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## WORLD TOURISM DAY

### Tourism and Rural Development

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September 28, 2020 –

An international panel of industry leaders discussed the theme of Tourism and Rural Development as part of World Tourism Day which highlights the important role tourism plays in preserving and promoting culture and heritage around the world. The webinar, hosted by Capilano University's School of Tourism Management and its student associations, PATA Canada Vancouver Student Chapter and the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Student Association (TREC SA) attracted nearly 200 attendees during the session which was moderated by Jordan Sam, 4th year Bachelor of Tourism Management student.

This year's theme "celebrated the sector's unique ability to drive economic development and provide opportunities outside of big cities, including in those communities that would otherwise be left behind" (UNWTO.org). With the industry on pause due to COVID-19 now is the time to reflect, rethink, and restart tourism in ways that preserve the beauty and cultures of our planet.

Rick Antonson, author and former CEO of Tourism Vancouver delivered a keynote opening to set the stage. He gave tourism students a glimmer of hope for the future: "You (tourism students) are entering (the tourism industry) at an amazing time with terrific unparalleled opportunities... Your fresh approach to solutions will be more important to a company today and in the coming years than they would've been back in January."

Other panelists included Candace Campo (Owner and Operator of Talaysay Tours), Claire Bennett (Author, International Educational Tour Guide and advocate for Responsible Volunteering), Ellen Walker-Matthews (Vice President of Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association), and Malia Asfour (Director of the Jordan Tourism Board in North America).

The panelists were able to share insights on the theme from their own experiences and how rural tourism development can be a positive economic driver. In particular, Ellen Walker-Matthews discussed the regional strategic plan for the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, and has reminded us that "Tourism is a privilege and not a right," and that we need to "figure out how to build back (rural areas) in a way that is accepting to them and that builds from those communities," and local Indigenous Tour Operator Candace Campo feels that "Indigenous Tourism has a big role to play in our wellbeing as an industry, and that effective communication of Indigenous communities is also really important." She discussed the importance of "networking with local leadership and municipalities as a small tourism operator." Candace values those conversations.

Attendees were also able to learn from the international panelists on how rural tourism impacts the countries that they represent. Malia, from the Jordan Tourism Board discussed how "We need to look at and listen to local communities and engage them and make sure that government and the private sector are working together to identify the rules of community." She also mentioned that "We need to make sure there's no compromising on health care for them (the rural communities)



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and that we're not bring in anything to them as tourists." Claire, who is based in Nepal focuses her time on developing sustainable agritourism. She believes that "Getting tourists involved in agriculture can be one of the greatest values of tourism and that there is "an immersive educational side of tourism where travellers can bring home their experiences and new values."

Bryana Spur, a student attendee stated that "Initially, I was nervous about entering the tourism industry during such unprecedented times. However, the discussions I have heard today make me excited about the impact we as young tourism students will have on shaping the future of tourism both rurally and globally."

Not to worry if you missed the session, you can watch it anytime [here](#) at the bottom of the page.

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The School of Tourism Management Capilano University has been a leader in tourism education for more than 40 years and supports the PATA Canada Vancouver Student Chapter and Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Student Association (TRECSA) student groups in engaging with a broad range of initiatives that build student networks, leadership, community, and global citizenship.

School of Tourism Management: [www.capilanou.ca/tourism](http://www.capilanou.ca/tourism)

PATA Canada Vancouver Student Chapter: [www.patacapu.com](http://www.patacapu.com)

To learn more about TRECSA and PATA, visit our social media pages:



@capu.trecca and @pata.capu.studentchapter

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