Community Tourism and Sustainable Local Development Training Course



28 Dec 2026 - 01 Jan 2027

Geneva

5900 € (Per Person)

Ref: #TOU3538_148350

Course Introduction / Overview:

This course provides a comprehensive exploration of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) as a powerful catalyst for sustainable local economic development. It moves beyond theoretical concepts to offer a practical framework for planning, developing, and managing tourism initiatives that empower local communities, conserve cultural and natural heritage, and create lasting economic benefits. As articulated by leading academic Regina Scheyvens in her influential work, "Tourism for Development: Empowering Communities," the core of successful tourism lies in placing community interests at the forefront. This training program, offered by BIG BEN Training Center, is designed to equip participants with the skills to create authentic, high-quality visitor experiences that are both commercially viable and socially responsible. We will delve into the entire lifecycle of a CBT project, from initial community engagement and asset mapping to innovative product development, strategic marketing, and robust impact assessment. Participants will learn how to navigate the complexities of stakeholder collaboration, build local capacity, and ensure that the economic gains from tourism are distributed equitably, fostering resilience and prosperity at the grassroots level. This course is an essential guide for anyone committed to harnessing the transformative potential of tourism for genuine community advancement and sustainable development.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Tourism officers and planners.
- Local government officials and policymakers.
- Community leaders and representatives.
- Non-profit and NGO project managers in the development sector.
- Entrepreneurs and small business owners in the tourism industry.
- Destination management organization (DMO) staff.
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) managers.
- Rural development consultants.
- Heritage and cultural site managers.
- University students and researchers in tourism and development studies.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Tourism and Hospitality.
- Local, Regional, and National Government Agencies.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).
- International Development and Aid Agencies.
- Cultural and Heritage Preservation.
- Environmental Conservation.
- Rural and Agricultural Development.
- Consulting and Advisory Services.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Economic Development and Planning.
- Tourism and Culture.
- Community Engagement and Development.
- Sustainability and Environmental Management.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Strategic Planning and Policy.
- Marketing and Communications.
- Project Management.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for a community-based tourism initiative.
- Conduct community asset mapping and stakeholder analysis to identify tourism potential.
- Design authentic and marketable tourism products and experiences.
- Create effective marketing and communication strategies for CBT destinations.
- Implement financial management and business planning for tourism micro-enterprises.
- Foster strong partnerships between communities, government, and the private sector.
- Measure and evaluate the socio-economic and environmental impacts of tourism projects.
- Integrate principles of sustainability and responsible tourism into all operations.
- Enhance visitor experience management to ensure high satisfaction and repeat business.
- Navigate the legal and regulatory frameworks governing tourism development.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, participatory, and practical, ensuring that participants can immediately apply their learning. This course moves beyond traditional lectures to create a dynamic learning environment. We utilize a blend of expert-led presentations, real-world case study analyses of successful and challenging CBT projects from around the globe, and interactive group workshops. Participants will engage in hands-on activities such as developing a mini-tourism plan, mapping community assets, and brainstorming marketing campaigns. Role-playing scenarios will be used to simulate stakeholder negotiations and community meetings, building practical communication and conflict-resolution skills. Facilitated group discussions and peer-to-peer learning are central to our approach, allowing participants to share experiences and insights from their own contexts. Continuous feedback is provided by the instructor and peers to foster a supportive and collaborative atmosphere. The methodology focuses on transforming theoretical knowledge into tangible skills and actionable strategies for implementing successful community-based tourism projects.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Community-Based Tourism

- Introduction to Community-Based Tourism (CBT).
- The principles and pillars of sustainable tourism development.
- Global trends and the evolution of responsible travel.
- The role of tourism in local economic development and poverty alleviation.
- Benefits and potential challenges of CBT initiatives.
- Key stakeholders and their roles in the tourism ecosystem.
- Case study analysis of pioneering CBT models.

Unit Two: Strategic Planning for CBT Initiatives

- Conducting a community readiness and situational analysis.
- Participatory asset mapping for tourism resources.
- Identifying and engaging key community stakeholders.
- Conducting feasibility studies and market research.
- Developing a shared vision, mission, and objectives.
- Formulating a comprehensive CBT strategic plan.
- Legal structures and governance models for community tourism enterprises.

Unit Three: Product Development and Visitor Experience

- Identifying unique selling propositions (USPs) of the community.
- Designing authentic cultural, nature-based, and educational experiences.
- Developing local supply chains for accommodation, food, and handicrafts.
- Establishing quality standards and service protocols.
- Pricing strategies for CBT products and services.
- Training and capacity building for local guides and service providers.
- Managing the visitor journey from booking to departure.

Unit Four: Marketing and Promotion for Community Tourism

- Developing a unique brand identity and story for the destination.
- Identifying and targeting niche tourism markets.
- Crafting compelling marketing messages and content.
- Utilizing digital marketing, social media, and online travel agencies (OTAs).
- Building strategic partnerships with tour operators and travel agents.
- Public relations and media outreach strategies.
- Leveraging visitor feedback and reviews for promotion.

Unit Five: Management, Sustainability, and Impact Assessment

- Financial planning and management for community tourism enterprises.
- Best practices for environmental conservation and resource management.
- Strategies for preserving cultural heritage and authenticity.
- Developing a framework for monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) for measuring success.
- Managing socio-cultural impacts and ensuring equitable benefit distribution.
- Planning for long-term sustainability and resilience.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can communities effectively balance the economic pressures of tourism development with the critical need to preserve their unique cultural identity and natural environment for future generations?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by focusing on a holistic and grassroots-driven approach to tourism development. Unlike programs that may concentrate solely on marketing or hospitality management, this training provides a complete A-to-Z blueprint for creating sustainable and equitable community-based tourism ventures. Its core strength lies in its unwavering emphasis on community empowerment, ensuring that participants learn how to facilitate processes where local people are the primary actors and beneficiaries, not merely passive participants. We move beyond abstract theories by integrating practical, field-tested tools and methodologies for every stage, from initial community engagement to long-term impact assessment. The curriculum is enriched with a diverse range of global case studies, offering valuable lessons on what works and what does not in different socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, the course champions the development of authentic experiences that resonate with the modern traveler's desire for meaningful connection, rather than standardized commercial products. It equips leaders to build resilient local economies by fostering entrepreneurship, strengthening local supply chains, and ensuring that the benefits of tourism circulate within the community, creating a lasting legacy of prosperity and pride.