by quality control or licensing bodies with which the Member has voluntarily agreed to comply or which, by law, it is required to meet
- encourages respect for the world’s cultures, and
- is consistent with WYSE Russia Chapter’s recognition of the principles of peace, respect for the environment, universal respect for justice, and the rule of law, and for the fundamental human rights and freedoms, without distinction of age, ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, or religion.

The power of youth travel

WORKING WITH PARTNERS AND GOVERNMENT TO RAISE STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARD YOUNG PEOPLE WORKING ABROAD

By Steven Caron, Executive Committee WYSE Travel Confederation | Chair, WYSE Work Abroad

WYSE WORK ABROAD

- WYSE Work Abroad is the leading global forum and trade association for organisations involved in all aspects of work abroad, volunteer, internship, and work & travel programmes.
- Membership is open to specialists and companies actively offering work abroad programmes. WYSE Work Abroad members are active in over 40 countries worldwide.
- Member organizations of WYSE Work Abroad place tens of thousands of young people in culturally oriented, quality work abroad programs every year.
- WYSE Work Abroad members agree to its code of conduct, which signifies competence, integrity and fair business practices. Many of our members (both sponsors and agents) are involved in the Summer Work & Travel program in Russia.
- WYSE Work Abroad is a global not-for-profit organization and sector association of the World Youth Student & Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation.
One of our main motivations is to ensure that organisations involved in sending and receiving students all over the world do so ethically, and that governments understand the economic and cultural benefits of well-run work abroad programs. We see the current situation with the J-1 Visa program as being very serious, and want to ensure a positive outcome for all involved.

Following the meeting, Carye Duffin of the Council of International Educational Exchange and I, both board members of WYSE Work Abroad, along with several board members of the newly founded WYSE Russia Chapter, met with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to move the process of improving the situation forward.

With the advocacy efforts and unified voice of the WYSE Russia Chapter, U.S. officials have the incentive to work with better quality agents, who follow a strict code of conduct and provide significantly better job and student vetting.

There is more to do of course, and as the WYSE Russia Chapter continues to add members and develop more relationships, continued diligence will be required to ensure the success of all involved, including most notably the youth exchange workers.

The WYSE Russia Chapter demonstrates how a concerted group of ethical individuals and organisations can work with local and international governments to vastly improve not only the standards of their own industry, but more importantly the safety and enjoyment that young people should enjoy when embarking on a journey to work abroad.

WORK EXCHANGE REALLY WORKS!
Anna Danshina, a former USA Work & Travel participant, is now the Public Diplomacy Campaigns Manager at the British Embassy in Moscow. A great example of how programs like this can change a young person’s life.

**What made you decide to join the programme? Why did you want to participate?**

I had never been abroad before. It was my first international trip, I wanted to see another country, know more about the world, make new friends and improve my English. I had heard you could not only have the opportunity to work (my first work experience), I was able to choose the region where I wanted to work and then at end have an additional month to travel the US and be able to see many states and cities.

**When you decided to participate in the programme, did you already have specific goals in mind, personally and for your career?**

I did not have concrete plans but I already knew I wanted to work in an international organization. I was interested in international relations.

During my last two years of study I went on the Work & Travel USA program. After two summers of living and working in the USA my English improved tremendously and I was accepted into a Masters program at the St. Petersburg State University titled “International Relations with a focus on European Studies”. The program was taught entirely in English. If I had not had the English experience during Work & Travel I would have not been accepted into my Masters program.

**Please describe your experience – where you stayed, where you worked, the challenges and the memorable moments.**

I made many American friends including those with whom I worked. I met other participants from Russia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Mexico. I made friendships with other participants with whom I’m still friends till this day. I loved it all. Everything was new and interesting. It was an unforgettable experience with many once-in-a-lifetime moments. I also loved shopping… I was barely able to bring it all back.

At first it was challenging because I didn’t know English well. I tried hard to express myself and communicate, especially at work where I really needed to understand and be understood. I had studied English in school but didn’t have much practice speaking. After a few weeks I was able to breakthrough my barriers and start speaking freely.

**What kind of career success have you had after the W&T programme as well as your future plans/ambitions?**

After graduating, I immediately got a job with the British Consulate General in St. Petersburg in the Political and Public Diplomacy Section. Last year I was transferred to the British Embassy in Moscow and promoted to position of Public Diplomacy Campaigns Manager in the Press and Public Affairs Section. In a few weeks I start my studies at St Antony’s College, Oxford University. I received a two-year scholarship from the Hill Foundation. I’ll be studying for a Masters degree in Russian and East European Studies.

When I finish at Oxford I’d like to work at the United Nations’ International Atomic Energy Agency in the area of nuclear non proliferation.
The rise of Chinese tourism has gained the attention of travel, tourism, and hotel companies across the globe. According to UNWTO, 66 million Chinese will travel overseas this year, a 15% increase over last year, and 100 million will be global travellers by 2020. As a result of three decades of spectacular growth and development, China recently became the second largest economy in the world behind the United States. The country has also become a major market for the world’s leading international consumer goods companies. Many travel brands are trying to capture the attention of these very valuable new customer segments, but this not without challenges and disappointments, for various reasons.

**David is a leading travel technology and digital marketing company.** Working with travel companies to connect with Chinese consumers by leveraging technology, digital marketing, and social media, and by focusing on the growing importance of the Internet, changing consumer behaviour trends and the shift of traditional to more individual and experiential travel, both domestic and outbound China.

The way many Chinese consumers are finding out about new destinations and travel services, such as hotel or cruise brands, is via the Internet. With over 485 million Internet users in China (more than the entire population of Europe) more than 80% of Chinese travellers research and educate themselves about destinations and brands online. According to the Digital Influence Index, social media is the most influential medium in modern China, more than travel agents, newspapers, magazines, or TV.

Online and offline are not separate, and it is important to allow for different means of expression. Real time is a way of life for the Chinese, they need to get news and respond as things are happening. Even though the time spent on email is similar to the same age group in the US, tools that are anything less than real time seem outdated. Young Chinese consumers want answers; they want to feel in the loop, they want to feel valued. For brands, helping customers feel “in the know” is important, especially for the younger generations.

Travel is an important part of self expression, and how they spend their valuable time is part of demonstrating who they are.

**NEW CUSTOMERS, NEW WAYS OF TRAVELLING**
A structural change is happening in the way Chinese customers choose to travel. While large tour groups will continue to drive volume to destinations, a recent study by the Boston Consulting Group revealed that 95% of Chinese tourists are unsatisfied with the current travel products and services available both domestic and outbound. Package tours with busy schedules in multiple destinations are being replaced by multi-directional developments such as in-depth and theme tours. Chinese tourists are increasingly pursuing personalised tour experiences, shifting away from the traditional concept of a tour group. However, many first-time Chinese travellers see the benefits in joining a tour group which include not having to worry about complicated visa application processes, having to navigate in destinations where Chinese is not widely spoken, and the convenience of travel planning and competitive prices through travel agents.

**NEW CONSUMERS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES**
Younger Chinese people in particular are sophisticated, and the growing appetite for interesting Western brands, famous historic locations and art galleries are testimony to that. They seek respect and global integration, they want to be part of it all and they work hard - many at international firms as well as in entrepreneurial domestic companies.
For them, travel is an important part of self expression, and how they spend their valuable time is part of demonstrating who they are.

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG CHINESE CONSUMER GROUPS

The term "youth" is too broad. When brands contemplate who their ideal vs. actual consumer is, they have to be specific about which subset of "youth" they are targeting. To treat Chinese consumers as one, homogenous audience is disrespectful a waste of money. Every campaign must carefully consider the gulf of differences between the different age groups, shown in the table below.

Finally, how can travel companies leverage these trends in order to grow their businesses in the China market?

1. Don’t try too hard to be trendy just because you are communicating with young people. Many companies put too much effort into picking up trends rather than creating arenas for young people to express themselves. Never underestimate the subtle nuances in people’s desire to be different. “Being different” doesn’t mean the same thing for people born in the 70s, 80s and 90s.

2. Make use of the instinctive competitiveness of those born post-1980s. They tend to live their lives among their peers and compare themselves with them. For the marketer, this is the perfect basis for all sorts of consumer competitions such as online campaigns and contests: If the results are visible and comparable to peers, this will encourage them to engage in the game.

3. The younger the target audience, the less influenced they will be by so-called "celebrity endorsers". Instead, they will turn to the opinion leaders amongst their peers. This creates some challenges for marketers, since the new leaders of opinion may be harder to identify than the traditional celebrities. On the other hand, it creates opportunities in terms of credibility, closeness to the brand and creativity. It is possible to target the new opinion leaders by studying their communication patterns online. The key is to identify them and to build long term relationships with them.

So, as it turns out, Chinese youth are not so very different from young people all over the world.

www.dragontrail.com | www.chameleonstrategies.com

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Tools that are anything less than real time seem outdated.
The South African Youth Travel Confederation (SAYTC) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization formed from Backpacking South Africa (1998) to market South Africa globally as a preferred youth tourism destination and to establish a professional youth tourism industry based upon accreditation and guidelines. Membership is not limited to South Africa, but includes members from neighbouring Southern African countries: Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia.

The change in political landscape in the early 1990’s marked a new era of growth for the tourism industry as South Africa became an exciting new destination for global travellers. Rapid increases in arrivals from young explorers and backpackers stimulated supply-side growth in the backpacking and adventure travel industry. This in turn led to the establishment of Backpacking South Africa (BSA) in 1998 by a few backpacker and hostel owners. BSA, initially run on a voluntary basis, had as its main aim to coordinate the marketing of South Africa as a premier backpacking destination, organize the industry and lobby government on behalf of members.

These efforts paid off – youth arrivals increased, membership grew to 100 members and government took notice. As part of a wider focus on niche tourism, the National Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) initiated a research study in 2006 to determine the nature, size and value of youth and backpacking tourism in South Africa. The findings of the study indicated that, although relatively small in terms of total tourism arrivals, the backpacking and youth travel market represent a high yield and high growth market with significant developmental impacts to South Africa. These have included improved geographic spread into less visited areas, greater community involvement and social responsibility, local economic development, SME development, extended length of stay, and repeat visitation. It also focused more attention on emerging and high growth niche markets such as volunteering and educational tourism.

A stronger relationship between BSA and the DTI following the study led to incorporation of other bodies working in this field, allowing for wider representation, significant membership growth, and better alignment with international bodies. Furthermore, SAYTC has gained greater presence on the South African tourism landscape due to internal lobbying within government and industry, wider representation on the SAYTC board, and increased membership revenue. In addition, through substantial government support increasing numbers of SAYTC members were able to attend a variety of international trade events (including WYSTC) in key source markets since 2007. This placed South Africa firmly on the global stage of youth travel along with traditional youth destinations.

Through research, strategic partnerships with government and industry, improved market access, South Africa has managed to significantly grow its share of the youth tourism market, position itself as a responsible tourism destination, grow tourism export earnings and stimulate structured development of the sector.

www.saytc.co.za

Building partnerships to increase the country’s share in the youth market
CAPE TOWN’S BACKPACKER STUDY – REVEALING THE POTENTIAL OF BACKPACKER TOURISM IN CAPE TOWN AND THE REGION

The Tourism Department of the City of Cape Town is responsible for driving the local tourism mandate and supporting the City’s strategic sector strategy.

The study on the state of the backpacking and youth tourism market in Cape Town was commissioned by the City of Cape Town (CoCT) Tourism Department with the aim of identifying prevailing trends, challenges and opportunities in the backpacking and youth tourism and the appropriate measures and actions to develop the backpacking and youth tourism niche sector to its full potential. The study was conducted by Kamilla-SA Sport and Tourism Consultancy in partnership with the South Africa Youth Travel Confederation (SAYTC) and Backpacking South Africa.

Key secondary research findings at national level supported the findings about backpackers at the global level. South Africa’s top backpacking source markets are the United Kingdom, Germany, domestic travellers, the United States of America and The Netherlands. South Africa is often seen as a gateway to the rest of Africa and as a destination for humanitarian work.

Their preferred destinations in South Africa are Cape Town, followed by the Kruger National Park, Durban and Port Elizabeth, Jeffrey’s Bay, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Knysna, Coffee Bay and Plettenberg Bay.

Backpacking at local level: Cape Town and the Western Cape

Primary research was conducted to get a clearer profile of the backpacker at the local level. The results of this survey showed that:

- There are no gender differences in participation in backpacking;
- Backpackers are mostly young with 68% below the age of 30;
- They are relatively highly educated (50.4% with an undergraduate degree and 27.3% with a postgraduate degree), but;
- Their monthly earnings indicate that they are mostly at the early stages of their careers.

Other interesting facts are that backpackers:

- Travel mostly motivated by their desire to explore new places and to learn about other places and cultures.
- The main purpose of visit is holiday (69.3%) followed by visiting friends and family (11.4%) and volunteerism (10.2%).
- The main sources of knowledge about Cape Town are their own experiences and advice from friends and family.
- They have visited Cape Town an average of two times within the past five years.
- They mostly make use of backpacker hostels for accommodation (89%) with cost as the main consideration.
- They stay an average of 11 nights in Cape Town during their trip.
- They spend an average of ZAR 7737 in Cape Town with the highest spend being on food and drinks.
- They visit all the major Cape Town icons such as Table Mountain, the V&A Waterfront, Cape Point and others but show a real interest in engaging with locals during their stay.

Finally, the study also revealed a noticeable trend toward older backpackers with a high disposable income, demanding a more upmarket travel experience.

The study revealed South Africa as the most popular destination for volunteer tourism, with the average length of a placement one to three months, usually self-financed and with volunteers mainly hailing from the United States of America.

The current trend and flow of backpacking traffic to Cape Town shows that it is a high potential niche sector. In an effort to identify and map the path to recognition of the full potential of this niche sector, the study presented an action plan with the goal of creating an organised backpacking and youth travel sector, improving public-private sector relations and government support for backpacking tourism in the next 2-5 years and beyond.


Enquiries can be directed to Theuns Vivian, Manager: Destination Development at the City of Cape Town, at Theuns.Vivian@capetown.gov.za.
A few days ago, one of my students expressed the wish to study abroad for a consecutive semester, only this time in a different country. Although she did not explicitly mention her main reason for extending her time abroad, I suspect her recently-established friendship with a foreign exchange student to be her underlying motivation to now go to France. I know from my own experience how the foundations for lifelong friendships are established through study abroad programmes. Making friends is only one of the many social benefits of travel, which are often overshadowed by the more obvious economic contributions of young travellers to destinations. Unfortunately, to date, the social impact of youth travel to host communities has been given little attention by decision makers and academics alike. However, in the last decade, a growing body of evidence has emerged as to how young people themselves, and particularly backpackers, benefit from their travel experiences.

Whatever the motive for travel in this increasingly diverse sector of the global tourism, it seems that there are parallel socio-cultural benefits which can include increasing cultural awareness for young travellers as well as the acquisition of personal and linguistic skills. Furthermore, young people regularly feel that they have become more tolerant, patient and self-confident as a result of their travel experiences. They also commonly report meaningful experiences which are sometimes even perceived as pivotal moments in their lives. For many, backpacking across Europe or going abroad on a school or university exchange programme is their first travel experience outside the family circle. In research conducted by MODUL University Vienna, young travellers frequently pointed to their increased maturity in the form of a rite of passage into adulthood. This increased maturity is also often expressed by young travellers in terms of greater feelings of independence and increased ability to deal with stress and solve problems.

Being exposed to different cultures usually helps young travellers to understand better their own cultural values, biases and sometimes even their own physical selves, which in turn often contribute to shaping new identities. Just as backpackers commonly attach patches representing the places they have visited to their rucksacks, young people who undertake long trips figuratively collect pieces of places which all come together in the shape of new and fragmented multi-identities.

Thus the transformational effect of travel experiences among young people is undeniable. While some young travellers report having discovered their true self during their journey, others indicate that their trip has changed their overall lifestyle in some ways. New horizons open up to them and very often new paths and new careers arise as a result of travel. Indeed, the accumulation of experiences and the skills acquired through a trip abroad serve as sources of inspiration and drivers in their professional lives.

In the short term, a trip may be regarded as an adventure. Full immersion in foreign cultures provides young women and men with many opportunities to learn about others, about themselves and acquire the personal skills which will shape their future pursuits. In the long run, youth travel becomes powerful as young people feel a sense of self-fulfilment and personal growth and this is undeniably a powerful influence on the creation of future aspirations.

Xavier Matteucci is a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at MODUL University Vienna. His main research interests centre upon cultural tourism, tourism impacts, transformative travel, and second home tourism. Prior to his academic position, Xavier has worked for both inbound and outbound tour operating businesses for 5 years in France and Canada.
CONCLUSION | THE POWER OF YOUTH TRAVEL
HOW GOVERNMENTS, OFFICIAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS (OTOs) AND OTHER INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS CAN GET INVOLVED

Our research shows that youth travel is an important market for the future, not just because of the economic benefits it can generate, but also because it can make a real difference to the destination in cultural, social and development terms. The power of youth travel is clear.

To maximise these benefits, it is important that OTOs and governments work together with other public and private organisations to stimulate and develop youth travel. For OTOs themselves youth travel has a number of direct benefits related to tourism development and marketing, because it:

- Increases the economic impact of tourism
- Spreads tourism to new areas
- Combats the effects of seasonality
- Provides a steady, resilient tourism market
- Builds future tourism business which can deliver high lifetime value
- Stimulates innovation

A ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPING YOUTH TRAVEL

There are a number of steps that can be taken by OTOs to maximize the potential of youth travel to the tourism industry. In our view, these steps should be seen as part of a strategic approach to building relationships with youth travel suppliers and young travellers, which over the longer term will deliver even greater sustainable value. Many OTOs around the world are benefiting from strengthening their cooperation with the private sector in the field of youth travel. Action in the following areas has proved to bring positive results.

CREATING AWARENESS

The first step is to ensure that potential stakeholders in the youth travel industry are aware of the need to take a proactive approach to developing the market and the benefits that can be obtained. This is a key area where WYSE Travel Confederation and the UNWTO can provide support to OTOs. The range of research and reference materials developed by these bodies is a rich source of research evidence on the value and nature of youth travel. Keeping track of global trends with the UNWTO Barometer of World Tourism and the WYSE Travel Confederation’s Research programme is fundamental for gaining the latest information about the market and its needs in order to align stakeholders behind youth travel campaigns.

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

Once consensus has been reached about the need to develop youth travel, the next step is to identify those markets which can deliver the best value to the destination and its stakeholders. Usually, this evaluation will be based on research in the key market segments of youth travel.

A number of destinations have undertaken specific research on their own youth travel markets, but there is also a wealth of information available from research carried out at a global and regional level. The WYSE Travel Confederation Research Programme has produced a range of reports which highlight the characteristics, trends and value of youth travel as a global market in general, as well as specific sectors such as work abroad, language travel, volunteering and youth travel accommodation. These reports are available for members from the research section of the WYSE Travel Confederation website (www.wysetc.org).

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

One of the most effective steps is to establish a youth travel industry association or forum which can act as a focal point for information exchange, innovation and marketing and development activities. Most of the challenges traditionally faced by businesses in the youth travel sector such as lack of awareness, lack of resources dedicated to research and marketing can be overcome when businesses in a destination pool resources and share information.

The articles provided by the South African Youth Travel Confederation, the Australian Tourism Export Council’s Backpacker & Youth Tourism Advisory Council and the Spanish General Secretariat of Tourism in the report are just some examples of how effective coalitions can be constructed between government and commercial operators. Such partnerships can be very effective in creating flexible responses to rapidly changing youth travel demand.

CREATING A BUZZ ABOUT YOUTH TRAVEL

Once the structures for collaborative development of youth travel have been put in place, initiatives often need to be launched or ‘kick started’ through campaigns designed to create a buzz around travel to specific destinations.
Because young people are heavy users of social networking sites and other new forms of information and communication technology, one of the most effective ways of doing this is to use viral marketing. A number of leading youth brands have used viral games and similar techniques to create a buzz about their products.

**STRENGTHENING SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

Tourism is a highly interconnected sector of the economy, and the visitor experience will depend on a whole variety of areas provided by different public bodies (visa facilitation, border protection, police, health agencies, etc.). Recognizing this link is an essential part of enhancing visitors’ experiences and establishing a long-term relationship with them. Research has consistently shown that visa issues are among the main barriers to developing niche markets such as educational travel and work exchange.

UNWTO believes that while requiring other nationals to hold a visa before granting access is a fundamental right of all governments, close collaboration between States on visa facilitation and the progressive relaxation of visa requirements can provide a considerable stimulus for the development of States’ tourism industries and a boost to economic development. In particular, the potential for encouraging more tourists to visit a country include:

- abolishing visas for as many nationalities as possible
- making visas obtainable on arrival for as many nationalities as possible
- handling visa processing in a highly friendly and efficient manner
- making visas free or cheaper than those of competitor destinations

The Canadian Student Work Abroad Programme or Tourism Australia’s latest youth immigration advocacy campaign (presented in this document) are examples of the strong linkages between youth travel, work and education and the steps that can be taken by national governments to encourage this kind of tourism.

**CREATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

It is increasingly important for destinations to create long-term relationships with their visitors. This is even more important in the case of young people, who are likely to return to the destination later in their ‘travel career’.

The key to relationship marketing is to build up a bond between travellers and the destination brand. For young people, interaction with the local community is often a fundamental step in this process. WYSE Travel Confederation research has shown that meeting local people is the most important motivation for young travellers, and as demonstrated in the UNWTO article ‘Beyond backpacking…’, encouraging this interaction can bring significant benefits for host communities and travellers alike, not least of which is the increased probability of repeat visits.

**EFFECTIVE MARKETING**

The design of specific marketing campaigns can be very important in developing and maintaining interest in the destination. This involves a number of important elements, including:

- **Communication**

As Tourism Australia notes in its analysis of the youth travel market:

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Our research shows that youth travel is an important market for the future, not just because of the economic benefits it can generate, but also because it can make a real difference to the destination in cultural, social and development terms.
‘Digital channels need to be core to any communications strategy as the internet is emerging as the centre of the young adult’s world.’

In addition, mobile access is becoming increasingly important for ‘Generation Y’. As a result, Australia has a presence on Twitter (SeeAustralia) and Facebook (with 385,500 fans) and it targets ‘opinion leaders’ - young people in important positions in the media, fashion and blogging spheres. Tourism Australia has also recently created a new role – Head of Social Media - emphasizing the importance of these platforms in its strategy to engage young travellers.

The Hostelworld case study in this volume also provides information on the way in which they have been innovating the hostel product through the use of social media and new marketing initiatives.

Image

Getting the product noticed in a crowded marketplace means you have to build brands and associate them with youthful themes – creativity, fashion, sport, fun, etc. Kilroy’s “Explordinary” campaign and Hostelling International’s “say HI to the world” are two examples in this report.

Content

Young people are keen on being able to customize information through user-generated content. Sites such as Lonely Planet’s Thorn Tree provide a mass of information which is useful to other travelers and helps link users to particular sites and to each other. The video content generated by the “Best Job in the World” campaign (see above) also illustrates how effective users can be in generating content.

Linking with other networks

Because it is often difficult to target networks of young travellers abroad, partnerships with organizations that already have these contacts can be important. For example, travel companies can usefully tie up with information sites in their target markets to provide content and activities for mutual benefit. Potential links include student sites, cultural events listings and city guide sites that attract a lot of traffic from young people.

Linking youth travel to other sectors

Youth travel is a benefit not just to the travel industry, but also to many other industries, as well as the cultural and social life of the destination. It is therefore important that OTOs and government are involved in enhancing the links between youth travel and areas such as education, volunteering, creative industries, urban and rural development and sport.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

This roadmap for developing youth travel is exactly that – an indication of the many different routes that can be taken by industry stakeholders seeking to maximize the value of youth travel. It is clear that really effective youth travel development requires a holistic and integrated approach that brings together a range of public, private and voluntary sector organizations. Ideally a clear focus needs to be developed for youth travel product development and marketing, as the case studies presented in this volume indicate. This is not an easy task, but our research also indicates that the potential rewards are great.
The social importance of youth travel was identified by Experiment in International Living founder, Donald B. Watt, in 1932 when he saw the need for a new kind of study, “not of the relations between states but of the relations between individuals of different cultures”. Watt’s vision of a better world depended on the capacity of young people to learn to live peacefully together. The Experiment has consistently fostered the building of understanding between and respect for people of different cultures and in 1989 was recognized as a Peace Messenger by the United Nations General Assembly.

The homestay concept, pioneered by Watt, has long been the hallmark of Experiment programs. Today the homestay is widely accepted as one of the most effective means of learning about people and cultures. Community is a logical extension of family and so, guided by the principle that “We go to learn and not to teach”, community service is central to many Experiment programs.

Experiment high school group programs take place in 30 countries and include, for example, small-scale construction projects, work on sustainable community development projects, teaching in local schools or planting trees for habitat rehabilitation.

In 2004 members of The Experiment in International Living Federation (Federation EIL) launched the program Volunteers for International Partnership to offer individuals opportunities to merge intercultural learning through travel with community service in health, social services, environment and education. Programs are available in 20 countries and combine language immersion, homestays and host project placements with local co-workers and international volunteers.

With funding from the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, Federation EIL completed a research project to explore and assess intercultural outcomes in service programs. The full report can be accessed at http://experiment.org/resources.html. Analysis of the data strongly supports assertions that:

- Intercultural experiences are life-altering and impact, among other things, academic and career choices.
- Service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and hosts beyond traditional exchanges and thus affect all parties involved.
- Returnees often engage in activities that further impact on others.

Over the course of eight decades, Experiment programs have had a profound effect on tens of thousands of young people. They in turn impact individuals, families and communities worldwide. Friendships are made, stereotypes are challenged, and lives are changed. As participants return home and engage in socially oriented activities, their influence on others multiplies significantly the power of each experience.
STA Travel is a global travel specialist with 30 years’ experience advising young people on holidays and adventures abroad.

By the time STA Travel really started taking sustainability seriously it had moved from a fad to be part of mainstream “business dialogue”. It was not just about “offsetting carbon footprint”, but finding a practical and measurable approach to sustainable tourism.

The drivers
The real catalysts that compelled the company to strengthen its commitment to sustainable tourism came from three places:

- Dialogue with our customers. They were looking for more opportunities to “give back” through fulfilling personal commitments of their time.
- Our annual global eNGAGE survey to measure how people think about our company.
- The prompting of one of our global partners, GAP Adventures, via its non-profit organisation Planeterra which has developed a great project working with communities in and around Cusco.

Partnerships
The combination of market pull, staff push and personal insight led us as a company to establish a responsible tourism product as one of the key planks in our overall sustainability strategy. We quickly moved on to partnering with Planeterra to build a program that would be assessable to our customers and engage our staff.

Two years later we have completed US$80,000 of fund raising for one major community project in Thailand (the building of a community centre in a village devastated by the 2006 tsunami). We have sent over 50 of our staff out to volunteer on various projects around the world and we are about to launch our latest “Travel With Purpose” brochure which offers over 80 volunteering options to customers. The response has been overwhelming.

Taking action
The Responsible Tourism plan is one facet of our commitment to sustainability. Our goal is “to become the number one sustainable retail travel agent by 2015”. To achieve this over the next four years we are also focusing our efforts around energy consumption and carbon emissions, recycling and waste management and paper consumption. Across all of our businesses we have built a “bottom up”, Green Plan driven by our staff. Already, significant progress has been made with 12% of all savings being put back into support the various community based projects the company is involved with across the world.

Our commitment to sustainability is clear and simple:

- Only do it if you mean it.
- Make sure that the business is involved in projects which are externally verified as genuine and ethical with a clear long term sustainable objective.
- Adopt best practice and use third party experts to measure and verify the results.
- Embrace it fully – it’s not a top led initiative; it’s a total company culture change.

www.statravel.com
Our own analysis of these figures, using student week data provided by our members, demonstrates the impact English language learners have on the local economy of many areas. Perhaps unsurprisingly, London’s economy was boosted by almost £794m last year, accounting for almost half of the sector in the UK. Smaller cities and towns can also benefit enormously: English learners were worth almost £90m to the university city of Cambridge; almost £70m to Edinburgh; more than £150m to Bournemouth on the South Coast, more than £196m to Sussex, £63m to the South West and £72m to Yorkshire. Furthermore, English UK’s private sector members saw a 4.6 per cent in the number of student weeks in 2010.

We have also worked to raise standards. Together with the British Council we created Accreditation UK, the world’s most rigorous inspection scheme for English language providers. It is the only scheme to insist upon seeing every teacher in the classroom, and it inspects a school’s resources, management, financial probity, welfare systems and accommodation.

All English UK members must pass this inspection, which means young people and their families can be reassured that they will get the best possible teaching and care during their stay. Together with our new Partner Agency Scheme, which builds a closer relationship with the very best study abroad agents, we believe this quality assurance encourages more young people to choose our members when selecting an English language provider abroad.

English UK works closely with other bodies to represent the sector’s interests, including through the English Language Promotions Group, whose other members are the British Council, Visit Britain, and UK Trade and Investment. We have been doing a great deal of lobbying to mitigate recent changes in the visa system. As an organisation, we will continue to help our members and potential students predict and adapt to changes in market conditions in this way.

www.englishuk.org
Our new brand strapline is ‘discover the real hostel experience’, inviting each individual hosteller to have his or her own unique feelings in relation to the hostel, the people and the culture they visit. With this in mind, and the evolving of new ways to communicate, Hostelling International has chosen to focus its communication on social media platforms. Most young people today have never been offline, which has had the effect of making the world smaller in many ways. They are used to being able to interact, comment and give feedback direct to the source, and also recommend and share their experiences with friends instantly. Giving guests who book online the possibility to comment and rate their hostel stay, and give fellow travellers tips on what to do, eat or see have become quite normal, but Hostelling International posts all this directly online for everyone to see.

All of this is going to take Hostelling International into the future, building on its age and experience while remaining young at heart and innovative.

www.hihostels.com
In June 2011, Conservation Volunteers was delighted to be awarded the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Ulysses Award for Innovation in Tourism Governance. This prestigious award recognised a particular project in Victoria, Australia, which has involved thousands of international and domestic volunteers.

The Island Reserve was donated to Conservation Volunteers in August 2006 by a visionary Australian, Jim Whyte. His vision was for Conservation Volunteers to rehabilitate the degraded landscape and return it to full environmental health. To date, The Island Reserve project has assisted over 5,000 travellers and community members to connect with our environment while achieving very real conservation outcomes. Amongst many achievements, over 160,000 trees have been planted at the site to date – including 2,000 planted for, and by, delegates at the World Youth and Student Travel Conference 2006 (Melbourne).

Many people may initially be surprised by the connection between Conservation Volunteers and the tourism industry – we don’t necessarily sound like natural and immediate partners. The truth is that, while Conservation Volunteers is often not seen as a ‘traditional’ part of the tourism industry, our involvement over the last fifteen years shows a really strong commitment to combining conservation and tourism.

We’ve chosen this course because we think that involving people is the very best way to help them understand the problems facing our environment, and to care for it. For young people in particular, travelling the world has become an accepted rite. Encouraging them to volunteer along the way helps build their understanding and their lifelong commitment to causes such as the environment. Of course, the travel industry too has a vested interest in conservation and needs to actively engage with environmental protection and understanding.

In 2006 we expanded into New Zealand and found that once again, our partners from WYSE Travel Confederation were able to help us get programs up and running successfully.

www.conservationvolunteers.com.au
KILROY
BACK TO THE FUTURE

The youth and student travel market constantly evolves and presents operators with new business challenges. Online distribution cut margins and challenged what used to be a unique value proposition; student flight tickets at rock bottom prices. One solution is to focus 100% on online distribution and another response to this challenge is to broaden the target group of customers.

KILROY decided that neither of these strategies was right for our business or our customers. Instead, our path forward came from looking back. After the Second World War, Nordic students were motivated to work for and campaign for the international exchange of students. By getting to know other cultures and people, the students would both grow as individuals and understand the importance of peaceful coexistence.

Based on this special spirit, this desire to contribute and learn from each other that we recognise in our customers - KILROY has defined its role as helping the youth and students of today maximize their personal potential, both as individuals and as multi-cultural, global citizens that will shape the world of tomorrow. This means keeping our business focused on young people and developing our products and services. Amazing results occur when students cross borders and form themselves through travel experiences, volunteer projects, language courses, university education, work or other situations where they challenge themselves mentally, physically or socially.

To reposition KILROY’s role among youth and students is not done overnight, but the first major step has been taken by building KILROY education for study and internships abroad. We think the path we have chosen will be the right one for our customers and our business.

www.kilroy.eu/about/be-explordinary

‘Be explordinary’ is our call to you, who sets high demands for yourself and for your own development. For you, who takes the winding road instead of the freeway because that’s where the lessons in life are to be found. ‘Be explordinary’ is a way of thinking. It is a lifestyle where you take on the challenges you encounter on your path - wherever in the world they may be.

(http://www.kilroy.eu/about/be-explordinary)
Despite this fearlessness, we know that safety, security and the certainty that there’s a bed waiting at their chosen destination are also hugely important.

HOSTELWORLD
CONSTANTLY INNOVATING FOR YOUNG TRAVELLERS

As the leading provider of accommodation to the budget and independent youth travel (BIYT), sector Hostelworld.com has serviced the accommodation needs of the youth traveller for over a decade. On any given night we are booking over 25,000 young travellers into budget accommodation in over 180 countries worldwide.

We identified the huge opportunity in this sector early on and we have continued to innovate ever since. Providing a service to one of the fastest growing and most dynamic groups of travellers keeps any online business on its toes. We are constantly finding new ways to keep our customers coming back. Hostelworld.com is now available in 22 languages with global customer support available on the site and through the various social media channels.

Just out - our new Facebook app gives fans the freedom to book on the social networking site itself instead of having to click out to the site - a necessity according to any research into buying behaviours in the social media space. We’ve also established a strong foothold in the mobile space with the launch of both our mobile sites and our smart phone apps. We know that social media and mobile initiatives are hugely important in meeting the needs of the youth traveller – and we aim to please.

Our research corroborates the key reasons why the youth travel sector is such a valuable one: Disposable income, a fiercely strong sense of independence and an insatiable appetite for adventure all ensure that regardless of what’s going on in the world, young people continue to travel. Worldwide recessions, natural disasters, war and conflict – it doesn’t seem to matter what’s thrown at them, the youth traveller exhibits a resilience like no other.

That said, we know that security and safety in the knowledge that there is a bed waiting at their chosen destination are also hugely important. So, in 2010 we became the first and only hostel booking website to offer a $50 Booking Guarantee. We are so confident that the bed is 100% guaranteed we’re willing to pay $50 back for any reservation that isn’t as it should be when the guest arrives. We have also built the most respected rating system in the online hostel space. Our 4 million reviews are by guests for guests. Only Hostelworld bookers provide reviews – guaranteeing the authenticity and accuracy of each and every review. And our Hoscars are regarded as the world’s most prestigious hostel awards, recognising top hostels around the globe.

We are proud of what we have achieved for our customers but we are also immensely proud of our customers. In a world which really does throw it all at the youth traveller they’re proving that it really doesn’t matter. It’s simply a case of ‘have backpack, will travel’ where they’re concerned and good on them!

www.hostelworld.com
When we started, our strategy was to consider the brand and its positioning right at the outset. We realized that as well as being youthful and appealing, fun and cool, young people also wanted the reassurance that there was a reliable organization behind the brand that would provide excellent service at affordable prices in a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. Today, our research tells us that the brand is easily recalled for the majority of Mexican students from 18 to 25 and many young couples in their 30s.

Thinking about our brand and our future ambitions for the organization as we established our business was an important move. With a strong brand we were able to extend our business to other activities related to youth travel like hostels, educational services and language schools.

Although the brand is Spanish in name, it has already started to gain recognition amongst international travellers. This brand recognition is growing, fuelled by the internet and the positive experiences of our customers.

We have carried our brand values through to our online marketing efforts – apart from the main social media actions, like Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, YouTube videos, SEO, Google AdWords and mobile applications, MJ has concentrated on using a friendly language and navigation structure. MJ is working to create a social network among all our clients where travel experiences can be shared and young people can meet, learn or buy.

Enhancing youth mobility
MJ is participating in the creation of a youth travel division in the Ministry of Tourism. Based on examples from other countries the purpose of this is:

- To facilitate the supply of tourism products that are specialized or related to youth travel
- To identify all those political and legal obstacles, like visas, residence permits and licenses for a wide variety of business that limit the possibility of the local and international youth mobility.
- To determine and create the necessary links and relationships among different ministries, like education, health, human rights, transport, ecology, foreign affairs and the central government, in order to release the necessary synergies to promote youth travel.
- To promote the official use of the ISIC card in most universities in the country as the only official student identity recognized by UNESCO.
- To create of a solid and reliable data base that will facilitate the mobility of national and international youth travelers.

www.mundojoven.com
In order to achieve these objectives, our organization set up its own Student Exchange Training Department and Student Travel Services Department.

We partnered with Egyptian universities to develop our educational and work exchange programmes for students in different specialisms and we particularly focused on extra-curricula activity. This opened new avenues for collaboration with colleges, universities and technical institutes abroad. With the supreme council of universities, we now take a leading role in organizing and advising all students taking part in work and educational exchange.

At the same time, we organise diverse international educational programs, seminars and educational tours here in Egypt. Recent political turmoil in the region means these have become even more important for young people who cannot travel abroad for various reasons.

Through the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) we provide a range of information and services including discounts to historic, cultural sites and national parks. Eligible students and young people travelling within Egypt are entitled to considerable discounts on intercity public transport and flight tickets.

Our partnerships have enabled us to keep students and young people mobile and culturally connected during these times of significant, widespread change.
The SWAP participant who finds work in Canada will, within a year, return to their home country a more experienced employee, and possibly able to perform new tasks that they otherwise might not have learned.

**CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS**
**LEARNING NEW SKILLS AND CONTRIBUTING TO CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

Though not immune to the effects of the global recession, the Canadian economy has weathered it better than others. As a result, many Canadians, particularly young Canadians, are looking for opportunities to have a positive economic and social impact on countries whose economies have been more deeply affected than their own.

One such tool for positive economic and social impact has been the Student Work Abroad Program (SWAP) of CFS-Services. SWAP is Canada’s largest working holiday program through which CFS-Services sends approximately two thousand Canadian students abroad for working opportunities.

At the same time, CFS-Services hosts a greater number of foreign students seeking opportunities to work in Canada. During this year alone, CFS-Services will have hosted nearly 5,000 foreign students.

The economic impact of SWAP is self-evident. Canadian students travelling abroad bring new money into the visiting economy. And, though the Canadian participants in SWAP are taking jobs in their destination country, we have heard anecdotally that most SWAP participants spend most of the money they earn while working in their host country. Thus, the money earned by SWAP participants has largely stayed in the local economy.

SWAP’s inbound program, through which CFS-Services hosts students from abroad, also has an economic benefit to the countries from participating students. Comparatively speaking, Canada’s job market has been relatively robust during the recession. Many inbound SWAP participants will find obtaining work in Canada to be easier than obtaining work in their home country.

The students who obtain work in Canada can then, if necessary, send money home to their families. Each student who finds work in Canada through SWAP is also one less person looking for work and potentially utilizing the social safety net of his or her home country. Lastly, the SWAP participant who finds work in Canada will, within a year, return to their home country a more experienced employee, and possibly able to perform new tasks that they otherwise might not have learned.

Every year SWAP leads to several thousand Canadians becoming educated about foreign destinations, while many thousands more students from abroad are educated about Canada. As the participants of SWAP, both those from Canada and those from abroad, return to their respective homes and share their experiences with friends, this cross-cultural understanding will grow exponentially.

**www.cfs-fcee.ca**
When it comes to motivations for travelling, groups express similar motivations: personal motivations 43%, price 25.5%, recommendations of friends and relatives 18%.

For specific services, the internet plays the most important role in accommodation with search engines being heavily used. Search is also important in car rental but social media has much less influence, especially amongst the 24-34 group (58%).

Traditional agencies now play a marginal role as a source of information for planning: The younger the traveller, the less the value perceived from traditional agencies.

It seems clear that there are similarities between the 18-24 group and the 24-34 group, while these differ from the total population. Nevertheless, the 24-34 group tends to act with much more independence, with the highest degree of confidence in planning and booking online.

The lack of relevance of traditional media (TV, newspapers, radio, guides) is remarkable, accounting for only 10% of their media. Brochures are also totally irrelevant except when we talk about cruises. The same marginal role is played by official tourism offices (less than 2%).

These hard facts should be a “wake up” call to those in charge of promoting destinations or marketing travel products, which unfortunately often seem to be stuck in the past, unable to ride the digital wave.
The power of youth travel

POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR GLOBAL TOURISM

This major new publication from UNWTO is a guide to the major themes in world tourism today. Through 11 chapters, it presents an overview of topics ranging from sustainable tourism to social networks or emerging markets to creating a successful destination brand. Examples of UNWTO’s work in key areas are highlighted throughout the publication, and these are complimented by case studies and opinions from business leaders, destinations management organizations, academics and NGOs.

In this comprehensive publication, UNWTO is proud to include contributions from over 30 Affiliate Members from around the world, as well as input from experts from the UNWTO Secretariat.

Policy and Practice for Global Tourism is aimed at decision makers working in the public and private sectors alike, as well as those who are simply interested in learning more about this fast-moving and dynamic sector of the global economy.

The publication is available to consult in electronic format in the UNWTO at e-Library www.e-unwto.org to which Affiliate Members can benefit from free access.

Policy and Practice for Global Tourism is now on sale through the UNWTO Infoshop at www.unwto.org/infoshop at the price of 50 EUR. UNWTO Members can benefit from a 50% discount on all purchases through the Infoshop.

To find out more about becoming an Affiliate Member of the World Tourism Organization visit www.platma.org

PLATMA - UNWTO AFFILIATE MEMBERS PROGRAMME

UNWTO Affiliate Members Programme presents www.platma.org, the professional online network for the Organization’s Affiliate Members. The network was launched in January 2011 in collaboration with SEGITTUR and provides a space for the public and private sectors in global tourism to meet, share knowledge, experience and best practices using a range of multimedia tools.

Platma is now open! If you work in an affiliated organization, please email platma@unwto.org to register yourself and your colleagues. Each Affiliate Member organization is eligible for up to five individual user accounts. Guests can also be invited to participate for a certain period of time.

If you would like more information about platma or you wish to discover the benefits of affiliation to UNWTO, we will be happy to help you. Please contact: UNWTO Affiliate Members tel: +34 915678167 / 243 email: platma@unwto.org

In cooperation with
Wyse Travel Confederation is committed to understanding the ever-changing characteristics, motivations and needs of young travellers and the industry that supports them.

The Confederation and its sector associations gather, analyse and share important research data and market intelligence with their members, academics, corporate and government decision makers and the general travelling public.

Our investment in research and market intelligence informs the policies, services and products which make international travel and educational experiences exciting, safe, accessible and affordable for young people.

### Highlights

To compliment our existing research initiatives and provide members with the latest industry intelligence, we have established a partnership with industry research specialist StudentMarketing.

1) **Industry Review Series**  
A quarterly research-based industry review from secondary sources, compiling recently available data on industry matters that affect member’s business (youth travel market dynamics, pricing, customer preferences and marketing).

2) **Survey**  
Primary research to source up to date data from youth specialist businesses across all sectors, globally.

3) **Research on Demand**  
Wyse Travel Confederation members can commission their own research project, particular to their business needs at a discounted rate.

**Wyse Travel Confederation**  
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THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO)
The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 154 countries, 7 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 400 Affiliate Members.

UNWTO AFFILIATE MEMBERS
UNWTO Affiliate Members bring together over 400 companies, educational & research institutions, destinations and NGOs whose activities are related to tourism and which contribute to the UNWTO their knowledge and expertise to promote the development of tourism that’s responsible, sustainable and accessible for everyone. Over 80 countries are represented among the Affiliate Members, the world’s premier forum for exchanging tourism knowledge.

AFFILIATE MEMBERS PROGRAMME
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WORLD YOUTH STUDENT & EDUCATIONAL (WYSE) TRAVEL CONFEDERATION
WYSE Travel Confederation is a not-for-profit membership association and the world’s largest network of youth and student travel providers. We have over 600 members in 120 countries serving over 10 million young people and students, every year, worldwide.

The Confederation’s mission is “to increase international understanding through the promotion of travel and educational opportunities for students and youth”.

We are dedicated to supporting the global industry and creating new opportunities for youth and student travellers worldwide.

Members of the Confederation work through specialist sector associations including Study Abroad, Work Abroad, Cultural Exchange, Language Travel, Youth Travel Accommodation, Au Pair and Travel Insurance.

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