

FEBRUARY 1, 2024

9:30 AM - 04:00 PM EST (UTC-5)

# STUDENT CONFERENCE 2024

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT PARTNER:



JOHNSON & WALES  
UNIVERSITY





# RISE TRAVEL INSTITUTE 3RD ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZER

**RISE Travel Institute** is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring responsible, impactful, sustainable, and ethical travel through education. Our award-winning online curriculum consists of a 10-week cohort-based Flagship Certificate Program, thematic short courses on sustainability and anti-oppression in travel, and place-based conscious travel short courses. These programs are designed to encourage travelers and travel professionals to think deeply and critically about sustainability and justice issues related to travel and tourism using a systems approach and decolonial principles. Additional programming includes Experiential Journeys for our alumni, a professional development program for educators, a study abroad pre-departure program, and the production of educational resources on sustainable travel and tourism. We envision a world where travel, when welcomed, is a force for positive change for communities, ecosystems, and travelers.

## ABOUT THE EVENT PARTNER

**Johnson and Wales University's Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies** provides students with a broad-based foundation in the current fundamentals of tourism development and hospitality management. Housed in the university's College of Hospitality Management, the curriculum prepares students to work in all facets of the exciting, fast-paced tourism and hospitality industry.



# RISE TRAVEL INSTITUTE 3RD ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

**The 3rd RISE Annual Student Conference** will be held in partnership with the Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies, College of Hospitality Management at Johnson and Wales University from 9:30 am-4:00 pm ET on Thursday, February 1, 2024.

The RISE Travel Institute Student Conference is an annual event where students from the **Flagship Certificate Program in Sustainability and Anti-Oppression in Travel** present their capstone projects to the community. This year, the conference will commence with opening remarks from Dr. Vincie Ho, Executive Director of RISE Travel Institute, and Michael Sabitoni, Chairperson of the Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies at Johnson and Wales University. Subsequently, there will be a presentation of RISE's 2023 impact report. To mark the beginning of our presentations, Wesley Espinosa, Executive Director at the Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST), will deliver a keynote address that dives into the importance of taking an equitable approach to destination management and challenging our concepts of community. The morning session will mainly feature presentations by undergraduate students from Johnson and Wales University. In the afternoon session, other RISE Flagship alumni – comprising seasoned tourism professionals and graduate students specializing in sustainability – will lead presentations.

The purpose of the capstone project is to research and investigate a pressing justice issue present in the travel and tourism industry, analyze the issue critically using theories and concepts from the RISE Flagship Program, identify the systemic cause(s), share reflections and recommendations, and/or propose sustainable and equitable solutions.

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



## MORNING SESSION

- 9:30 AM **OPENING REMARKS**
- 9:45 AM **RISE IMPACT REPORT**
- 9:55 AM **WESLEY ESPINOSA\***
- 10:10 AM PAMELA PEREZ
- 10:20 AM RYAN COMERY
- 10:30 AM CHLOE LANDRY
- 10:40 AM JORDEN PENCO-MARSHALL
- 10:50 AM MICHELLE HILL
- 11:00 AM SIERRA MESSINA
- 11:10 AM EMILY VILLA
- 11:20 AM LINDSAY COLLINS
- 11:30 AM LAURA KELLY
- 11:50 AM LAURA RANKIN
- 12:10 PM **LUNCH BREAK**

## AFTERNOON SESSION

- 1:00 PM NICOLA STEENKAMP
- 1:20 PM BERNARDA BUSTILLOS
- 1:40 PM JOSEPH KOCH
- 2:00 PM KELLY CHRISTIAN
- 2:20 PM ZACHARY PARRETT
- 2:40 PM JILLIAN SPRATT
- 3:00 PM TANNER CATERINA-KNORR
- 3:20 PM SERENA MANNA
- 3:40 PM SELMA BERRADA
- 4:00 PM **CLOSING REMARKS**

*\*Keynote Speaker*

This is a hybrid event.

In-person: The SEEM Lab, JWU Campus, 261 Pine Street Providence, RI 02903 | Virtual: Zoom

# WESLEY ESPINOSA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## IT TAKES EVERY VILLAGE: PLACING COMMUNITIES AT THE HEART OF RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Born in Los Angeles to a first-generation father and a mother from rural Appalachia, Wesley Espinosa, the Executive Director of the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), draws inspiration from the familiar proverb, “it takes a village,” to guide his approach to responsible tourism. This proverb emphasizes the need for community effort to provide a safe, enriching environment for a child's healthy development, and it parallels Mr. Espinosa's vision for tourism.

With a background in human rights and international development, his view of tourism and community veer from the status quo. In his keynote, Mr. Espinosa will delve into thought-provoking ideas and questions shaped by his personal experiences, like: How can tourism management be inclusive of every member of a community, especially the most marginalized? Why are immigrant and refugee communities important to the fabric of travel and tourism?

In CREST's tourism work, particularly in destination stewardship, management, and development, Mr. Espinosa and his team believe it takes every village to responsibly steward a tourism destination. Drawing on CREST's 20-years in travel and tourism, he will explore how this approach can create equitable economic benefits, preserve heritage, conserve nature, and offer more authentic experiences to travelers.

# PAMELA PEREZ



## BIOGRAPHY

Pamela Perez is currently a senior year student at Johnson & Wales University, pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Tourism & Hospitality Management. Born and raised in New Jersey, Pamela is Dominican American and is fluent in Spanish. Her academic journey has been enriched with experiences, including an internship in Park City, Utah, and a semester of study at Sejong University in Seoul, South Korea.

These travel experiences have not only broadened Pamela's cultural horizons but have also served as the foundation for her aspiration to transform her passion for travel into a career. Pamela is enthusiastic about deepening her understanding of ecotourism, with plans to undertake further studies in Costa Rica. Additionally, she envisions pursuing a Master's degree in Tourism to continue expanding her expertise and making a significant impact in the field of hospitality and tourism.



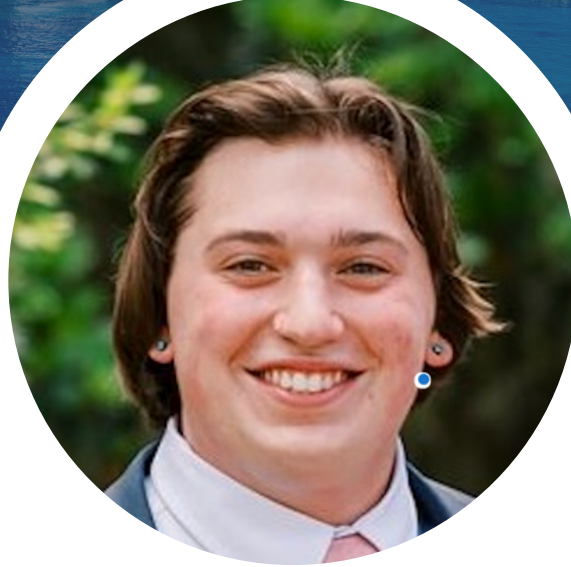
# PAMELA PEREZ

## Navigating Historical Injustices, Developing Sustainable Futures through Hawaiian Cultural and Economic Empowerment

"Hawaii draws in millions of tourists annually and has been marketed as a tropical paradise as well as for its cultural heritage. However, since the beginning western presence in Hawaii has always been rooted in colonialism, especially tourism. Because of the prioritization of tourism and leaving it unchecked indigenous Hawaiians are faced with ongoing challenges. This research goes into the aspects of Hawaii's tourism industry often overlooked, revealing the commodification of Hawaiian culture, exploitation, and inequalities perpetuated by tourism's economic dominance.

This research aims to uncover and address the historical and present-day injustices that overshadow Hawaii, proposing a framework for decolonizing the tourism industry. By focusing efforts on the needs and desires of the Indigenous population, and exploring solutions for redirecting tourism practices towards sustainability and social justice."

# RYAN COMERY



## BIOGRAPHY

Ryan is a Junior at JWU studying Tourism & Hospitality Management. He is from Indiana and has always been fascinated with learning about new cultures. Ryan hopes to go into tour operations and design group trips.





# RYAN COMERY & BRENNAN WALSH

## Over tourism in Dubrovnik Destroying Croatian Everyday Life

This paper talks about the effects of over-tourism on the city of Dubrovnik. We discuss the city itself and how tourism has affected different aspects of life in Dubrovnik. Over-tourism has become a major issue in recent years with the rise of cheap airfare and more expandable income. People now more than ever have the means and time to go exploring different parts of the world. This is not a big thing by itself but when you start looking at the cities these people are going to you can start to see the issue of the destination gearing the entire city towards tourism. We look more specifically at Dubrovnik in this paper and how there has been a loss of shops, schools, and post offices. We will propose multiple solutions to the problem of over-tourism in Dubrovnik in this paper and hope these solutions can be applied.

# CHLOE LANDRY



## BIOGRAPHY

Chloe Landry is a junior at Johnson & Wales studying Tourism and Hospitality Management. She is a part of the TRVL 3035 class that went to Peru this past November. Chloe is the co-editor of the Campus Herald school newspaper, and a current intern with Waterfire Providence and the Borgen Project. She values volunteering and plans to carry out those efforts in her future travels. Her presentation regarding water misuse and poverty is something she plans to continue tackling in her career in tourism and journalism.



# CHLOE LANDRY

## Water Misuse in Tourism and Links to Poverty Cycles

Tourism is a key distributor of wealth in many developing countries and yet they still struggle with basic needs like food, adequate shelter, and water. Water poverty is extremely prevalent in already poor locations, and when this situation merges with over-tourism it only gets worse. Tourists consume almost 3-4 times the amount of water than locals. This can be from showers, kitchen appliances, recreational uses, and a drinking supply. Since tourists bring in economic empowerment for these destinations, they are inclined to use however much water they please while the locals suffer. This creates a cycle of poverty that begins with. water-deficient and impoverished family and ends with a worse economic state of the area as a whole, and depleted resources that are difficult to obtain. The implementation of gray water in some of these areas can aid the struggles they are facing. Gray water recycling is a cost-effective and simple way to bring adequate water sources back to the abject poor. It can be utilized in crops and other pipelines that do not require digestion, since the water is partially contaminated. Policies such as the “Graywater Tourist Regulation Act” will support the use proper use of Gray water on a larger scale. This policy would be a large step forward in movement of water conservation, and positively effect people actively struggling and the general population as a whole.

# JORDEN PENCO-MARSHALL



## BIOGRAPHY

Jorden Penco-Marshall, a young woman from the culturally vibrant islands of Trinidad & Tobago, is carving her path in Tourism & Hospitality Management at Johnson & Wales University. Inspired by the profound impact of travel on her twin isle nation, Jorden developed a deep passion for the industry. Raised with a respect for diverse traditions and a curiosity for exploring cultures, she aims to contribute meaningfully to the global hospitality realm. Through academic pursuits, Jorden aspires to foster sustainable tourism in new destinations, bringing her ideas and knowledge to make a lasting impact on the industry's dynamic landscape.



# JORDEN PENCO - MARSHALL

## Mitigating Overtourism in Venice: A Holistic Approach to Sustainable Tourism

This capstone project investigates the ongoing issue of overtourism in Venice, Italy, with the goal of providing a comprehensive and long-term solution to this complicated problem. The primary focus is on identifying and correcting the underlying causes of overtourism, such as cruise ship arrivals, accommodation capacity, and cultural heritage protection. The initiative takes a comprehensive approach to sustainability by creating a framework that incorporates environmental, social, and economic factors. By drawing on insights from various sessions of the program, such as The Power of Decolonizing Tourism Experiences and Our Impact on Indigenous Land and People: Conserving Biodiversity through Sustainable Travel and Global and Local Impacts of Climate Change from and on Tourism, the proposed solutions include policy recommendations for responsible tourism, community empowerment initiatives, and the strategic integration of technology for effective tourism management. Finally, my personal connection to the topic comes from previously looking into Italy for a Heritage Tourism project and now looking further into the destination I find it devastating the effects tourism has had on such a culturally rich and beautiful place.

# MICHELLE HILL



## BIOGRAPHY

Michelle Hill is currently pursuing a degree in Travel and Tourism at Johnson & Wales University. With a clear interest in cultural diversity and sustainable tourism, she engages in coursework and extracurricular activities that help broaden her knowledge. From studying travel and tourism management to gaining experience within the industry, Michelle is committed to being a part of shaping the future of travel. Excited to contribute new ideas and foster responsible tourism, she desires to embark on a career that emphasizes her passion.



# MICHELLE HILL

## The Problems Easter Island Faces Due to Over-Tourism

Easter Island has a natural beauty that should be shared with the world. However, sharing it with the world should not come at the expense of the native people, their culture and heritage, their history, or their land. Today, Easter Island has been facing many problems due to over-tourism. This presentation will explore more on the issues Easter Island is facing and what we can do to help combat them.

# SIERRA MESSINA



## BIOGRAPHY

Sierra Messina is a junior at Johnson & Wales University, getting her Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Management. She has a passion for traveling and has taken multiple opportunities to do so while allowing herself to learn and gain knowledge of this industry. She is currently participating in her Banquets internship at the Omni Mount Washington Resort in New Hampshire.





# SIERRA MESSINA

## Indigenous Tourism

While tourism has many positive impacts, such as diversifying economies, educating people, and sharing cultures, there are also negative sides to travel that can often be overlooked. This project explores the effects of tourism on Indigenous communities; diving into the ways tourism can negatively impact Indigenous people and what changes can be made to allow tourism to help these groups. Issues, like over tourism, can cause a decrease in the quality of life for the residents; there can be an increase in local living costs, misuse of sacred spaces, limited economic opportunities, risk of disease transmission, and disrespect to Indigenous people's land and culture. Responsible tourism is essential in creating a healthy relationship between Indigenous groups and tourism. A responsible and authentic cultural experience would have Indigenous people in charge, allowing them to share their culture in a way that is respectful.

# EMILY VILLA



## BIOGRAPHY

Emily Villa is a senior at Johnson & Wales University, majoring in Tourism & Hospitality Management. Currently working at a prominent hospitality management company with a focus on hotel operations, Emily has gained valuable insights into the intricacies of the industry.

Fueling her passion for travel and cultural exploration, Emily spent a transformative year abroad, further igniting her interest in being a responsible traveler. Eager to combine her academic knowledge with real-world experience, Emily aspires to contribute meaningfully to the dynamic field of tourism and hospitality.



# EMILY VILLA

## Exploring the Impact of Consumerism in Tourism

This capstone project will explore the consumer-driven behavior present in the travel and tourism industry, which has spread across the globe with industry expansion. Research will be carried out to investigate this issue of consumerism, determining its cause and analyzing the impacts it has on the environment, economy, culture, and social aspects of tourism. Theories and concepts from various areas of the program to gain an understanding of consumerism in tourism will also be explored. Moreover, sustainable and equitable solutions will be identified to reduce the effects of consumerism. The program's theoretical structures will be used for determining the effectiveness of these solutions. The goal is to contribute to discourse on sustainable tourism by incorporating real-world events in the field. To attain this, a comprehensive analysis should be conducted in order to facilitate a shift towards a more sustainable and equitable future for travel and tourism. This project serves as an invitation to all stakeholders in the domain to practice responsibility to generate a sustainable future for tourism.

# LINDSAY COLLINS



## BIOGRAPHY

Lindsay Collins is a Tourism & Hospitality Management graduate of Johnson & Wales: Class of December 2023. She is originally from Massachusetts.



# LINDSAY COLLINS

## The Exploitation of Baby Alpacas (Cria) in Peru

In Peru baby alpacas are used as a way to attract tourists. Throughout my research I found that this practice is unethical and attempted to find solutions. I will discuss the balance of respecting local livelihood along with the need for change to protect this beloved species.

# LAURA KELLY



## BIOGRAPHY

Laura Kelly is a tourism professional, working as a Product Database Senior Analyst for Brendan Vacations. She holds a BA in German and History from Trinity College Dublin, a MA in Medieval History from University College Dublin and a MSc in Tourism Management from TU Dublin.

As part of her job, Laura manages her company's "Sustainability Squad", where she works on evaluating Make Travel Matter (MTM) experiences, helping the company work towards accreditation and working with suppliers to emphasise their sustainability story. In December 2023, Laura was the winner of the MTM Award, awarded by the Treadright Foundation. She was nominated by her colleagues for making travel matter in work, life and in everything she does.

Laura's passion for sustainability comes from being involved in Caretakers of the Environment, a non-for-profit environmental education organisation. She first attended the conference at age six when her father organised the conference and has been involved as a student, then as part of the alumni team. She volunteers as a member of the Senior Alumni Team and even hosted a virtual conference in 2021 for over 450 high school students and teachers worldwide.



# LAURA KELLY

## Repurposing the Bucket List: Creating More Sustainable Itineraries

The Cliffs of Moher is a star attraction featured on bucket lists as an unmissable attraction to be experienced by tourists visiting Ireland. This report, using the Cliffs of Moher as a case study, explores if it's time to banish the bucket list, ditch the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and highlight the hidden gem experiences. It takes a deeper look at what the bucket list mentality is and how it relates to the needs of the tourist, current and future. Using the Cliffs of Moher as an example, it examines the current state of play as well as the future plans of relevant agencies, then provides recommendations on how through collaboration and a bit of creativity, tour operators and local communities can make not only itineraries more sustainable but also adapt the bucket list to suit their needs.

# LAURA RANKIN



## BIOGRAPHY

Laura Rankin holds a BA in strategic communication with minors in Italian and music, media and enterprise from Ohio State University and is currently working toward her MBA in sustainable solutions from Presidio Graduate School. Laura has worked and/or studied on four continents to-date and is passionate about facilitating a just transition to more low-carbon, equitable and resilient tourism models that put local communities at the center while driving conservation and biodiversity outcomes. Laura is graduate student sustainability consultant and director of marketing for Wanderful.





# LAURA RANKIN

## Rethinking Travel in an Unequal World through Sustainable Development and Locally-led Tourism Models

My project explores systemic inequality and tourism leakage on a global scale and uses data visualization to reveal the inequitable distribution of tourism revenues. I connect insights from the work I supported under Solimar International on the USAID Maldives Climate Adaptation Plan as a case study, again using data visualization to demonstrate how guesthouse tourism can drive sustainable outcomes as an alternative to resort tourism and mainstream online travel agencies (OTAs). Ultimately, my project presents strategies to combat unjust tourism leakage as well as recommendations around how recovered tourism revenues can instead be allocated to support sustainable economic development as informed by local communities.

# NICOLA STEENKAMP



## BIOGRAPHY

Nicola currently serves as the Head of Community at StayAltered, a community-powered collection of Incredible Places with Inspiring People nurturing a more positively Impactful Planet. After years as a travel designer in safaris and earning her Life Coaching diploma, Nicola's passion revolves around connecting with people on a deeper level and figuring out ways to inspire positive change.



# NICOLA STEENKAMP

## Our Altered Code

Visitor guidelines are difficult to standardize and enforce, and are often perceived as punitive rather than educational and inspiring. StayAltered's solution, Our Altered Code, is a comprehensive ethical code that aims to ensure Altered Hosts are considered while Altered Guests are safe, educated and equipped to make informed choices about their travels and experiences.

StayAltered is a community-powered platform of place and people. The Altered Code proposes guidelines through a holistic, sustainable framework and a systematic, inclusive (anti-oppressive), participatory lens. Ethical codes, travel guides, policies, and practices of Destination Management Organizations were reviewed in creating Our Altered Code. In creating, categorizing, and reframing these guidelines, we have considered the views and insights from various voices within our ecosystem to ensure that all are represented and accounted for to the best of our ability. This is in line with StayAltered's values and in the spirit of collaboration.

By distributing Our Altered Code as widely as possible, we maximize positive impact in the tourism industry and minimize the extra efforts of key players that share our objectives. Through this reciprocity, we exemplify our commitment to "mitigating extraction and maximizing impact" in hospitality. The application of Our Altered Code is far reaching. The policies we're developing will serve as our blueprint of how to alter hospitality for good. In raising greater awareness, we inspire guests to travel better and be more intentional.

# BERNARDA BUSTILLOS TOBAR



## BIOGRAPHY

Tourism professional with over 12 years of experience in Tourism leading companies within the Ecuadorian sector, specializing in sales and the development of tourism products. Has actively contributed to state tourism projects and community tourism initiatives. Currently employed at Rise Travel Institute, a non-profit organization focused on educational tourism in the United States, where they spearhead Latin American expansion, promoting programs to train responsible and sustainable tourists and professionals.

# BERNARDA BUSTILLOS TOBAR

## Optimizing the Communication Process between the Indigenous Community Sinchi Warmi and Tourists through the Development of an Educational Tourism Brochure for Sustainable Conservation of the Environment and Local Culture.

The Sinchi Warmi community project in the Ecuadorian Amazon revealed notable deficiencies in communication between the community and tourists. The lack of high-quality information and accessibility have adverse effects that potentially lead to unintentional disrespect by tourists. Insufficient awareness of cultural norms can result in inappropriate behaviors, impacting the relationship between tourists and local residents. This lack of cultural awareness may contribute to unsustainable resource exploitation, posing a threat to the long-term viability of community tourism and impacting the tourist experience. When visitors' expectations diverge from the reality of community tourism, a sense of discomfort arises, causing cognitive dissonance with negative effects on the perception of the destination.

In response to these challenges, this research advocates for the development of an educational tourist brochure within the Sinchi Warmi community. This brochure would provide clear and accessible information about cultural norms while offering guidelines for responsible participation in community activities. The planned brochure seeks to incorporate narratives and testimonials from prominent community members to introduce a personal perspective. Tourists will gain a better understanding of local culture and establish a deeper emotional connection with the experience. The holistic objective is to actively engage visitors in the cultural richness and sustainable practices of Sinchi Warmi. By doing so, the brochure will contribute to the harmonious and sustainable development of community tourism in the region.

# JOSEPH KOCH



## BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Koch is an experienced finance and grants manager who has previously worked in education, public relations and information technology. He has a passion for travel, having visited over 150 countries, and enjoys helping others having volunteered and worked for numerous organizations and nonprofits. He has started a business that leads trips and engages in travel consulting with the emphasis on serving others as well as exploring our world and our lives. This emphasis on responsible tourism has continued through his recent volunteer work at RISE Travel Institute.



# JOSEPH KOCH

## How To Help Without Hurting: A Look at the Best Ways to Help Others When Traveling

How To Help Without Hurting: A Look at the Best Ways to Help Others When Traveling investigates projects in Africa, namely water well construction, and how they could have a negative impact. Often these impacts are due to a foreign voluntourism or NGO project, which is also within the scope of this project. Several case studies are included, with conclusions being similar across these case studies. There is a tendency for wells to fall into disrepair after they are built for a variety of reasons. Core causes include a type of neocolonialism, locals having limited input in the projects and foreign aid agents making decisions that do not address capacity or incorporate other people's views. Often volunteer projects mimic these mistakes. Possible solutions include more local input, privatization, technology and an emphasis on responsible tourism through the IPARD method which emphasizes collaboration before and after projects are completed.

# KELLY CHRISTIAN



## BIOGRAPHY

Kelly Christian is a mother, a retired Army combat veteran, and world traveler. She is originally from Washington state which is still her preferred state for camping. Kelly is a recipient of the American Red Cross Gold Volunteer Award and the Presidential Volunteer Service Gold Award.





# KELLY CHRISTIAN

## Voluntourism

My paper is about the sustainability of voluntourism. I highlight the failures of water supply points in Africa from voluntourism. I discuss how orphanages are impacted by voluntourism. I present solutions on how to provide sustainable voluntourism.

# ZACHARY PARRETT



## BIOGRAPHY

Zachary Parrett is originally from Detroit, Michigan, and currently calls Mexico City home. With enthusiasm for both travel and history, he has blended these interests together in his travel experiences. This attraction for cultural tourism naturally led him to embrace ethical tourism and its transformative potential. Zachary is delighted to actively engage with and spread the principles inspired by RISE, recognizing the need for responsible and impactful travel.



# ZACHARY PARRETT

## Dark Tourism

As a collective, humans have a history characterized by both triumphs and missteps. Within this historical tapestry, we possess the opportunity to spotlight moments of pride and glean valuable lessons from our past mistakes. In the era of global tourism, destinations embodying significant facets of human culture have become primary motivators for travel. However, with the escalating trend of mass tourism, it becomes imperative to uphold the contextual significance of these sites. This emphasis is crucial not merely for our own knowledge but also out of consideration for those still grappling with the enduring impact of historical events.

The practice of dark tourism has been woven into the fabric of travel since its inception. Yet, there exists a contemporary need to redefine and contextualize this form of tourism, particularly regarding how we approach locations with lingering sensitivities. It is essential to navigate these spaces with a modern understanding, acknowledging their historical weight and considering the ongoing implications for the communities and individuals connected to these sites.

# JILLIAN SPRATT



## BIOGRAPHY

Jillian is a sustainability and communications professional with a background in corporate social responsibility, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) strategy, and impact consulting. In her current role as an Impact Strategist, she helps clients develop global, impact-driven strategies and grounded storytelling as a way to eradicate greenwashing.

Her experiences as an independent traveler have taken her across three continents and inspired a desire to develop a foundation of ethical travel practices.

Since completing her certificate in Sustainability and Anti-Oppression, Jillian plans to incorporate additional learnings into her consulting practices as well as her personal travel.



# JILLIAN SPRATT

## Sustainable Tourism Certification Schemes: An Analysis of the Perception, Benefits, and Drawbacks

Within the travel industry, there has been increasing focus on ‘sustainable tourism’ as a global enabler for positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. As a way to measure adherence to sustainable tourism practices, travel operators, service providers, and customers often look toward certification schemes that are used to disclose and market progress. While numerous certification and accreditations schemes have arisen in the context of sustainable or “eco” tourism, their effectiveness is inhibited by multiple factors including the programs’ voluntary nature, inconsistent oversight, and a lack of guidance for adopting global best practices to local cultures and environments. Leveraging global case studies, this paper seeks to unpack the advantages and drawbacks to sustainable tourism certification schemes, and offer additional considerations that may help travelers, certification adopters, and certifying bodies orient towards improved outcomes.

# TANNER CATERINA-KNORR



## BIOGRAPHY

Tanner Caterina-Knorr is a Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Community Resources and Development at Arizona State University. He draws from his for-profit, academic, and non-profit professional experiences within the tourism industry to address gaps in tourism studies. Tanner is specifically interested in the intersection at tourism, phenomenology, decolonial theory, and Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.



# TANNER CATERINA-KNORR

## Pondering Systemic Sustainability Through Diné Relationality and Spiritual Tourism

This research utilizes commonly held understandings of sustainability and the concept of spiritual tourism to ponder a critique of Ben-Eli's (2018) systemic sustainability model. Because the spiritual domain of Ben-Eli's (2018) model aims to support the other domains of sustainability, it is critical to think about this domain from non-Western perspectives, given the tendency of the tourism industry to perpetuate Western ways of knowing, being, and doing. The current research considers decolonial theory and the Diné concept of Hózhó to seek alternative wordings for Ben-Eli's (2018) spiritual domain's premise, principle, and definition. This research opens discursive space for spiritual tourism to be sustainable for Diné travelers.

# SERENA MANNA



## BIOGRAPHY

Serena loves small business development and understanding how messaging aligns with business practices. With a background in International Business and Entrepreneurship, she started working at a social impact incubator in 2018 and currently leads as the Senior Manager of Network Engagement and is completing an M.S. in Global Tourism and Sustainable Economic Development.





# SERENA MANNA

## Navigating Economic Growth and Community Development Through Tourism in Rhode Island

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a systematic review of funding and organizational models on development in the tourism sector and to explore directions for future research. The area of interest will focus on the State of Rhode Island, geographically the smallest state in the U.S. Specifically recognizing that tourism development is operating within the public sector and utilizing marketing practices that are typically adopted by the private sector. The results demonstrate that owing to the distinct differences between the private and public sectors, there is a need to adapt branding principles to meet the sector-specific challenges faced by public organizations. However, the extent of the required changes needs further research. This review presents a number of potential directions for future studies, which focus on diverse topics related to the internal and external aspects that are crucial to the successful funding of inclusive tourism initiatives, economic development, and branding of public organizations.

# SELMA BERRADA



## BIOGRAPHY

Selma Berrada, a native of Morocco, graduated from Johnson and Wales University with a Bachelor's degree in Business and a Master's in Sustainable Tourism. Selma has recently launched her company, MAURESK, which specializes in sustainable small-group travel and custom events in Morocco. MAURESK reflects her educational background and her commitment to promoting sustainable tourism practices. Selma's passion for her country and her dedication to sustainability are at the core of her business. She aims to offer immersive, culturally rich, and conscious travel experiences, allowing travelers to feel like a local in her homeland.



# SELMA BERRADA

How to perpetuate the artisans' culture in Morocco and ensure their direct profitability?

This capstone project offers an in-depth analysis of the current state of craftsmanship in Morocco. It identifies the challenges faced by artisans and explores effective solutions to sustain and promote their unique cultural heritage. This project emphasizes ensuring direct profitability for artisans, safeguarding their arts, and enhancing their socio-economic status within the global market. Through a blend of traditional methods and innovative strategies, this work aims to preserve Morocco's rich artisanal culture.



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