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Chapter 9
Robust Innovation Anchors in Rural Wellbeing Tourism

Anne-Mette Hjalager
University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Anja Tuohino
University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Kaarina Tervo-Kankare
University of Oulu, Finland

Henna Konu
University of Eastern Finland, Finland

ABSTRACT

Innovation in tourism does not take place in a vacuum. Innovators find inspiration from many sources. This article identifies ten innovation anchors, e.g. critical trends that can guide the long-term innovation activity and lead to fundamentally new products, services, delivery mechanisms, organizational models, means of collaboration etc. Innovation anchors are robust as they are found persistently in the recent scholarly literature and appear on a consistent base in business related evidence. Rural wellbeing tourism is area of inquiry. The study reveals that innovation, in the future, can take further advantage of the following: 1) Towards a holistic wellbeing, 2) Connecting with nature and its resources, 3) Altruism included, 4) The rural as a medical prescription, 5) Work-life balance, 6) Wellbeing diversification the rural way, 7) Taking advantage of the climate squeeze, 8) Opening the digital channels, 9) A new puritanism rural style, and 10) The gear dimension.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a phenomenon under perpetual change and development. The geographical features constitute imperative attraction values (Hall & Page, 2014). Simultaneously, the material and immaterial features of the geography stimulate the innovation of new touristic products and services. In an era of increasing local as well as global completion, the careful and creative interpretation of what happens in the geographical space becomes more important.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss the foundations – innovation anchors - for the future of innovation in tourism. Innovation anchors are robust piles in the ground, they are developments and prospects that are likely to be of guiding value for innovating enterprises and destinations (Hjalager, 2002; Kozak, 2014; Mei et al, 2012). Accordingly, the study addresses trends in tourism, and there is a specific emphasis on wellbeing tourism.

The study also aims at contributing to the rural tourism research, hopefully with the future oriented view stimulating new directions in a research tradition which has had a focus on mainly authenticity and stability. There is a distinct need for further inquiries into innovations at the business level illuminating new business models in rural wellbeing. The study also attempts to move innovation studies further.

By definition, rural wellbeing tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings and that interconnects actively with local nature and community resources. Based on the rural tangible and intangible, openly accessible and commercial ingredients, wellbeing tourism is holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences.

Rural wellbeing tourism is related to wellness and health tourism, for example as defined by Sheldon and Bushell (2009), but it has a broader stance, and it might be seen as a further development of historical spa and wellness trends (Connell, 2006; Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Müller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Smith & Puczkó, 2009, 2014). Over the past decades spa and wellness tourism has increased in popularity, and a mushrooming of concepts takes place, for example into facets of spiritual tourism, thalasso specialities, occupational wellness tourism, yoga and meditation, and many forms of sauna (Smith & Puzckó, 2009, 2014). The development of the traditional spa and wellness resorts towards a more holistic paradigm is prevalent. According to García-Altés (2005) diverse demographic, economic and lifestyle related factors have enhanced this. Many people are stressed by living in work-obsessed, time-pressured, materialistic and over-individualistic societies (Laing & Weiler, 2008; Sheldon & Bushell, 2009; Smith & Puzckó, 2009, 2014). In addition, the aging population, changes in lifestyle and alternatives in tourism, where experienced travellers seek new experiences (Konu & Laukkanen, 2010), add to the increased emphasis on more holistically oriented wellness products (Koh et al., 2010; Lehto et al., 2006; Mak et al., 2009).

Smith and Puzckó (2009) have listed both internal and external factors that affect the growth of and the increased demand for wellness tourism. External factors include governmental policy, nutrition, psychology, therapy, and healing and medicine. Internal factors are the search for a community, a desire to "downsize", new spirituality, time-poor and cash-rich elite manners, and curiosity. They also mention fashion and tradition, obsession with self and celebrity, and fitness and sport.

It can be concluded that the main motivating push factors in the wellbeing and wellness tourism sector seem to be relaxation, escape, pampering, physical activity, avoiding burn out and mental wellbeing. Relaxation is in many cases connected to "rest" and "physical relaxation". Escape is in many studies seen as one of the most important motivations. Pampering seems to be a motivation that is characteristic of wellness and spa tourism (Laesser, 2011; Mak et al., 2009). Pampering is also connected to the enjoyment of comfort (Laesser, 2011). Physical activity includes sports and multiple activities, and also physical health and appearance with wellbeing implications. Mental wellbeing is a motivation that can be seen to be specific to wellness tourism. It includes motivations such as "to seek mental peacefulness" (Mak et al., 2009) and "to help me gain a sense of balance" (Lehto et al., 2006).

Health tourism and medical tourism concepts are used in conjunction with wellness tourism. According to García-Altés (2005) health tourism is based on travelling outside the home to take care of one's health, and the purpose of the trip can be healing illness or preventing it and promoting general health related wellbeing (Finnish Tourist Board, 2005; Kandampully, 2013; Suontausta & Tyni, 2005). In addition to preventing illness and maintaining wellbeing, the goal of wellbeing tourism is to experience pleasure and luxury. As forms of tourism, wellbeing tourism and healthcare tourism are not very distant from each other. For instance, healthcare tourists may travel to the same destinations and use the

Figure 1. The rural wellbeing tourism arena
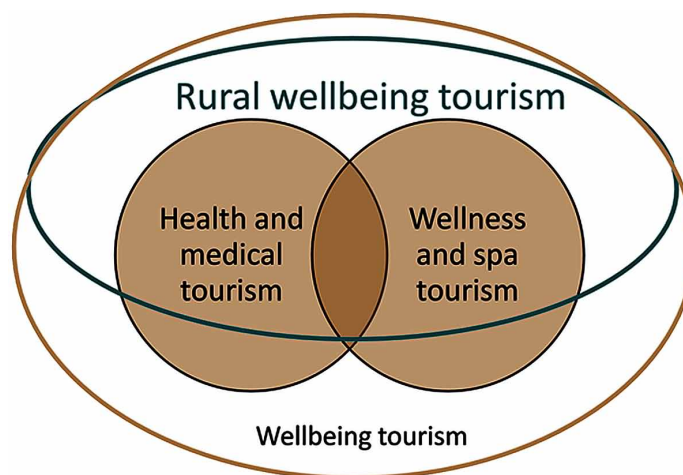
same recreational services as wellness tourists (Finnish Tourist Board, 2005; Müller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Suontausta & Tyni, 2005) (see Figure 1).

The ambition in this chapter is to loosen the backward looking perspectives on traditions and cultural heritage, so often seen when addressing the prospects for rural tourism (Briedenhan & Wickens, 2004; Hoggart et al., 2014; Roberts & Hall, 2001). It is also the aim to widen the ideas of wellbeing and the traditional spa and wellness phenomenon. Hence, the plan is to investigate tendencies for the future that might positively or negatively affect what actors can make of wellbeing tourism in a rural setting.

Trend Studies as Guidance for Innovation Processes

Trend and future studies have been well-known for a large number of years, and they seem to remain of importance as the speed of change is amplifying and the complexities of societies tend to increase. This also accounts for tourism related issues and (rural) places that accommodate for tourism. Trend and future studies can be regarded as indispensable instruments in continual development processes. The future will, of course, always be open and unpredictable, and trend research does not have the full capacity to predict long-term (or even medium- and short-term) situations with any impressive accuracy (Slaughter, 1995). However, the worthy aim of the endeavour is to raise attention, at the earliest possible stage, to changes that might eventually affect the normal lives of people, enterprises or communities. Trend and future studies try to travel into the future in order to inform the present. This is about creating both individual and collective foresight and planning aptitude. Users of trend studies are business sectors, governmental bodies and NGOs. Early awareness can lead to a suitable reaction or pro-action to exploit opportunities or, for that case, to prevent disasters.

Trend and future studies are recognised as being informative contributions to innovation processes, mainly in the first phases where ideas are generated (Cuhls & Johnston, 2008), but also on a continual base when enterprises need to adjust and develop. Trend studies are elements in a long list of tools available for destinations, as the geographical aspects are crucial in tourism (Kozak, 2014; Moutinho et al, 2013).

Marketing research has applied trend studies to a significant extent (Aburdene, 2007; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990; Varey, 2013; von Groddeck & Schwarz, 2013). In fact, from a broader tourism perspective, such studies have been applied to a considerable extent in tourism fields, for example in attempting

to predict the risks and implications of environmental developments (Edwards et al., 2008; Gössling et al., 2010) and as a means of identifying new customer segments and understanding their behaviour (Buhalis et al., 2006; Leigh et al., 2013). Wellbeing travel activity (and particularly wellness and spa tourism) has also received immense attention in academic and trade trend studies (Smith & Puczkó, 2013, 2014). Currently, broader wellbeing perspectives are included in tourism trends studies, but the field is still emerging (Hjalager et al., 2011; Konu, 2010).

In this chapter, a trend is understood as *the particular direction that something, over time, is developing into. The situation is not yet there in extended forms, but possibly there in embryonic forms.*

Trend analysis is the practice of collecting information and attempting to spot a pattern, or *trend*, in the available information. It includes for example forecasting based on historical data. Additionally, studies may detail the driving factors that enhance embryonic tendencies into mainstream futures. Analysis can also consist of the identification of upcoming phenomena among first-mover customers and enterprises. Methods are many and include extracting information from interviews or behavioural studies, where such first-movers expose their thoughts, tastes and preferences.

Leaning on the literature, in particular Aburdene (2007), Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990), Varey (2013) and von Groddeck and Schwarz (2013) it makes sense to distinguish between the trend formats at different levels. At higher levels, the impact may be comprehensive, and the possibility to affect limited, and strategies will mainly be adaptive in nature. At lower levels, actors e.g. enterprises, governments and organisation, will, to a higher extent, be able to become game changers.

- **Gigatrends:** Large evolutions, for example demographic shifts, refer to changes in various aspects of population statistics, such as size, racial and ethnic composition, birth and mortality rates, geographic distribution, age and income. Gigatrends may also comprise major science and technology inventions. Economic dynamics are changes in the production and exchange of goods and services globally, and gigatrends map principal changes in the policy approaches to prices, unemployment, banking, capital and wealth distribution etc. Environmental changes and challenges can be considered important gigatrends. Eventually, gigatrends define social and cultural shifts in core values, beliefs, ethics and moral standards.

- **Paradigms:** Ways of understanding how society operates, for example how political ideas and regulations can shape the prospects for enterprises and the lives of people. Paradigms are prevalent for example in the fields of health and welfare, where they govern the way that facilities are provided for citizens. Paradigms – for example, ideas about certification and data openness – emerge to be of relevance for tourism and wellbeing. In some cases the sophisticated interlinkage of paradigms takes place in order to create a higher level of political coherence and synergy.

- **Megatrends:** Patterns that last for some years or even decades and define how people choose to live their lives. Megatrends include for example holiday patterns that reflect the fact of an ageing population or the development towards one-person households. Megatrends include values related to leisure and spirituality, and attitudes to responsibility in health and wellbeing. Megatrends also embrace issues about the nature of human interaction including the role of technology in enhancing human connectivity. Megatrends may express comprehensive prospected changes in consumption patterns; for example as a response to environmental or economic constraints.

- **Fashions:** Short-term changing styles and consumption manners. This is about new food products, upcoming colour schemes and tastes and also must-experience hypes related to tourism. To a considerable extent, fashions are adopted by people in order to mark their social connectivity.

In practice the distinctions between these four categories are not entirely clear, but nevertheless the list provides an idea of levels. In this chapter the trends provided will mainly have a focus on megatrends but with references to paradigms as well as to examples from fashions.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

This trend study is elaborated with the following interrelated steps:

A literature review of academic sources has been performed, with a particular emphasis on contributions that address not only wellness but also a wider range of wellbeing and health prospects. This study does not have a uniformly rural perspective as new trends and consumer needs may emerge in urban agglomerations yet be applied in rural settings and contexts to raise new and different market perspectives. The literature review also looks into sources that address ecosystems services, thus assuming that human wellbeing is in this context based on daring reinterpretations of how nature and rural space can serve the desires of tourists.

Further, the process includes a search through commercial and trade-based trend studies with an emphasis on tourism and wellness. These sources are plentiful and tend to draw attention to the commercially directed demands of "first movers". They offer particular insight into consumption patterns and fashions, which can provide supplements to the academic literature.

A "trend workshop" with 21 participants in the ProWell research project group was organized. The participants were business and DMO professionals mixed with a group of tourism researchers from five countries: Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway. The trend session took place in two phases. First, sub-groups of three were asked, in a moving and dynamic process, to respond to possible future scenarios, some of these less likely occur than others. Those proposed elements had emerged from the literature and trade search as described above, presented to the participants in preparatory session. During the second phase reshuffled groups were, in a similarly dynamic process, urged to suggest more specific innovative rural wellbeing products with a commercial twist and consumer appeal.

The material from the workshop, in the form of many post-its, was the first step in the elaboration of trend proposals for this text. The statements provided were organized according to topic, and then reorganized on a "disruption axis" (Hjalager, 2014). Disruptive innovations are such technological social, institutional or other changes than may lead to the replacement of otherwise well-established products, services with entirely new ones. In the process some enterprises may fail and die, while others will thrive. The post-its were then again re-grouped by the researchers so as to generate coherent trends. A quite large majority of the contributions from workshop participants suggested trends with fairly cautious attitudes to the future, and some participants struggled with escaping the links to past trajectories. They mainly came up with bids and ideas for sustaining and enhancing natural resources. Many of these were, at an early stage of the trend building, omitted from the process. Dimensions of radical disruption were seen but not often, but did occur, particularly in the fields of enterprise internal service improvements. This analysis of the workshop contributions led to critical reconsiderations of the potential speed and scope of future changes. Thus, the process of analysis has raised reflections that might be of importance for an assessment of actors' inclination not only to envisage changes but also to proactively work for their occurrence at an accelerated speed.

In the following, the ten identified innovation anchors will be presented.

Innovation Anchor 1: Towards Holistic Wellbeing

Tourism no longer just provides opportunities to relax and recover from arduous daily lives with stress-ful working conditions, overburdened and spatially confined family lives, long commutes and polluted city climates. For many holidaymakers in modern welfare societies daily life is actually challenging and beneficial, and people are used to high-class facilities at or near home, or even at the workplace. However, that does not lower the demand for interesting and rewarding holiday experiences but requirements in terms of quality and variety tend to increase.

Tourists may seek contrasts to their daily life but also the enhancement of preferred lifestyle elements and life endeavours. Holidays are intermingled with and are part of a whole-life progression where it is essential to keep a balance, remain capable to face changes and prevent lifestyle related negative symptoms (such as burn-out, tension, stress) with a sense of control.

Wellness centres and spas are responsive to this change, and many of them are changing names and practices towards "body and mind". The range of water-based treatments, balance exercises, massages, muscle therapies, acupuncture services, chiropractic care, reflexology services etc. are being continuously developed. But increasingly, such spas and wellness facilities also include, for example, yoga, stress coaching, training of communication skills etc. "Whole individual" concepts lead to the integration of nutritional counselling, psychotherapy, emotional guidance and other elements of functional body and mind care.

From a rural perspective this trend can be regarded as highly promising, as the use of outdoor facilities in the body and mind integration may become far more prevalent. Reconnection with nature is shown to improve mental and emotional wellbeing more than just indoors relaxation, exercising or receiving therapy and guidance. Traditional spas expand outside with gardens and trails into nature. Entrepreneurs in the field provide, for example, riding therapy or other facilities that allow a (re)connection with animals. Kayaking, trekking or other physical sports and activities are also reinterpreted into body and mind totality concepts. Spiritual training and stress therapy may rely on the interpretative interlinkages between nature and healing but also relate directly to narratives of healing "powers" and "flows" in specific natural environments.

Many people now in their fifties and sixties are captivated by the concepts of body and mind wellness. They are well aware of the potentially longer lifespans that they may face and the need for preventive health and fitness. They want to go on holiday, but they will not want to return home feeling sluggish and weighing three kilos more than when they left.

Innovation Anchor 2: Connecting with Nature and its Resources

Traditional wellness products tend to be international, and wellness concepts travel. It is possible to acquire Dead Sea treatments all over the world, and Wat Pho traditional Thai wellness massage may be more well-recognized in the US than in Thailand. Volcanic rocks are shipped to equip hot stone massages in many non-volcanic places. However there is a tendency to relate wellbeing tourism more with the specific local and natural resources, and base it on what is available in order to ensure the development of new wellbeing products and services.

For example, thalassotherapy is well-known but there can be an emphasis on exploring local algae, seaweed and alluvial mud in combination with climates and marine environments so as to not only create

new touristic experiences but also to efficiently link up the local and regional spaces in a way that can assist recognition, image and branding.

Food is a major object for this endeavour, used to reconnect and to boost the wellbeing dimensions in rural tourism. Shying away from typical tourist behaviour, tourists express an interest in authentic experiences and community-based exploration, and food allows them to get to know locals in a meaningful way. A tendency consists of the inviting attitudes that intersect soundly with wellness travel, for example, the opportunity to attend cooking classes, learn about local agriculture and to participate in river and open sea fishing. It is a particular experience to follow food on its way from the farm/sea to the table that emphasizes the emotional, social, intellectual and sustainable aspects of wellbeing. Local food related traditions and events may also be opportunities in terms of wellbeing developments, such as "medical food plant festivals", an "apple and cider harvesting, preparation and tasting event" etc.

Working with ambience, for example how it is created by building style and building materials, underlines the connectivity between tourism facilities and rural resources. A rural setting can encourage the use of stone, wood, water, clay creating an ambience that can enhance the feeling of wellbeing and also create distinctive images of place and space while also emphasising multidimensional connectivity with nature.

Innovation Anchor 3: The Altruistic Fling

Very clearly, traditional spas and wellness centres have a focus on the individual's ego, his or her enjoyment and pleasure (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010). The products and services can be described as pampering, often also with the social element of being together with others with the same aspirations. Habitually, a prime matter of attention for customers in spas is the quality level that is likely to be synonymous with the standard of luxury.

However, new strata of holidaymakers tend to recognize that they do not necessarily leave a wider responsibility at home when they travel to their holiday destination. It is not only about having a good time but also about being responsible and taking care of the social and physical environment. There are enhanced psychological and economic links between altruism and wellbeing. Giving back is often found to be more joyous than receiving, and it is correlated positively with happiness and health. "Voluntourism" has become an increasingly popular travel option. Affluent and well-educated travellers looking for personal growth and discovery are turning to experiences that connect them to charitable causes and local communities while on vacation. The pleasure of contributing to a higher purpose is indeed a wellbeing issue.

This can be considered an opportunity for many rural areas. However, altruism is not a product that develops itself and it is demanding in terms of entrepreneurial creativity, initiative and local follow-up. Touristic products can consist of, for example, letting tourists assist in fields or help out in environmental and nature regeneration projects. Less strenuous versions can be the "adoption" of environmentally vulnerable trees, endangered species or historical buildings, where tourists both co-finance and commit themselves to operating as ambassadors for the protection of such resources.

Spiritual resources (religious sites, magical natural phenomena etc.) may be particularly powerful in terms of creating platforms for relationships between locals and guests in a way that may lead to a beneficial feeling of wellbeing. There is a plea for considerate rural wellbeing entrepreneurs with high ethical standards. Wellbeing products in this category require reciprocity.

Innovation Anchor 4: Rural as a Medical Prescription

Welfare economies in the EU are under financial pressure, and the constraints may increase with an ageing population, but also paradoxically as a consequence of better medical treatment opportunities. There is a trend that there will be an intensified focus on preventive medicine in order to stop expanded public expenditure, and populations will be required to take more self-preventive action.

It is not unusual for persons with health risks to take trips on their "doctor's orders", as physicians increasingly prescribe vacations as antidotes to stress. Doctors may recommend various kinds of physical activity to combat obesity and diabetes. In this development, rural areas can potentially become the location for a niche health business with services in care and treatments, and in the training of citizens so that they raise the level of their self-care competences.

Nature as a healer is widely discussed and quite well documented but still to some extent it lacks commodification. For example, silence may be a health remedy but enjoying silence properly prompts a demand for supplementary accommodation, catering, transport etc.

A restriction to such prospects may be the requirement for standardized and certified medical treatment provided by trained and professional staff. Such human resources might be lacking in areas far from urban agglomerations. Presently, preventive health provision in rural areas is often mainly found in unorthodox medical specialties. Overcoming the barriers and building bridges between alternative medical practices and mainstream health systems is a task for rural actors who will want to exploit the potential that emerges from this trend. This strategy alley also embraces inviting new health experts to start businesses in rural areas.

Innovation Anchor 5: Work–Life Balance

This trend represents a challenge to the standard understanding of citizenship. The assumption is that "dual" or even "triple" or "quadruple" citizenships will emerge, and people will not only live in one single place. Technology allows the emergence of virtual workspaces and simultaneously work will become less spatially restricted – the workplace can be moved between urban and rural localities. In the future, the inclination to combine work, leisure and tourism in outdoor environments will become more pronounced and integrated into comprehensive life strategies. We are talking about creating an optimal work–life balance for families with young children, semi-retired professionals and also for people in other phases of their lives.

The customers for rural wellbeing in this category will be private persons and possibly also enterprises. Occupational health issues related to work–life balance may become reshuffled, particularly in the case of indispensable employees with scarce qualifications and competences. If indispensable staff suffers from stress and also health threatening obesity, mental problems etc. it is a major concern for employers. Embracing employers as potential customers for wellbeing tourism may call for entirely new types of spatial organization and modes of collaboration. Partnerships with insurance companies and professional medical bodies may also become more prevalent.

Rural areas, particularly in attractive vicinities of urban agglomerations, may have to organize spaces and services in order to be more attractive for beta citizens. Beta citizens have homes in several places and they feel at home, for example, both in towns and in rural areas. Typically, they are mobile job-wise. In terms of adding to the wellbeing profile of a rural community, it is a core challenge and undertaking to make these inhabitants feel like citizens and not like just tourists or guests. The term "tourist" may

become less concise, and there is a necessity to reconceptualize the idea of a rural community and what is a "homeland". In addition, there is a demand for reconsidering the locations and designs of beta homes for beta citizens, possibly also including mobile categories thereof.

Innovation Anchor 6: Wellbeing Diversification the Rural Way

Above, it was emphasized that rural areas possess many resources of relevance for human wellbeing, resources that are specific for areas outside urban agglomerations and related to the existence of geographical breadth and open spaces. The rural also comprises resources that are related to rural traditions and practices that can be integrated into the development of new products. Any ambition to develop and innovate wellbeing tourism products may include the material or immaterial assets of the place. Rural wellbeing tourism may become significantly more than accommodation and spa facilities in rural areas.

However it must also be envisaged that rural areas are in competition with urban areas and that resources, however firmly defined as rural, may not be sacred and strapped to the rural environment. Continuously urban areas are found to steal, copy, transfer, and reconstruct rural wellbeing resources. For example, London is planning a green bridge over the Thames, which is a natural area in the middle of the city. Copenhagen has a scheme to establish a large ski-mountain, integrated into the harbour leisure development. It makes it increasingly difficult for rural areas to genuinely distinguish themselves and to profit from their rural resources. These are not "real" rural facilities, but in the mindset of some city-dwellers these facilities can nonetheless be perfect substitutes, and "rubanization" is a very consistent and strong trend, such as illustrated by Gražulevičiūtė-Vileniškė & Zaleskienė, (2014).

Good odds may exist if rural areas can maintain an interlinked, multidimensional rural profile. Such composite styles and trends will be harder to mimic by urban wellbeing actors. It will require a significant collaborative organizational setup in rural areas, if the image of the rural should transgress the products of several providers in a larger area.

A consistent and constant reinvention of traditional rural tourism products may also be a crucial ingredient. In addition, this will require professional inputs as well as local commitment and foresight.

It is worth noticing that rural wellbeing products, as they are now, mainly rely on fairly "superficial" and easily understandable resources, for example forests, wind, water, food etc. Less intensively, attempts are seen to include "hidden" and "intricate" resources. An outsider's view is essential to "excavate" such resources. Future rural wellbeing may embrace the extraction of resources less "beautiful" and obvious, for example resources available in mining areas, on seabeds or in less accessible nature areas in general. This can, for example, inventively lead to "shock" therapies or "dirty" experiences. The excavation of nonconformist resources can include new types of raw materials for the portfolio of spa products or food ingredients and also experiences where the tourists interact with the resources as part of wellbeing consumption. This kind of diversification may be less replicable by actors in urban settings and thus be a way to maintain a competitive profile and distance.

Innovation Anchor 7: Taking Advantage of the Climate Squeeze

There are many predictions about the changed and changing climate, but quite consistently, scientists assume that the weather in Northern Europe is likely to become more unstable, with more severe, rough incidents with heavy rain, storms and flooding. Gradually, the average temperature will probably rise. For better or worse, these are very important signals for rural wellbeing tourism.

Basically, warmer temperatures will benefit the rural tourism product as much of the experience takes place in outdoor environments. Biodiversity may benefit or degrade in a changed climate. Seasons may be prolonged. However, unpredictable weather conditions will urge a need to develop products that will be attractive no matter what the weather conditions are. This may consist of an increased emphasis on indoor facilities, possibly with opportunities to gaze at nature, in case outdoor environments are not accessible all the time and in all seasons. In winter sports areas, climate changes are particularly complex and ambiguous.

Alternatively, the development of touristic wellbeing products may take advantage of the volatility and enhance products that can make sense of and take advantage of, for example, heavy rainfalls or extreme winds. New categories of outdoor equipment may be invented for this purpose, with narratives that support the experience to follow. Likewise, the development may include safety equipment, remedies and procedures so that the wellbeing element is not compromised.

Slowly, sustainability is moving into tourism as a managerial prerequisite. Some spa facilities are taking their environmental footprint very seriously. The dimensions such as savings of water and energy are readily delivered in awareness messages to customers.. However, the distinct rural particularities – in general and in the specific locality – still need emphasis and communication to a tourism audience.

Innovation Anchor 8: Opening the Digital Channels

Social media influences all aspects of tourism. However, the communication imperative can be so intense that people nearly become "digital addicts", and in this case rural wellbeing can be a chance to turn off the mobile phone and the computer, and become disconnected for a period of time – for example for the purpose of reducing stress or addressing other health issues. The rural may offer medically supported help for digital addition victims. Thus, the rural environment can be an escape, a hideaway from the monstrous "surveillance" of daily life, and the tourist can be provided with the freedom to do things that are socially not fully accepted.

However, digital connectivity may offer opportunities in the completely opposite direction for rural wellbeing tourism. Potentially, users of social media do not want to be disconnected. This can be considered essential, which intrinsically means moving away from the social variety and turmoil of agglomerated places, but staying in digital contact. People may seek rural silence and peacefulness but within limitations: social media provides the (self-controlled) possibility to stay connected. While on holiday they may even increase their inclination to tell others about their experiences and thus compensate for disadvantages of geographical distance. They will be the nodes in interrelatedness across geographies. For rural tourism destinations and facilities the high frequency of updates is a "viral word of mouth".

Social media is entering the rural and outdoor experiencescapes in other important ways. Tracking instruments can map personal performances on trails – for example distance, speed, endurance, moods and feelings. Systems can tag places of particular interest visited. The results are "personal" data, which may affect the individual's behaviour. The performance data and tagging can, however, also be shared with friends, and they can be the initiators of new relationships, for example with other people who incidentally happen to be in the same rural area at the same time. Indirectly and through social media, valuable marketing may take place outside the specific region. The e-rumour is, of course, difficult or impossible for rural destinations or wellbeing enterprises to control. Working in social media environments is a new discipline for rural wellbeing operators, and integrating them into rural storytelling and ever-evolving narratives is a challenge.

In this process of adapting to new ways of communication, rural actors will have to reinterpret their roles and the roles of the visitors. Visitors are not only customers; they may also be friends, associates, collaborators and information pushers. If the relationship goes wrong, the visitors may become communicators with negative implications; disseminating reproachful and, in the worst case, wrongful information.

Innovation Anchor 9: New Puritanism – The Rural Style

Immanently, the rural has connotations with being "pure", "clean" and "healthy". Taking a wider stance, the rural can be the environment for initiating a healthier lifestyle, and popular self-help literature offers many allegations for this endeavour, for example de-clotting, de-toxication, simplicity, recycling, slow living etc. The rural may be the perfect place to acquire the genuine competences and skills to shift from an over-complex and hectic modern lifestyle to a purer one.

This wellbeing trend manifests itself in many, although not exactly coherent, ways. Enterprises in the rural tourism wellbeing field may grab this opportunity, for example by providing "grow-your-own food" and "collect-your-own herbs" courses and events, offering simple health treatments using local plants and foods in detox etc. The built ambience can also illustrate a strategic pureness, for example in the use of building materials, the handling of waste etc.

However, an honest shift may include a wider community in order to give an air of solemnity and urgency. The emerging "Slow Cities movement" demonstrates an indication of how a concept can gain some momentum by a comprehensive and coordinated attention and branding. Slow Cities is also an illustration of the fact that models must become global in order to gain dynamism and the power of persuasion. This is a challenge for small and remote rural areas, which are not always well accommodated within these context relevant competences and high quality global connections.

Innovation Anchor 10: The Gear Dimension

Rural wellbeing tourism can appear to be extremely simple, for example it may just consist of taking a walk in pastures bordered with wild flowers, listening to birdsong. Equally unpretentious is gazing at natural phenomena or relaxing in the midst of rural features. However, rural wellbeing tourism may also require a whole range of range of equipment, technologies and gear for the visitor to get the full benefit of the experience. There is a drift towards experiences that are enhanced, expanded and enriched by the use of technological add-ons. Examples are prevalent in wilderness and outdoor adventure travel, where the variety of gear is expanding, for example in terms of tents, clothing, communication and navigation equipment, safety tools, food and drink gadgets, fashion accessories etc. Likewise, traditional spa facilities are also being filled up with many types of spa products, cosmeceuticals, sauna choices, fitness and massage tools etc. and spa enterprises strive to augment the variety of provided attractive sounds, tastes etc. for the totality of outdoor and indoor enjoyment.

The gear, equipment and tools for wellbeing tourism are often of international standards, produced (in China) without any particular local aesthetic or functional accent. The trend is, however, to add local flavours and specifications for the enjoyment of the guests. Spa products can be produced using local herb ingredients. Healthy food can be grown and prepared in the area. However, seemingly little is done to widen the range of local products co-innovated with the wellbeing tourism industry.

Achievement in this field might benefit the visitors by providing a wider variety and more interesting experiences. Technology can also be a remedy to lower the cost of wellbeing services, so that

they can be available to the less affluent strata. Another impact is that gear, equipment and tools can be purchased in the rural destination and taken home; this can eventually create economic activity and employment in other business sectors than tourism. Finally, the image of a destination travels with the gear – for example a type of equipment that carries the name of a place or is related to, for example, a special type of locally specific treatment or activity. Accordingly, the gear dimension can constitute a multidimensional diversification tactic.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

This chapter sought to capture ten trends that may affect the future of rural wellbeing tourism:

- A movement towards holistic wellbeing.
- Connecting with nature and its resources.
- The altruistic fling.
- The rural as a medical prescription.
- Work–life balance.
- Wellbeing diversification the rural way.
- Taking advantage of the climate squeeze.
- Opening digital channels.
- New puritanism – the rural style.
- The gear dimension.

Noticeably, modern tourists will want the rural wellbeing product. However, demand changes due to complex demographic, environmental, economic and other shifts in society. In spite of the fact that spa tourism has demonstrated considerable growth rates over the past decades (Bushell & Sheldon, 2009; Voigt & Pforr, 2013), rural wellbeing is far more than just building additional spas. The process applied in the study suggests that destinations and providers would support and recommend a gradual and not too fast development of new products and services rather, and they are sceptical about changing the ideas about the products drastically. In rural practice, the pace of innovation in destination will have to reflect both market forces and entrepreneurial capacities.

Going in greater detail, the outline of the trends suggests that rural areas have development and market opportunities in the wellbeing fields, and there are distinctive nature-based resources available that can be the foundation of innovative progressions of products. It also becomes clear that rural areas are in multifaceted and rather severe competitive situations with urban areas, and they will have to take a closer look at trends and cultivate a suitable anticipation of their prospects. However, the trends illustrate that rural areas need to foster strategic relationships with actors in urban areas, as rural communities and actors seldom possess the full array of skills and investor potential for a massive expansion into wellbeing tourism in its wider varieties.

The trend analysis is far from definite, and there are considerable uncertainties about the when and how changes will affect rural practices. A micro-spatial approach is required to assess this. There is also a significant ambiguity about where in space new ideas will be created and how they will disseminate to other geographical areas. The study includes the participation of a number of countries in Northern Europe, and these countries represent quite different economic backgrounds, traditions, institutional

structures and policy directions. Progress with rural wellbeing anchors and ideas will hardly be entirely uniform across this geographical area.

The literature about innovation processes in tourism at the enterprise and destination levels is still only modestly developed, and more diverse arrays of tools could be tested following the initial effort in this study. Preferably increased interest will be in studies that are experimental in nature and that takes place in collaboration between researchers, wellbeing tourism services and possibly also such groups of customers who can be regarded as "first-movers". In addition, future research is needed to uncover the capabilities of change in rural areas and the nature of competition between rural and urban wellbeing providers. Such endeavour based on empirical evidence may lead to grounded theoretical re-orientation of the innovation-in-tourism research. Each of the ten anchors raises a number of more specific prospects and problems and many of these lack solid academic inquiry. In particular the suggested trajectories in anchors 9 and 10 touch upon issues that have only recently emerged in the research literature, and where further inquiry is needed.

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