



The case of the Dinner Experience

Sustainable tourism and integration

The tourism and hospitality sector is advocated as a significant job generator in many regions worldwide, specifically its ability to 'open up' the labour market for marginalized groups, such as immigrants is stressed. However, jobs in this industry are often low paid, low skilled, temporary and/or part-time. These include the numerous lower-end employment positions within the hospitality sector where limited training appears to be the norm and long-term career opportunities are few. Furthermore, the hospitality workforce at this lower tier of the employment spectrum predominately consists of women, immigrants and young people.

The ambition of alternative tourism initiatives, e.g. community-based tourism, is to challenge these norms and to create an inclusive and sustainable labour market. **Tikitut Community based tourism community-based tourism** was launched aiming toward this, working to create job opportunities for local residents within the frame of sustainable tourism. Since 2013 the social enterprise addresses challenges such as integration and environmental sustainability by creating experiences and activities where people from different parts of society meet.

Tikitut Community based tourism operates in the northeastern parts of Gothenburg, where there is a higher level of unemployment. There is also a higher level of immigrants and refugees in this part of Gothenburg. This, in combination with a beautiful natural environment, makes it possible to combine integration with sustainable tourism.

Tikitut Community based tourism runs a program for young immigrants and refugees in order to make them employable. The name of the program, **UVUC**, is a Swedish acronym for "**Young adults and community-based tourism**".

When the number of asylum seekers to Sweden raised a lot in 2015, the Swedish Employment Agency organized the establishment of new comers. The local agencies in Gothenburg started sending participants to the UVUC program, as a part of their establishment path.

The UVUC program is complementary to the Swedish language courses (SFI) which all adult immigrants and refugees in Sweden are offered. SFI courses usually focus on Swedish grammar offering little time for the participants to practice their oral speaking skills. UVUC, on the other hand, focus on practical language training, organizing real-life meetings with Swedish speakers for the participants to practice speaking Swedish as much as possible. The program uses sustainable tourism as a tool for inclusion, for practicing the new language and understanding the new society and its culture (customs, norms and values).

The UVUC program runs during 4 months, 4 hours in the afternoon, with ten to fifteen participants, trainers from Tikitut Community based tourism and various invited tutors and lecturers from relevant organisations. The main subjects are the hospitality sector and product development, sustainable tourism, Swedish society, project management and job seeking.

The main objective is to assure a comprehensive accompaniment of the participants, integrating adult learning methods and taking in account the different intertwined learning processes of the beneficiaries. The aims to achieve are to make participants:

- get planning process knowledge and skills (e.g. project planning, product development),
- increase their civic knowledge,
- learn and practice hosting,
- acquire increased confidence for communicating with people (from Gothenburg),
- improve their language skills.

The Dinner experience – a flagship activity of the UVUC program

As their last assignment in the framework of the UVUC program, the beneficiaries are divided in groups to plan and carry out a dinner experience with guests from Gothenburg.

The dinner experience is a practical tool for them to gain knowledge and skills in multiple fields:

- project planning and implementation
- product development/design
- speaking Swedish with each other and with people living in Gothenburg who speak fluent Swedish
- understanding the Swedish society and Swedish culture
- develop general working life competences – taking responsibility, cooperation, service minded, communication, etc.

Tikitut Community based tourism collaborates with different organizations when implementing the dinner experience. In this case Tikitut Community based tourism worked together with the Museum of World Culture that also gave the dinner guests a guided tour through the museum. The museum is a platform for dialogues and reflections, where many different voices can be heard and controversial and contentious topics discussed. The museum wants to be a place where people can feel at home and reach across borders.

The guests are from Gothenburg. They all pay for the dinner. This makes it possible to cover the costs for the food and to remunerate a linguistic tutor for the dinner – who is a former participant of UVUC.

Préparation of the last assignment

Actually, the dinner being the last assignment of the beneficiaries, its implementation is prepared during almost four weeks before through parallel theoretical and practical activities (called pre-planning in the introduction film).

They familiarize with planning tools through simple exercises like planning an activity of their own choice, such as an exercise which is to make the participants plan an activity of their own choice – for example a travel to the moon, a fun fair or an excursion for a group. It's about to learn very simple planning tools and actually also see that we often use these tools in our normal life. In the same time, the preparation is also to give them the possibility to meet people, to practice out of their own comfort zone by being exposed in a variety of situations where they have to talk Swedish, in a warm welcoming atmosphere with a lot of humour. They gain knowledge and self-confidence through practice and dialogue exercises. It can be for example a speed dating, presentations from diverse lecturers, a gallery round, a role play or giving out coffee to people on the street.

Planning and implementation

For the concrete planning of the dinner, we use different tools:

- We make a *SWOT analysis*: Together with the participants, we work on what kind of possibilities this activity give us and on which weaknesses and strengths we have. Like for all other tasks they will speak their preferred language for a while with each other. But they will put down their 'post it' in Swedish and we will talk about it in Swedish.

- We will then plan what type of food they will offer by making *brainstorming*.



- The next path will then be to plan the different tasks towards the implementation of the dinner by using *backwards planning/back casting* you look at the goal and plan backwards.

- The *visualisation* exercise is used for planning how do we want the room to look like or what the guests will do. It is both a practical manipulation and talking and sometimes the participants are so much involved that they forget that they actually are talking different language

- Lastly we make an *operative scheme* of what will happen all the D-day

The participants will then practice in the real life everything they have planned and prepared for.

The work schedule specifies in detail all the tasks and participants learn the work-related vocabulary.

We meet up, review the work schedule and prepare the cooking area and the dinner table. The trainer welcomes the guests and introduces the dinner program. We present each other and the participants and the guests organize themselves in groups for presenting the food and cooking together. Then the buffet is served, we eat together and a guided tour is done at the Museum. After the guest have leaved we clean up

Evaluation

We evaluate with the participants the theme of the diner, the realisation (how did it function?) and the conversation (did we have the conversations we wanted to have with the guests?). For making the evaluation scheme and the evaluation we got the help of two tutors from the Gothenburg University.