



EXperiential TOurism for sustainable RurAl development

From Sustainable towards Slow and Regenerative Tourism

LU2 - EXTOR Training Program



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Lesson 1:

Tourism at a Tipping Point - Finding the Limits, Seeking Solutions



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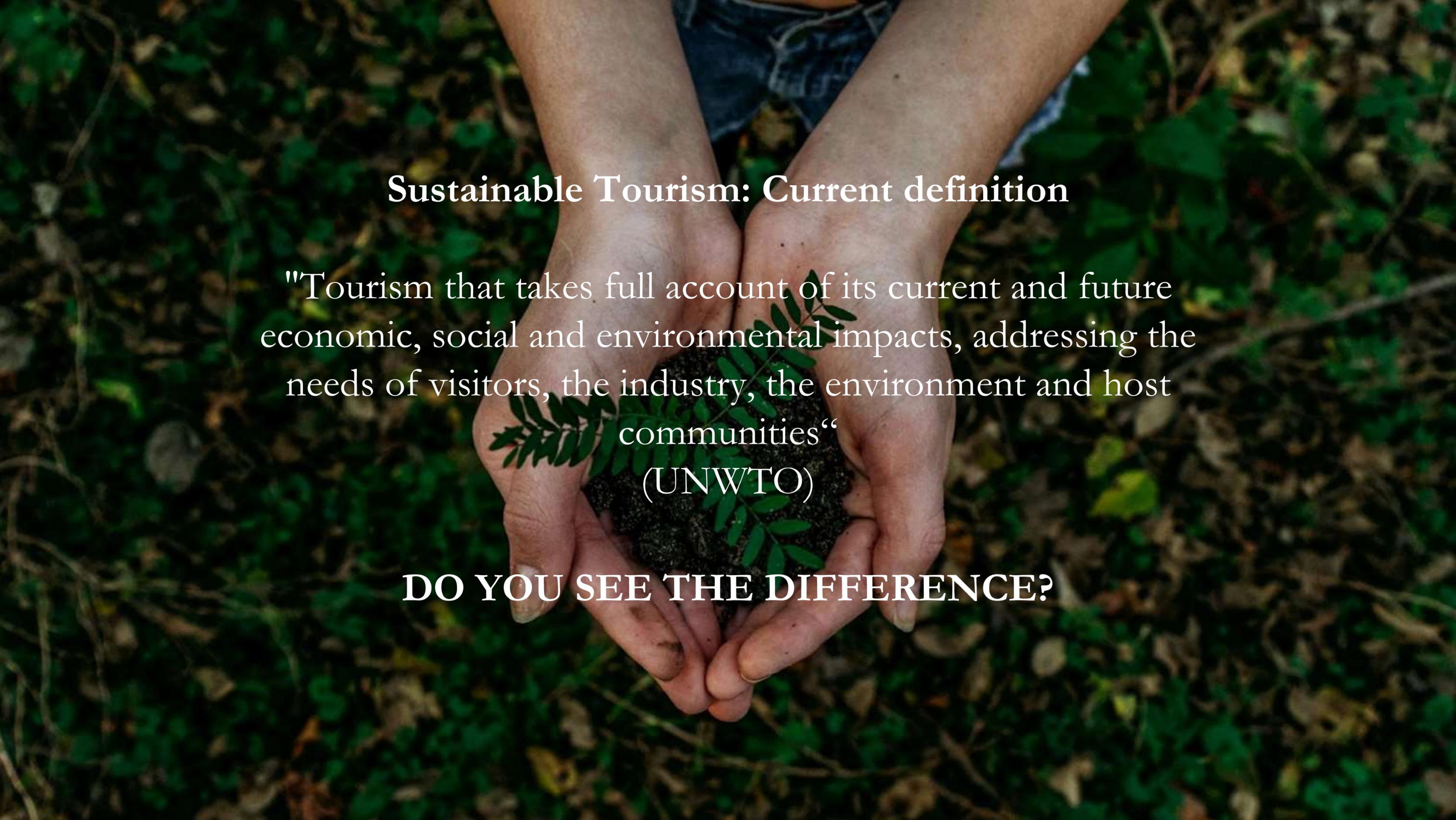
A top-down photograph of a person's hands cupped together, holding a small amount of dark soil and a young green plant with several leaves. The person is wearing blue denim shorts. The background is a dense, out-of-focus field of green plants and leaves.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Definition 1999

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. [...]”

(WTO 1999)

A photograph showing a person's hands cupped together, holding a small amount of dark soil and a small green plant with several leaves. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest floor with many small plants and leaves. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold, serif font.

Sustainable Tourism: Current definition

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"
(UNWTO)

DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

A photograph showing a person's hands cupped together, holding a small amount of dark soil and a small green plant with several leaves. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest floor with many small plants and leaves. The text is overlaid on the image in white, with the word 'industry' highlighted in a green box.

Sustainable Tourism: Current definition

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the **industry**, the environment and host communities"

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DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

LIMITS OF RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

RESPONSIBLE

Tourists are „taken by the moment“

Individual decision might differ a lot from actually needed sustainable development

SUSTAINABLE

industry-oriented

Buzzword

greenwashing



The trouble with tourism ...

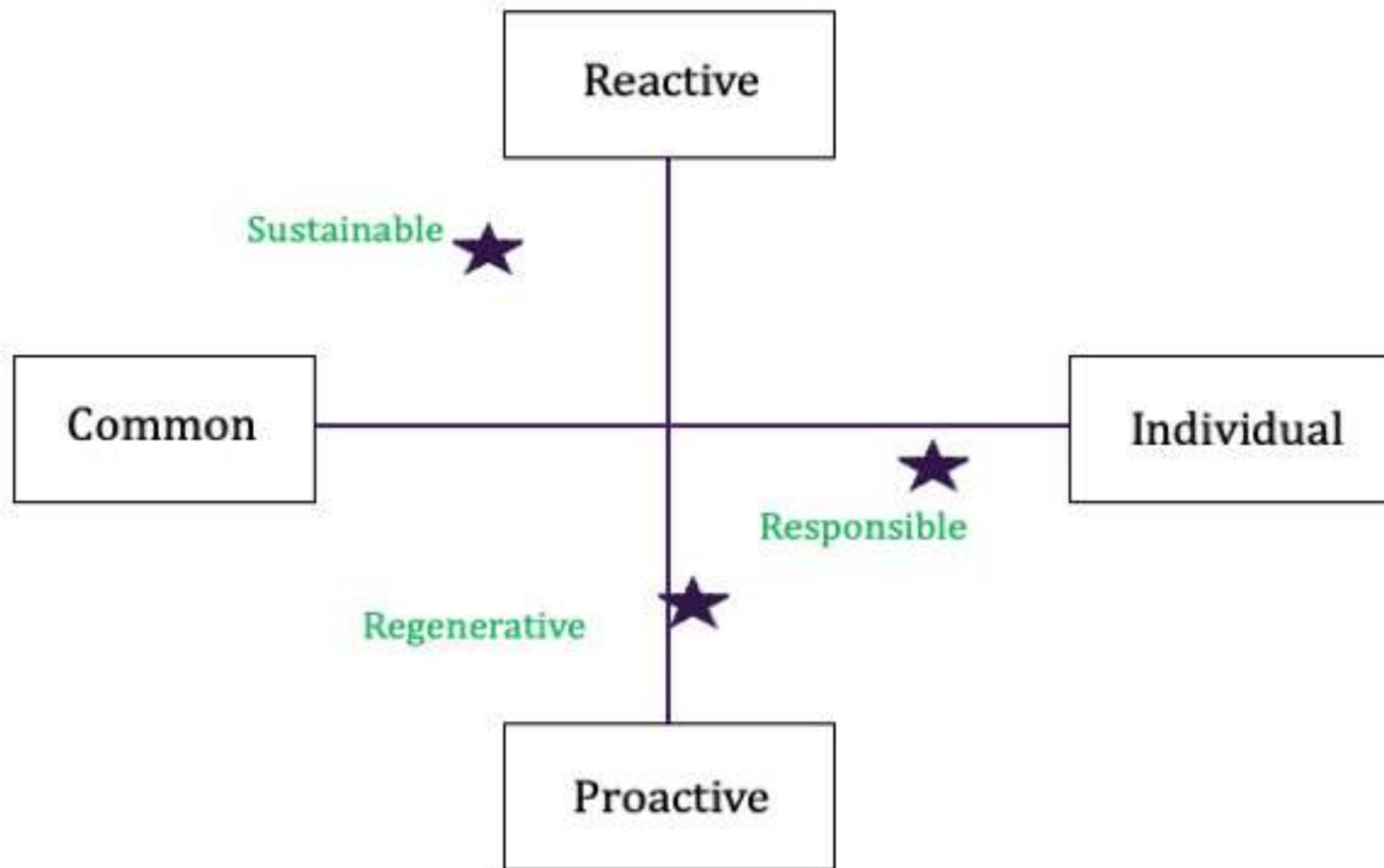
Funeral of the Glacier „Ok Jökull“ in Iceland

A letter to the future

Ok is the first Icelandic glacier to lose its status as a glacier.
In the next 200 years all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path.
This monument is to acknowledge that we know
what is happening and what needs to be done.
Only you know if we did it.

Ágúst 2019
415ppm CO₂

CHANGING THE PATH, BUT WHERE TO?





Is „REGENERATION“ the answer?
What is regenerative tourism?





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Lesson 2:
Travel That Gives Back
The Principles of Regenerative Tourism



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Regenerative tourism is NOT:

Sustainability on steroids
Making incremental improvements

„Doing more good“

A trendy buzzword
(Anna Pollock, 2021,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3hgfxWLOf8>

Introducing Regenerative Tourism)



Regenerative, slow and earthly tourism – what does that mean?

“What I am advocating is a tourist studies agenda around humbleness and care that we need to exercise in our dealings with the Earth, put simply; being kind and giving back to the Earth.”

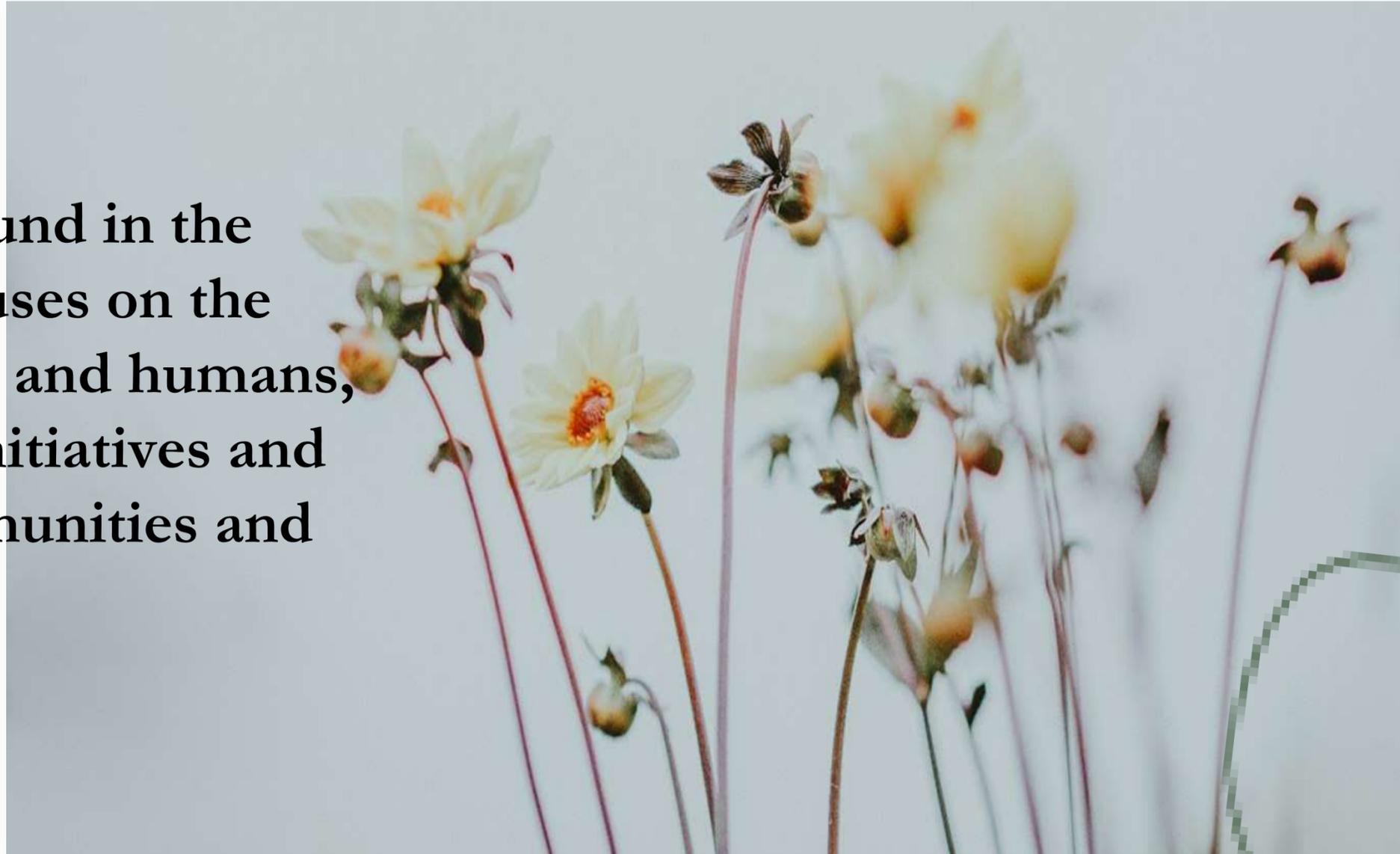
Edward Huijbens, Geographer



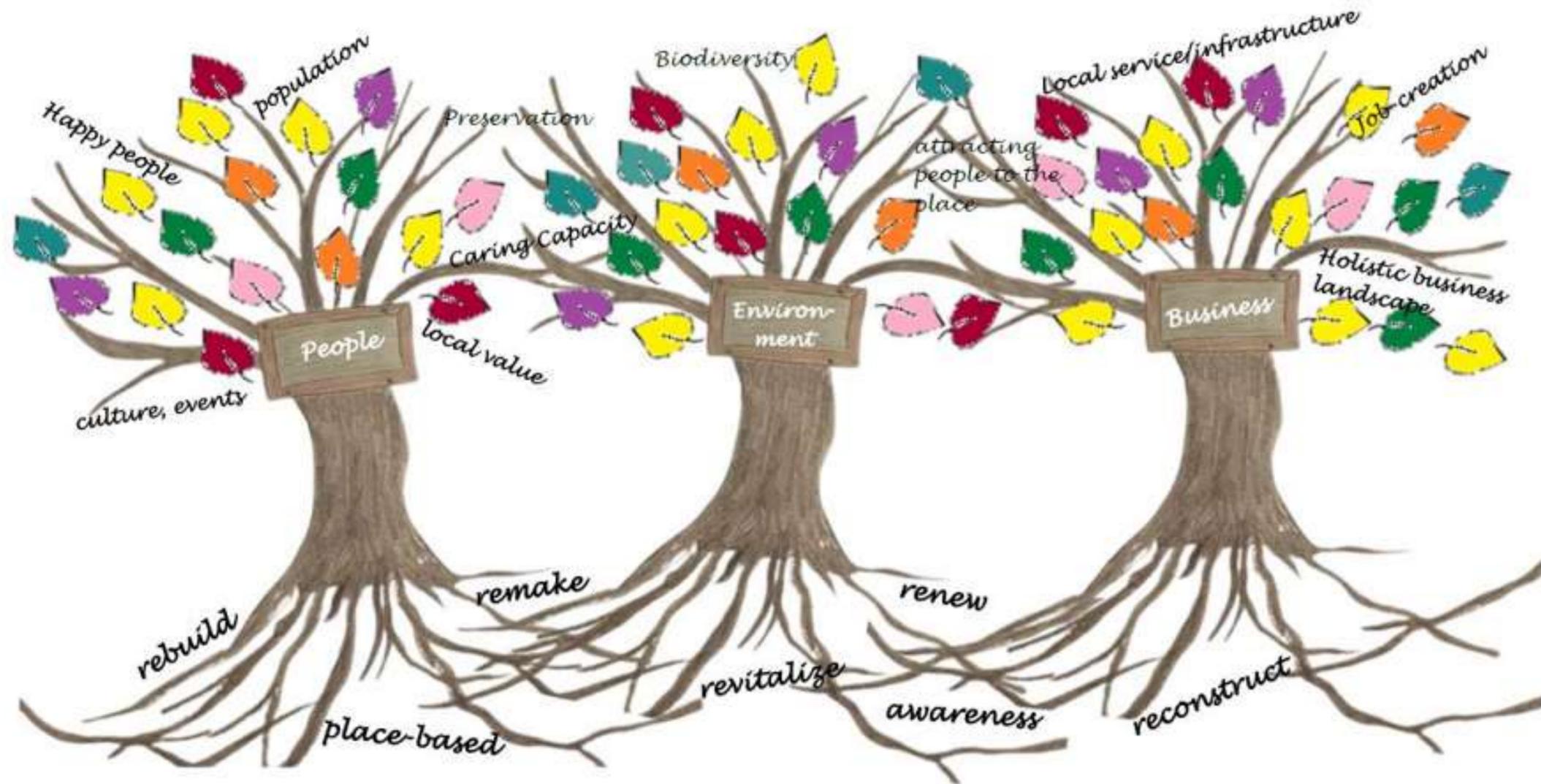
Regenerative, slow and earthly tourism – what does that mean?

“The perspective on well-being found in the regenerative tourism approach focuses on the reciprocal relationship between nature and humans, pointing at bottom-up, micro-scale initiatives and the idea of giving back to local communities and nature.”

(Mathisen et al., 2022)



A holistic approach with the goal to GIVE BACK („re“)



Regenerative Tourism: a matter of values

Current tourism:
profit-driven, capitalism

Goal of regenerative tourism:
Values beyond sole economic growth!



First Mile™ – Behavior Smart

Key Idea

If unsustainable options don't exist, they can't be chosen.

Tourists often ...

... interpret “responsible travel” differently. ...take a “break” from responsibility while on vacation.

The Solution

Eliminate unsustainable choices entirely. Create frameworks where only sustainable options are available.

Examples:

Reusable over Single-Use: Hotels/restaurants provide reusable bottles only.

Sustainable Rentals: Car rentals exclude diesel options.

Source & Copyright: <https://behavior-smart.com/>





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Lesson 3:

Practical Tools for Regeneration

Inspiration for Rural Tourism Leaders



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Best Practice Examples: Regenerative Tourism

Go Local (Faroe Islands)

Small-group tours spotlight Faroese culture, sustainability, and conservation. Guests engage in eco-actions like wildlife-safe wool collection.

Rentabike (Faroe Island)

Promotes cycling as a green mobility solution using recycled bike parts. Fosters leave-no-trace exploration and infrastructure for eco-travel.

Hótel Snaefellsnes (Iceland)

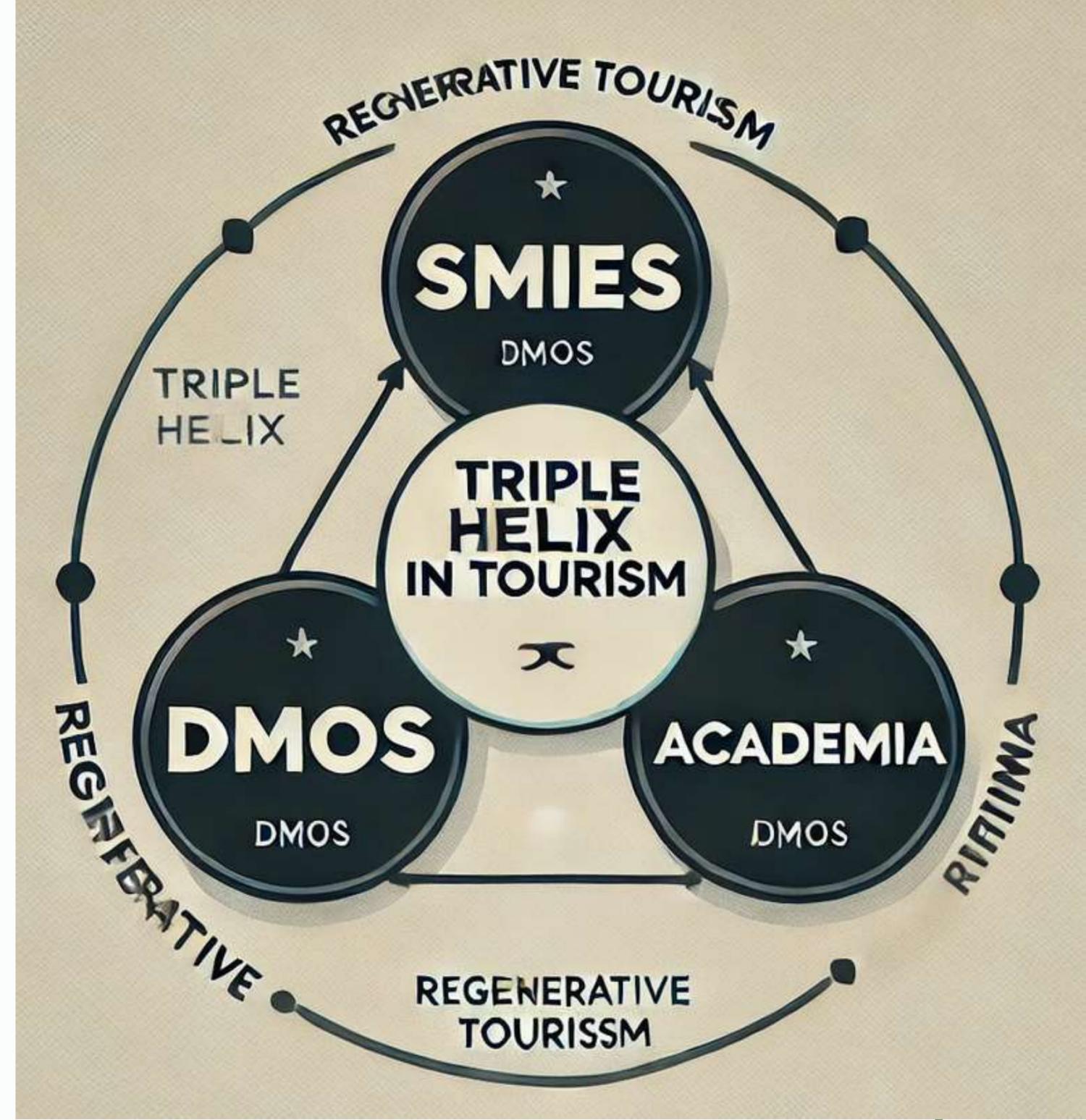
Family-run hotel emphasizes local sourcing and citizen science projects. Collaborates with the National Park to protect seals and raise eco-awareness.

Destination Trekantomradet (Denmark)

Visitor-led activities like crab control and eelgrass planting to restore biodiversity. A pilot initiative connecting guests with regenerative actions.

TOOLS TO FOSTER REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Triple Helix Approach



Tools to foster regenerative tourism

Citizen Science - Examples from Iceland -





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Lesson 4:

Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs

Agents of Degrowth



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Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs – Who are they?

Entrepreneurship	Lifestyle entrepreneurship...
... as ‘the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled’ (Eisenmann, 2013, p.	... turning a hobby into a career (<u>Hjalager</u> et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2009)

Tourism Lifestyle Entrepreneurs

A matter of values – Agents of Degrowth

“A lot of things don’t pay off that we do, but it is nice for the community. You know, I make a party, cause I know this will make the community happier, it is more likely that they will come out to eat later. But we are responsible towards the community, we are part of the community, this would not happen if it was not our hometown and if we were not a vital business for the town.”

Lifestyle Entrepreneur, East Fjords Iceland



Place Attachment: The Power of Locally embedded tourism entrepreneurs

Community Integration

- vital role of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs in sustainable development by prioritizing community well-being

Place Attachment & Sustainability

- greater care for the environment and community.
- Dependence on local resources fosters sustainable practices and emotional commitment to the area.

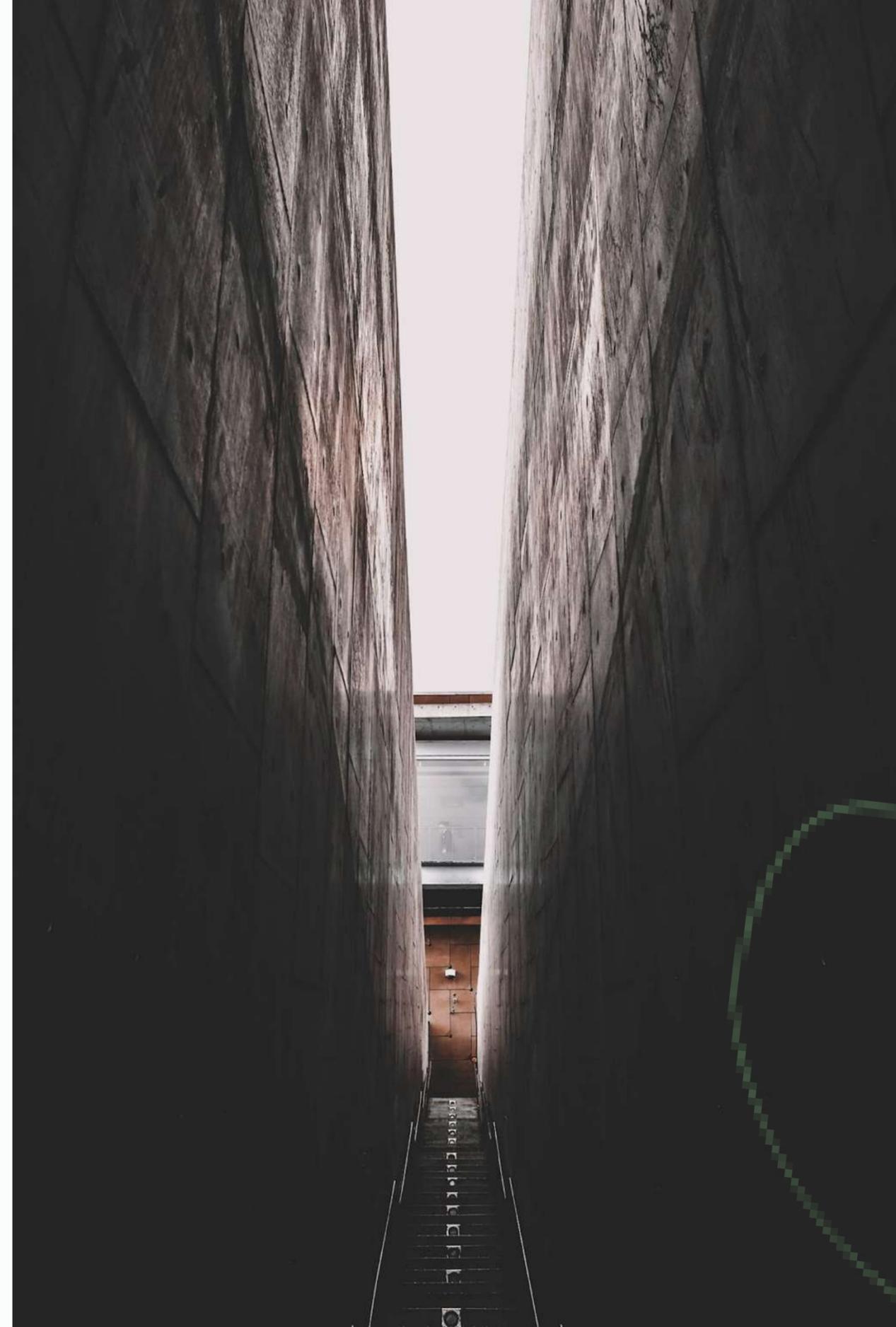
Innovation Through Connection

- Deep local knowledge inspires creative, place-based offerings.
- Unlike large companies, locally embedded entrepreneurs are more motivated to act sustainably.



Challenge: Communication Gap between Stakeholders

Up until now, tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are not yet key players in decision making processes in tourism development





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THANK YOU!

