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## EDITORIAL

### Re-purposing tourism: Engaging our Radical in Tourism Education

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## Introduction

TEFI 11 was hosted in June 2020 inviting delegates to reflect on the theme *Re-purposing tourism: Engaging our radical in tourism education*. With seven decades of growth in international tourist arrivals leading up to COVID-19, scholars and practitioners have been tasked with confronting the inimical and urgent concerns regarding the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts generated by the industry (Boluk, Cavaliere & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Specifically, the issues of overtourism, the climate crisis, the availability and quality of tourism work, the capacity of communities to accommodate tourism and the ability of the natural environment to regenerate, have mutually attracted media, public attention, and the scholarly literature (e.g., Carnicelli & Boluk, 2022; 2020; Lundmark, Zhang & Hall, 2021). Such discussions highlight the unsustainable nature of the current industrial models of tourism necessitating reflection and action (Dredge, 2017; Robinson et al., 2019; Sheldon, Pollock & Daniele, 2017). In addition to sustainability concerns, political activism in support of Black Lives Matter and the wider racialized voices matter movements, precipitating the death of George Floyd, necessitates we urgently challenge the operation of tourism which has been a vehicle for oppression towards minority and marginalized groups (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019), supporting systemic racism. We must determine how we can change this.

While the mainstream and scholarly literature has proposed the onset of COVID-19 and subsequent halt in tourism presents us with the opportunity to revision, and repurpose tourism (e.g., Everingham & Chassagne, 2020) re-envisioning a sector requires identifying our purpose and being radical in the way we teach and practice tourism. With this in mind, and in support of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative's (TEFI) ambition to move beyond business as usual and using value oriented teaching as our vehicle (see Edenheim, Joppe & Flaherty, *forthcoming*) our call for papers sought to radically challenge and debate the purpose of tourism and tourism education. This Special Issue is inspired by the TEFI11 virtual conference on the same theme, hosted by York St John University in June 2020. Given the isolation COVID-19 has prompted globally, and in consideration of the many crises (environmental, humanitarian, health, political, economic etc.) we are confronted with, there is no better time to reflect on our purpose.

### Setting the Scene: Purposeful Tourism

Aaron Hurst's (2014) critical analysis illustrates a fourth economy focused on purpose stemming from the agrarian, industrial, and information economies. The purpose economy reflects the needs of our society, centering sharing, community, and getting back to our neighbourhoods, emphasising experiences, enhancing relationships, doing something greater than ourselves, and personal growth where purpose is the primary driver to human output (Hurst, 2014). Purpose is what motivates us. Excavating our purpose and those of others, provides an opportunity to find common ground. Purposeful tourism is about creating sustainable places to live, work and visit, based on co-creating values *with* communities that is focused on localisation and more than the pursuit of profit (Phi & Dredge, 2019 ; Higgins-Desbiolles, Doering & Bigby, 2022).

Purposeful tourism education is about creating values-based teaching to set the scene for future world makers (Edenheim, Joppe & Flaherty, *forthcoming*). Purpose is intentional and requires a commitment to iterative learning and reflexivity about one's decisions, behaviours, and choices. A purposeful tourist must be honest and demonstrate restraint regarding the amount and types of travel one chooses to embark on. A for-purpose business strives to deliver more than just profit, often delivering social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits to other stakeholders or communities because it is "the right thing to do." The goal of our call for papers was to reflect on how purpose drives us to be radical agents in the delivery of our pedagogy, and within our broader communities. We, the editors of this special issue have reflected on purpose within the context of our TEFI11 conference and what this may mean for us our involvement with TEFI now and in the future.

The peripatetic lifestyle of academicians is troublesome and comes at a cost; if our work is to have posterity, we must honestly and critically reflect on the values informing our practices and respond radically. As such, TEFI11 challenged the academic community to consider ways to promote purposeful travel and purposeful work. Tourism education is at the forefront of this challenge as we, educators, and practitioners, critically seek ways to enhance tourism practices and, through our radical actions, challenge the collapse of biodiversity and the silencing of host communities affected by the various impacts of tourism. It is within this context, our contributors' examine "purpose", and the potential criticality and radicality "purpose" has to facilitate transformation to a less harmful kind of tourism.

## Contributions to this Special Issue

The call for papers for this Special Issue of JTTT invited authors who seek to explore purposeful tourism in tourism education. It was a call that encouraged the ambition to move beyond “business as usual” and venture into writing papers that seek to radically challenge and debate the purpose of tourism itself, as well as tourism education. This is an ambition found in the network Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI). TEFI understands purpose as the motivation behind actions, be they the planned design of a teaching session, intentional business models or any other phenomena that is based on a value-driven sense of “why we do what we do”.

The process of selection, reviews and collaborative interaction between the guest editors, external peer reviewers, and authors has rendered an issue consisting of an introductory editorial, report from the TEFI conference which was the starting point for initiating this Special Issue and four contributions. Together, these texts create a broad presentation of not only the TEFI values, but also different perspectives on their meaning, as well as how they may be translated into practice. Worth noting here is that neither the call nor the selected texts set partaking in any current or prior TEFI activities as a prerequisite. Rather, this Special Issue is just as all aspects of TEFI are: open to any contributions and individuals who perceive the values formulated as professionalism, stewardship, knowledge, ethics and mutuality as an agreeable context to be in.

The first article of this Special Issue, uses a master program in Sweden to illuminate how more experiential, action-oriented learning can complement a curriculum even when it is designed to entail reflection and vocational sections (Farsari, 2021). Such changes are according to the analysis presented by the author, not intended solely to further the understanding of tourism among the students but also – and in the context of this Special Issue theme not least – a way for pedagogues to keep their own self-reflection active and in dialogue with the surrounding educational situation. Reflexivity is important process considered in Aquino’s (2021) contribution. Specifically, this contribution stresses the essential nature of self-reflectivity to not only raise awareness of the limitations of objectivity, but also aid in creating an understanding of the viewpoints of others, even when they might conflict with one’s own views. The case presented addresses nature, culture, and wildlife management, but the discussion goes further into how practice is inevitably based on our own philosophical understandings, even when we have not formulated them as such.

All contributions in our Special Issue touch upon the aspect of unpredictability within teaching and learning. Miller, Balslev Clausen and Cater’s (2021), exploratory research attends to the limited tourism scholarship examining the pedagogical value of *trouble*. The authors’ turn the table by presenting what may be perceived as logistical trouble for educators and cognitive trouble for students, as potential pedagogical tools in creating a deeper understanding. Again, reflectivity can be detected as a way forward to formulating purpose and purposeful activities, and therefore a vital aspect for students and educators alike and essential in their interaction with each other. de Bernardi’s (2021) contribution reflects the critical role of communicating values in our axiological approach. By pursuing values-based education and interaction, one implicitly presents a set of values that may and should be used as a basis for education and understanding. Thereby, de Bernardi (2021) points to an aspect of presenting a set of values as aspirational that must not be ignored.

Planning, supporting, and executing a Special Issue during a pandemic is a reminder that it takes a village to support such projects. In addition to those who contributed to our special issue, we are

eternally grateful to those who accepted our request to carry out a peer review; especially given the pandemic context. Our reviewers jointly reflected established and emerging critical voices, with expertise in the areas of critical and innovative pedagogical practices, value-oriented pedagogy, sustainability, and tourism. We would also like to acknowledge the incredible support of this Special Issue provided by Kara Wolfe, Editor of the *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*.

## Where to Next?

This Special Issue and group of editors are both based on the activities within the global network of TEFI. Inherent in TEFI's vision is to present a kind of generosity that in an academic context may be perceived as radical in its openness to individuals in all stages of their academic lifespan. In essence, it offers potential spaces for care and attention, that are not limited by space nor professional obligations. The pandemic has presented new challenges to educators and students alike. In response to, and to show acknowledgement of this, TEFI has partnered with Tourism RESET and is planning a two-day symposium targeting graduate students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs). The goal is to create caring spaces for dialogue regarding how our networks and the wider academic community may enhance supports for graduate students and ECRs, to ensure they flourish, with attention to their personal well-being.

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