Title of the Story: The Community-Based Tourism course

Destination Name: São Miguel do Gostoso, Rio Grande do Norte

Country: Brazil

Submitter name: Janielle Linhares

Email address: gostoso.jane@hotmail.com

Position: Secretary of Tourism and Communication

Nomination Category: (Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)

☒ Culture & Communities
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☐ One of the 17 SDGs* (if yes, which one) Click or tap to choose

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. For further information on Tourism for SDGs: http://tourism4sdgs.org/

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DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice? Click to add your text

São Miguel do Gostoso is a 27 years old city, located on the north coast of Rio Grande do Norte and since its creation sought tourism development, for an audience who values the care and respect to the local community, culture and natural environment.

In such context, aiming to be "THE MOST SUSTAINABLE TOURIST DESTINATION IN THE NORTHEAST BRAZIL", since the beginning of 2019, the municipality joined the DEL Turismo program, a participatory planning methodology based on structuring popular participation through an active and deployed council divided in working groups (CTs), in the format of technical chambers with dense popular participation.

The DEL program arrived precisely to harmonize the dense and increasing tourist flow in São Miguel do Gostoso, which brought noticeable economic benefits, although practically exclusive to the city and waterfront (not diversified for the 25 districts and rural areas). In this context, the problem arises: a lack of tourist diversity in the municipality of São Miguel do Gostoso and a concentration of the tourist flow and of the tourism production chain in the coastal region adjacent to the place where the city is located.

Countless districts\communities, located inland, distant from each other and separated by unpaved roads, could be included in the production chain through segments such as cultural tourism and rural tourism, under the community-based tourism management mode, adding elements of the rich popular culture still present in the region to the local tourist offer. The guiding question was: how to include these communities in the benefits that well-planned tourism can bring?

Methods, steps and tools applied

How was the good practice implemented? Click to add your text

One of the projects resulting from the Technical Chamber of Tourist Destination was the proposal of a Community Based Tourism course for the furthest district from the city, known as Baixinha dos França. Precisely in this attempt to diversify tourism in the municipality, to provide a tourist product that values local culture and to empower a disarticulated local community of tourism in the city.

This proposal won support from SENAC-RN (representative of the DEL program in the state of RN), who set up the exclusive course for the community, hired a specialist teacher in the subject and in the region to teach the course and offered it for free. The city government supported the initiative by holding an event to survey potential people interested in the region, in addition to the logistics and supplies for the teacher who would teach the course. Also, the council pledged to give space to the community to present the products developed in the course at an event and also, in a further moment, commercialize the itineraries produced and gastronomy for the locality in its establishments.

Key success factors
What helped you tackle the issues? Click to add your text

Union, articulation and commitment of the local tourist trade (city hall, businessmen and associations)

Lessons learned

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome? Click to add your text

In an initial moment, the idea of tourism interiorization generated strangeness and even skepticism on the part of the students of the course. Statements like “there is nothing interesting to see here” were common in the classroom. In addition to low self-esteem, lack of cooperation between leaders from different communities was a factor of difficulty in the development of the routes. The activities and contents of the course strengthened the participant’s positive view of the locality in which they lived, and opened doors for the creation of the routes.

Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards? Click to add your text

The Community-Based Tourism course, which was a pioneer in the Northeast in terms of Senac, with a total workload of 80 hours, covered topics such as ethics, customer service, tourist market, entrepreneurship, culture and heritage, sustainability, among others. Students from four districts participated in the classes, which took place during the night, at a municipal school in the Baixinha dos França district.

As community-based tourism has in principle the empowerment and decision-making in the hands of the communities, techniques were applied during the course that guaranteed the autonomy of the participants in the conception and planning of a tourism aligned with the expectations and needs of the community. At first, low self-esteem of residents was detected, little appreciation of available resources and even disbelief in the attractive potential of that rural region.

To explore the possible tourist resources that could be used, a participatory photography technique called Photovoice was used (GEHRKE, B. M.; DUARTE JUNIOR, J. B.; MILITO, M. C. . 2015), where each student was instructed to produce photographs of contexts, places, symbols, objects and resources that they would like to share with a visitor. As a result, hundreds of photos were produced, based on an affective and local view of the place. These photographs served to illustrate the diversity of resources that could be included in tourism, and helped to foster an increase in the participants’ self-esteem. Subsequently, some selected photographs were printed and used in the assembly of a photographic exhibition.

These resources, raised through photographs, served to build pilot routes in the region, including several districts and focused on cultural and rural tourism. Another result of the course was the creation of a logo, whose art was
developed by a student and the symbols present, very representative of the region, were decided collectively in the classroom.

At the end of the course, an event was organized, calling on the population of different districts to appreciate the cuisine, agricultural production, handicrafts, music and dances of Baixinha dos França.

Additional references
Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.


http://pasosonline.org/Publicados/13515/PPS515_02.pdf

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