



# Featured Research:

## **Community Engagement Done Differently** From: Islander Way



### OVERVIEW

Destination communities are often left out of conversations about tourism policy, planning, development, marketing, etc. As we consider the future of tourism, the industry needs to collaborate with the destination community to increase the satisfaction and growth of a broad, diverse range of stakeholders. Aiming to build more feedback and establish more community outreach programs will improve citizen participation and strengthen understanding of the value of tourism to destination communities.

## DISTINCTIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Learning from social projects, such as the Islander Way Project, can initiate the shift towards engaging more meaningfully with your destination community. <u>This short article</u> outlines seven (7) important factors that demand the industry take a different community engagement approach. These factors include:

- Prioritizing inclusion and recognizing that all individuals, not just key stakeholders, have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.
- The need to reframe tourism through the lens of community well-being and communicate how tourism contributes to residents' well-being.

The Islander Way approach to community engagement is based on previous projects with different types of communities from the local to international scales. The following are the ten (10) distinctive features of this approach:

Questions can be an indicator of key Listen and be empathetic to others' concerns and issues - take note of the shared experiences. questions people ask you. New ways of thinking from diverse Seek out the perspectives and audiences are essential to knowledge of broad, diverse reimagining tourism's future. audiences. Prepare for criticism/rejection -Set aside pre-conceived notions information sharing and be open to moving forward and conversational intelligence can letting go of the past. easy anxiety about the process. Facilitators play a vital role – they Envisioning a new future for tourism are engaged in deep listening, involves diverse perspectives, reflection, and a generative ingenuity, trust, and collaboration. questions-based approach. Do not be haste in making early Ensure that the goals and promises of the assumptions that may stymie better social contract between community and solutions to a problem. facilitator are clearly defined.

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