



MEANINGFUL TRAVEL SUMMIT 2021

 Tourism Cares with **Colombia**

**12 MONTH
UPDATE**





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About Tourism Cares



We are the people and places of travel dedicated to the people and places of travel.

Tourism Cares, a 501c3 non-profit organization, unites the travel

industry and is a catalyst for positive social, environmental, and economic impact for the people and places of travel. To achieve this, we work to enact lasting change in the way we do business for the people and places we serve.

Since its inception, Tourism Cares is known for bringing the most prominent names and companies in the travel industry together, mobilizing them to create change. What started with relief and revitalization volunteer efforts has grown into involvement and investment in social and environmental impact organizations that provide real and sustainable change, and many direct economic benefits for communities worldwide.

By doing what's right for travel, we create opportunities, empower communities, amplify culture and protect the environment while fostering diverse perspectives and building inclusivity and understanding.

www.tourismcares.org 

The Meaningful Travel Summit

The Meaningful Travel Summit is our signature program, connecting top travel industry professionals with local changemakers in tourism destinations around the world. By coming together in destination, we harness the power of travel to create opportunities, empower local communities, amplify culture and protect the environment, while fostering diverse perspectives and cross-sector collaborations.

The Summit stands out as an innovative travel event with the primary goal of creating long-term economic impact for tourism communities by curating deep and immersive connections through unlikely and little-known partnerships. Attended by many of the largest US-based tour operators, top travel advisors, trade media, and influential industry ambassadors, attendees of the Meaningful Travel Summit spend 4-5 days experiencing unique offerings by local change agents in-country.

Our goal is to inspire participants to integrate local social enterprises and impact experiences into their products and demonstrate how they can drive sustainable tourism and provide travelers with an authentic, immersive cultural or conservation experience.

For the destination, the Meaningful Travel Summit provides an opportunity to source and develop new sustainable tourism products and tell their sustainability story to the US market through Tourism Cares' vast industry network. The returns for the destination are immense, as involving more local stakeholders in the tourism supply chain creates opportunities to foster transformative change.

The Meaningful Travel Summit is the culmination of many months of collaboration between Tourism Cares, destination managers, travel businesses, and local communities, but it is only the beginning.

At Tourism Cares, we view the Meaningful Travel Summit as the start of our sustainability journey with a country, not the end. The benefits of the program can impact destinations for years to come, distributing the economic benefits of travel & tourism through a destination, empowering local communities, and enhancing visitor experiences.



LABORATORIOS URBANOS COMO MEDIOS PARA ARTICULAR PROCESOS CO

La Casa de Todos

A group of event attendees participate in a traditional capoeira dance.



Tourism Cares with Colombia

Thirty tour operators, travel media, and select suppliers including airlines, insurance providers, and association executives, spent four days experiencing unique offerings in Medellín, Colombia. Through local-led tours, education sessions featuring local experts, and networking opportunities, attendees were left inspired to integrate local social enterprises and impact experiences into their product, increasing the positive social, economic and environmental impact of tourism.

The event provided an opportunity for radical collaboration across the country, introducing ProColombia to social enterprises and organizations they had never worked with before. The impacts just a year later are encouraging, with plans to expand the Meaningful Travel Map of Colombia and a comprehensive tourism development strategy centered on sustainability in continued development.

The top takeaways from the Summit:

1. All tourism is community tourism. It is first and foremost about relationship-building and not simply transactional, so we must give communities a voice and ask how they want tourism to work in their homes.
2. The travel experience becomes more beneficial for locals and visitors when destination stakeholders - both in the public and private sector - build partnerships with intention.
3. Working with local leaders and forging unlikely partnerships can create social transformation **and** a prosperous business.

Sustainable Practices

Tourism Cares went to extra lengths to improve responsible practices during Tourism Cares with Colombia in Medellín. Here's what we accomplished:

- Offset all attendee travel
- Provided accurate counts to avoid over-ordering and reduce food waste
- Prioritized venues with a cultural or historic significance to the local community
- Ensured every meal included some form of a sustainable check mark (low carbon or provided by a local organization)
- Designated one night a "dine around" with a list of local restaurants, and created a sustainable shopping experience to allow more local businesses to benefit from our presence
- Limited "give-aways" and chose local suppliers
- Limited on-site brochures, sending most communication digitally in advance
- Required attendees to bring their own water bottles and supplies
- Chose a locally owned hotel

90%

OF SPEAKERS
REPRESENTED
LOCAL VOICES

140

MEALS PROVIDED BY
LOCAL VENDORS

12

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
SUPPORTED

\$25K+

INVESTED IN LOCAL
PROGRAMS

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



47.88

METRIC TONS OF CARBON
WAS OFFSET BY
WORKING WITH OUR
PARTNERS AT
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL
INTERNATIONAL



Policies +
Commitments

Our Partners

Tourism Cares builds the Meaningful Travel Summit hand-in-hand with our local partners, identifying their challenges and determining how they want tourism to influence their country and communities. Our program partners reported the following advances in their country's/businesses sustainability goals as a result of the Meaningful Travel Summit.



PROCOLOMBIA
EXPORTS TOURISM INVESTMENT COUNTRY BRAND

What positive outcomes are the result of hosting the Meaningful Travel Summit?

The process, including qualifying nearly 300 social enterprises with interest in becoming a part of the project, was an important exercise to strengthen community-based tourism and generate more traction among local DMCs and meaningful experiences.

Today the Meaningful Travel Map is part of our program for capacity building, inviting companies who develop a strong sustainable and well-articulated product to be included, expanding the base of experiences that the country offers. By including them in the supply chain, we are expanding the positive impact the travel and tourism industry can have in every corner of the country.

Working with Tourism Cares, the tour operators, and the social enterprises of Colombia have contributed to increasing the scope of our sustainability actions and the commitment Colombia has to build a stronger travel and tourism industry.

Being one of 12 countries in the world with a National Tourism Policy focused on Sustainability and having been invited by Tourism Cares to be among the founding signatories of the Future of Tourism Coalition, the Meaningful Travel Summit is a key engine to continue growing the effort led by Tourism Cares and Colombia in the Americas.

- Maria J Abuabara Brulhart, Director of Tourism, ProColombia USA



IMPULSE
immersive travel experiences

What positive outcomes resulted for your company as a result of being involved in the Summit?

The Meaningful Travel Summit has been key for our trajectory as a leading social business in the tourism sector. We could build strong and meaningful connections with potential commercial partners on our own, but the fact that [the Meaningful Travel Summit] allowed them to experience our product firsthand makes the relationship [with them] closer and with high trust levels.

The feedback we received from all the participants was incredibly helpful. We have finessed our experiences and that has resulted in very positive business results both for us and the social enterprises.

Working as a team with Tourism Cares, Procolombia, and all of the social enterprises was an invaluable learning experience that galvanized a multilateral commitment to make sustainable tourism a top priority for the development of private and public sectors, and from the community level.

- Rodrigo Atuesta, Co-Founder, Impulse Travel



The Meaningful Travel Map of Colombia

BREAKING BORDERS BOGOTÁ

Bogotá



Egipto neighborhood, Bogotá Experience the story of how resilience has transformed the Egipto neighborhood in Bogotá. Discover...

Culture

[VIEW MORE](#)



Social Enterprise Development

As a product development tool designed to leave a long-term impact in Colombia, the Meaningful Map continues to actualize the power of travel to leave a positive footprint, reinvigorate economies, and establish authentic community-based connections.

In every corner of the world, there are amazing impact entrepreneurs and local community leaders wanting to partner with the tourism industry. The Meaningful Travel Map gives tour operators and advisors access to connect their travelers with unique and positive travel opportunities every day.

It's quite uncommon to come across countries that can boast a cultural heritage as wide and diverse as Colombia's. From the depths of the mystic Amazon, all the way to the waves that break on the foothills of the imposing Sierra Nevada, community experiences in Colombia reflect a richness of culture and ecosystems that are waiting to be shared with a world willing to learn, grow and transcend alongside them.

The Meaningful Map introduces 22 social enterprises and non-profits from all over Colombia to the trade, with plans in 2022 to include an additional 14 map sites, increasing the number of small enterprises impacted by tourism.

For more than 5 years, Colombia has put tourism at the front and center of its economic development in an effort to countereffect other sectors such as fossil fuels in the path to the energy transition. Community-based tourism will be a leading force in the tenure of the current government of President Petro, increasing the number of communities using tourism as an economic driver.

“

[The Meaningful Travel Summit] was very pertinent for the moment that the city, and especially the community, are going through.

It allowed us to continue moving towards the construction of a new economy and continue strengthening our [products] with people who have more than 50 years of experience in the tourism industry.

The mere opportunity to interact with experts in the sector gives us a perspective of how and where we should continue to move forward with our venture, and above all to take note of the things we are doing well.

It also prepares us for what is coming, which is very fast growth [for Colombia], so this event gave us the tools for this stage of new challenges. We are happy that we were able to show all the participants our territory.

”

- Fredy Asprilla, Cofounder of Afrotour

Map Spotlight



Breaking Borders Bogotá

Experience the story of how resilience has transformed the Egipto neighborhood in Bogotá. Discover graffiti art and chat with the locals on this authentic tour.

Learn about the impressive history of a group of locals from the Egipto neighborhood in Bogotá. Deciding to leave their criminal past behind, they started the initiative Breaking Borders, showing tourists around their streets filled with artwork that tells the neighborhood's history. Through this experience, tourism has formed a real alternative for their personal and professional development and opened the doors for a brighter future.



Union Latina, Medellín

Visit the academy that transformed the Manrique neighborhood through dance and art. Guests will visit Barrio Manrique, located in Comuna 3 of Medellín, a popular sector known for its stories of resilience, social transformation, and tradition around dance as a form of expression and liberation.

If you're lucky, a group of dancers will surprise you with a choreography in the middle of the streets of the neighborhood. The music, dance and the smiles and hugs of the artists will not only surprise you, but also the locals of the neighborhood who will lean out of the windows to enjoy the show.

Reach by the Numbers

65,000

MAP VIEWS SINCE 2021

248

PUBLICATIONS REACHED

12,000

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS CONTACTED

260,000

IN DIGITAL AD AUDIENCE REACH

The long-term goal of the Meaningful Travel Summit is to build connections and widen the audience for community enterprises - 14 more sites are being added to the Meaningful Map in 2022/3.

20

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS INTRODUCED

1.5 MIL

CIRCULATION VIA MEDIA PARTNERS

160

TOURISM CARES MEMBER COMPANIES ENGAGED

20K

PEOPLE REACHED VIA SOCIAL CHANNELS

SDGs Highlighted:

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



“

The Meaningful Travel Summit catalyzed the consolidation process of a sound product offered by the social enterprises.

The work Impulse Travel did, together with the social enterprises [included in the] event, came at a moment of reactivation and marked a before and after for all of us.

Thanks to the prep work and the on-site feedback we received, all social enterprises involved have strengthened their product offering and increased their market access, generating more sales and better quality.

Also, a network effect in which social enterprises started to work together in collaboration was a result.

”

Rodrigo Atuesta, Co-Founder, Impulse Travel



Community members unite with a handshake during a tour in Medellin.



Project Funding

To continue the impact work in Colombia, Tourism Cares, in partnership with the Tauck Ritzau Innovative Philanthropy made a \$25,000 grant to Collective Impulse for their Changemakers initiative.

The Change Sessions project is an initiative to connect agents of change from Colombian local communities to the tourism, academic and experiential learning world, using audiovisual content & storytelling to generate economic opportunities for grassroots cultural & social enterprises and foster cross-cultural integration.

The goals of the project are to:

- **Innovate:** Generate innovative economic opportunities for local projects, including community tourism initiatives, and connect them to the market using high-quality experiential learning solutions and creative digital content.
- **Diversify:** Find alternatives that don't solely depend on tourism demand; yet generate income, visibility, and social empowerment.
- **Leverage:** Bringing the storytelling and experience design built from tourism to the virtual academic world.

The grant will fund the development of four promotional videos for different community projects and experiences throughout the country. All four videos/experiences will be added to ProColombia's Meaningful Travel Map, which will result in increased visibility for these community projects and help them be sustainable during the coming years.



Commitments to Action

A major goal of the Meaningful Travel Summit is to see a commitment from tour operators to incorporate Meaningful Map experiences into their travel products. Tour operators who attended are planning to integrate one or more social enterprise experiences in their itineraries and two are starting to offer tours in Colombia for the first time. Commitments to actions for sustainability progress are ongoing and Tourism Cares stays in direct communication with operators on the progress of those promises. Since the Summit, the following progress has been made with two attending operators:

Trafalgar: "We are excited about the launch of our Trafalgar's Best of Colombia program for 2023. We are hopeful that we will be able to run some of our departure dates for '23 and be able to take our guests to some of Colombia's communities like La Boquilla fishing village, Comuna 13 art tour, Las Berracas de la 13 for a meal, Santa Elena Flower farm visit, Coffee farm experience in Quindio and so many other amazing experiences." - Anand Nachtajler, Travel Experiences Developer, DA | The Travel Corporation

Big 5: Big 5 is working with Son Bata, and our guests have loved it. Post summit, here are our initiatives started:

- Working with Freddy's company to enhance our experience in Comuna 13
- We continue to support the education initiative in Comuna 13 having just delivered new shoes for the entire student body last month
- We've gone beyond the Summit, adding experiences in Marinilla using the newly opened Cannua Lodge
- And during the Summit, we discovered a new eco-hotel in Medellín- Quinta Ladera which sets the benchmark for sustainable hotels in Medellín."

-Ashish Sanghrajka, President, Big 5 Tours

Additionally, Abercrombie & Kent opened an office in Colombia - with plans to do so beforehand, but the decision further cemented by their time spent in country during the Summit. Globus also continues to improve their Monograms trip to Colombia, "now that we have a better understanding of the story they have to tell and their efforts to build tourism sustainably."



A path forward

Further to the Meaningful Travel Summit, ProColombia continues to center sustainable tourism development in its strategy. Since our Summit in 2021, ProColombia has carried out the following initiatives as a means to strengthen its tourism product:

- Continued efforts have been made to identify community-based initiatives in the country. Started in 2020 through collaboration with the Vice Ministry of Tourism, Colombia Productiva, and the Global Education Innovation Initiative (OpEPA), the project identified approximately 170 initiatives in the country through a call for proposals. A validation and curation matrix was applied to these identified initiatives to filter the most "tourism-ready" initiatives.
- Strengthening of community-based tourism initiatives with OpEPA through a program designed to provide capacity and training for community-based initiatives through feedback and guidance by expert consultants and community-based tourism tour operators.
- Development of a community tourism guide document with OPEPA.
- Participated in a learning mission to Peru with the ATUCA Foundation with 16 community-based initiatives to learn about the good practices of communities in Colombia's neighboring country and further support sustainable tourism throughout South America.



OpEPA is a Non-Profit Foundation founded in Bogotá, Colombia in 1998. OpEPA seeks to contribute to the construction of a society connected to the Earth, creating access and promoting daily action that reduce the human impact on the planet and forge a sustainable and participatory model of impact.



A Summit attendee looks at local art for sale on the streets of Medellín.

Appendix: Tourism Cares with Colombia

Attending Companies

Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy
AFAR Media
American Society of Travel Advisors
Beyond Green Travel
Big Five Tours & Expeditions
City of Medellin
Country Walkers & VBT Bicycling Vacations
Delta Air Lines
Destination America (The Travel Corporation)
Diario La República
El Colombiano
Eric Friedheim Foundation
Finn Partners
Give Me Astoria
Globus family of brands
Impulse
Intrepid Travel
Jordan Tourism Board North America
Norie Quintos Media and Consulting
ProColombia
Tauck Inc.
The Globe and Mail
Toronto Star
Travel Relations LLC / Bob Whitley Memorial Fund
Trip Mate
USTOA

Media Coverage Sample

The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://traveldailynews.com/post/the-tourism-industry-unites-around-community-led-travel
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://advfn.com/stock-market/stock-news/86492565/the-tourism-industry-unites-around-community-led-t
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://finance.yahoo.com/news/tourism-industry-unites-around-community-151800816.html
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://fox8live.com/prnewswire/2021/11/08/tourism-industry-unites-around-community-led-travel/
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/the-tourism-industry-unites-around-community-led-travel-1030949911
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://aotrip.com/newswire/index.html?rkey=20211108FL67506&filter=6451
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://babta.org/content.php?page=Travel_News_from_PR_Newswire&rkey=20211108FL67506&filter=15623
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://benzinga.com/
The tourism industry unites around community-led travel	http://millenniummagazine.com/prnewswire?rkey=20211108FL67506&filter=13610
Tourism Cares and ProColombia host Meaningful Travel Summit and launch Meaningful Map	http://en.travel2latam.com/nota/71078-events-tourism-cares-and-procolombia-host-meaningful-travel-summit-and-launch-meaningful-map.html

Media Coverage Sample

The Tourism Industry Unites Around Community-Led Travel	https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-tourism-industry-unites-around-community-led-travel-301418629.html
INOVIO Announces Collaboration with Colombia; Memorandum of Understanding Focuses on Protecting Against COVID-19 and Supporting Broader Health Preparedness Initiatives	https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/inovio-announces-collaboration-with-colombia-memorandum-of-understanding-focuses-on-protecting-against-covid-19-and-supporting-broader-health-preparedness-initiatives-301405504.html
Should some of the world's endangered places be off-limits to tourists?	https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/should-some-of-the-worlds-endangered-places-be-off-limits-to-tourists
Peru: Ollantaytambo named among Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO	https://andina.pe/ingles/noticia-peru-ollantaytambo-named-among-best-tourism-villages-by-unwto-871984.aspx
Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Summit in Medellin, Colombia	https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/tourism-cares-meaningful-travel-summit-in-medellin-colombia/
Meaningful Travel Summit - Tourism Cares with Colombia 2021	https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/events/details/meaningful-travel-summit-tourism-cares-with-colombia-2021/
Get a Taste of Community-Based Tourism in Colombia	https://vacayou.com/magazine/community-based-tourism-colombia/
Virtual Meaningful Travel Summit - Colombia	https://ustoa.com/events/Virtual-Meaningful-Travel-Summit-Colombia
In Colombia, Community-Based Tourism is Reviving Local Economies.	https://www.cntraveler.com/sponsored/story/in-colombia-community-based-tourism-is-reviving-local-economies
Community Tourism: Post-Covid19 global trend, is developing strongly in Medellin, Colombia.	https://www.bureaumedellin.com/community-tourism-post-covid19-global-trend-is-developing-strongly-in-medellin-colombia/
Why Colombia Should Be Your Next Dream Trip	https://www.afar.com/magazine/why-colombia-should-be-your-next-dream-trip
Virtual Meaningful Travel Summit: Colombia + Beyond	https://www.colombiameinspira.com/calendario/virtual-meaningful-travel-summit-colombia-beyond



LINKS TO EXPLORE

Meaningful Travel Map of Colombia:

<https://colombia.travel/en/tourism-cares> 

Meaningful Travel Map of Jordan (2018 Summit host)

<https://www.myjordanjourney.com/experience-meaningful-travel> 

Tourism Cares Summit History:

www.tourismcares.org/meaningful-travel-summit 



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MEANINGFUL TRAVEL SUMMIT 2021



Eric Friedheim
Foundation

BOB WHITLEY
Memorial Fund

TRAVEL
Insurance Advisors



AFAR



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