ISTO – International Week Fair & Sustainable Tourism For All

How to ensure everyone’s right to holiday in Flanders, in Covid19 times and after.

Date & Hour
23rd June 2021 – 16.15pm

By
Seppe Dams
Flora et Labora

VISITFLANDERS' VISION AND STRATEGY
Why are we moving towards tourism with added value?
FROM
Just ‘more’ Returns on investments

TO
Added value and Social returns

FLURISHING FLANDERS
OUR VISION

We want to strengthen the role of tourism as a positive force, ensuring Flanders can thrive as an innovative, inspiring and qualitative travel destination, for the benefit of its inhabitants, entrepreneurs and visitors.
our strategy
on the basis of
five key principles

1. Creating added value for all stakeholders in a balanced manner.
2. Generating connections between people, places and activities within a unique story.
3. Stimulating participation.
4. Prioritising quality, with room for innovation and creativity.
5. Working on the basis of strategy and knowledge.
Six themes which connect into the DNA of Flanders

- Heritage experience
- Flanders Naturally!
- Culinary Flanders
- Flanders as a cycling country
- Why Holidays Matter (iedereen Verdient Vakantie)
- Conferences and events
Why Holidays Matter

1. Growing and Condensing Network
2. Creative and Innovative Initiatives
3. Social Rates and Booking Procedures
4. One Coordination Point
Two main policies:
- Government subsidies (youthwork infrastructure/social tourist organisations/Care Hotels)
- Why Holidays Matter network
A NETWORK OF DIFFERENCE MAKERS

MORE THAN 2000 PARTNERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE IN POVERTY

Social organisations & Easy on Holiday offices

Other partners

Tourist Partners

Holiday makers
COVID19 – A PANDEMIC

HUGE CONSEQUENCES

TOURISM PARTNERS:
- closed & no income (March till May 2020 and again later on)
- Summer 2020: trying to compensate so no room for

SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS & OTHER REFERRAL PARTNERS:
- closed down
- no contact or other priorities

HOLIDAY MAKERS
- lots of fear & isolation (or extreme opposite eg conspiracies,...)
- even less income

OTHER PARTNERS
- often closed as well
SUPPORT PACKAGE

- 30+ million Euro in total
- For both subsidised partners as well as the network
SUPPORT PACKAGE

SUBSIDISED: 20.5 MILLION EURO
- Youthwork infrastructure & youth hostels
- Social tourism vacation ngo’s
- Care Hotels

NETWORK WHY HOLIDAYS MATTER
- 5 million for holiday organisations, accomodations & recreational partners AND holiday goers (65% - 35%)
- Easy on Holiday Offices: 4K€ each
- Referral partners: project subsidies

FOUNDATION EVERYONE DESERVES A HOLIDAY
- new fund for people in absolute poverty (500k €)
-
GOING OUT THERE AND GETTING OUR BOOTS IN THE DIRT

“...What we really noticed is how the ‘Why Holidays Matter’ team took the challenge and gave it all it’s best to contact us and make sure we understood the possibilities.

Interview with a tourism partner
CHALLENGES

- Internal:
  - Slow decision process
  - European legislation
  - Need for different profiles (loads of admin & bookkeeping)
  - Different relationships (handing out money)
- External
  - Tourism partners: admin & stress through changing covid regulations
  - Social & referral partners: lost contact with public
  - Holiday makers: confusion about changing rules, not aware of extra stimulus
LESSONS LEARNED

- Closer contacts with the network partners (dirty boots)
- A feeling of being able to doing something back as a government within this specific network structure
- A lot of people who for the first time were able to go on a Holiday + discovering the network or more expensive partners
- Process has to be smoother for the tourism partner (Government bookkeeping needs more flexiblity)
THE FUTURE?

- Administrative follow up
- 65% to 30% price reduction
- Evaluation of subsidy model
- Relationship netwerk & foundation
- Economic recession
Questions?
Thanks!

Always happy to have a conversation about our network

CONTACT
E-mail: seppe.dams@toerismevlaanderen.be
Iedereen Verdient Vakantie