

## Innovation challenge Un/Sustainable Tourism

Two core themes of this event will be a focus on *sustainable tourism*, and a focus on *experience-creation*. You will get to hear lectures and take part in study visits with local tourism companies and learn from their work.

The end goal for our event is for you to **create an interesting, sustainable tourism experience**. We want you to think about what sustainable tourism could look like, as well as local tourism for locals. Think about experiences that would be fun and engaging for people who live here.

**Task for the Innovation Camp: Together with your group, you should design a 10–15-minute-long tourism experience that you can run at the end of day 3.**

**Target group:** Your target group is your fellow participants: local people from northern Finland and Sweden. Most of you will be young but remember that there are teachers and jury members taking part as well.

## To do before the event!

We want you to start to think about the issues of sustainable and unsustainable tourism before you come to Tornio. Please do this pre-assignment *before* the event.

**Step 1 Read the text below:** *Introduction to Un/Sustainable Tourism*

**Step 2: Watch two videos.** The videos have English subtitles, which you can turn on in the video settings in Youtube.

[How top tourist destinations try to overcome overtourism and touristification | DW News - YouTube](#) (5:53 min)

This video gives a short introduction to the social issues of tourism in Europe.

[Can tourism ever really help the environment? - The Climate Question podcast, BBC World Service](#) (26:07 min)

Ecotourism is often seen as a solution to the environmental problems that tourism brings. This video explores the ups and downs of ecotourism with examples from Costa Rica.

**Step 3: After having watched the videos, think about the following questions:**

- What are the sustainability issues related to tourism, and is sustainable tourism even possible? Does it matter what kind of tourism it is?
- What *is* tourism like in our area? Please do a quick Google search to see what kinds of tourism experiences are marketed where you live.
- The examples in the videos are from different parts of the world. What do you think are sustainability issues in tourism in *our* part of the world?
- A big part of tourism experiences in our area are focused on attracting foreign tourists. What could local tourism for local people look like in our area?

## Introduction to Un/Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is 'the practice of travelling for recreation'. You go to new places and seek out new experiences. It is per definition something you do for fun and leisure, but it can also be educational, social, and even challenge your view of the world. Many of us dream of a relaxing beach holiday, amazing hike, or exciting city break. Tourism can be fun and rewarding, but it also has some significant downsides.

We have recently seen anti-tourism protests from places like Barcelona, Amsterdam, Canary Islands, and Venice. Closer to home, this also happens in places like Gotland and Rovaniemi. Local people can no longer afford housing; local shops are replaced by chain stores focused on the needs of visitors rather than residents. Visitors create waste, wear down local environments, and strain resources from drinking water to access to health care.

The environmental impact of tourism is high. Some forms of travel carry a particularly steep environmental cost, such as all-inclusive travel, air travel, and cruise ships. Even tourism that is claimed to be environmentally friendly causes damage to sensitive natural areas if too many people visit. Some tourists also feel free to behave in ways that they would never do at home. Tourism can be an expression of power dynamics, colonialism, and wealth disparities. Who gets to be the tourists, and who are always the locals?

At the same time, tourism can bring important income and create new opportunities to live and work. Part-time engagement in tourism can be a way to supplement incomes for farmers, reindeer herders, small business owners, etc. Tourism can also protect natural areas from other kinds of exploitation, since tourists want to experience wilderness instead of clear-cut forests. Through tourism, people can sometimes learn about other cultures, get a better understanding of people's different life experiences, and make new friends.

**During our Un/Sustainable Tourism event in October, we want to invite you to learn more and think deeply about questions of sustainability and tourism.**

What are the sustainability issues related to tourism, and is sustainable tourism even possible? Does it matter what kind of tourism it is? Is a farm stay, where you get to know the locals, inherently better than a week at a swanky hotel with a private pool in your room - or is that just moralism? What about the carbon footprint of people flying to Rovaniemi to visit Santa for less than a day, and then flying back home in the afternoon?

A lot of tourism experiences in the north of Sweden and Finland are mainly designed for tourists from abroad, but tourism experiences closer to home are easier to make sustainable as it avoids the environmental cost of long travels. What could local tourism for locals look like in our area? With anti-tourism protests in popular destinations on the rise, and the warming climate creating new interest in 'coolcations', our areas in the north of Sweden and Finland will need to pay attention to these issues as well. Tourism contributes significant income to our regions now. What if tourism booms here?