



Final report

Outdoor innovation workshop: "Towards a sustainable future for health tourism in the Alpine region"

For

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Wohnungsbau Baden-Württemberg

Schlossplatz 4 (Neues Schloss)

70173 Stuttgart

Germany

From

bwcon GmbH

Seyfferstraße 34

70197 Stuttgart

Germany

Stuttgart, 30.09.2019



OBJECTIVES

The concept for the outdoor innovation workshop pursued two main goals:

- (1) developing innovative concepts for health tourism based on previous work of AG2 and ARPAF project HEALPS on alpine natural resources and
- (2) applying innovation methodologies in a new context, meaning the exploration of new ideas in an outdoor environment.

1. PREPARATIONS

1.1 Application

Invitation texts for the workshop were created in English and German. The workshop offer was disseminated via different channels: mailing, social media, post on websites and face-to-face. It was important for us to have a mixed group of participants from different sectors. In order to achieve this, we promoted the event through a variety of channels: It was sent to local representatives from the tourism sector, to regional municipalities, to partners and stakeholder from National Park Black Forest and from the Subgroup Health tourism AG2, to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to the regional Digi Hubs, up to suitable faculties from the universities and SMEs from the bwcon network.

In addition, an article was published in the regional newspaper "Schwarzwälder Bote" (see picture).



1.2 Participants

Until the announced deadline, we were able to attract a multidisciplinary compound group of participants for our workshop. At the end, we got a group of 15 people: Representatives from SMEs and medical actors who were active in the field of health tourism, founder from the ICT sector, as well as students from the master's program in Environmental Governance and Sustainable Regional Management, as well as employees from the National Park, representing the health tourism sector and environmental education and employees of bwcon, as business initiative for the high-tech sector.





1.3 Agenda

A two-day agenda was drawn up in co-creation with the cooperation partner of the Black Forest National Park. Two experts from the Department of National Park Planning, Regional Development and Tourism contributed their knowledge on the research of sustainable health and nature tourism.

Monday, 16th September 2019:

Time	Content
10:00	Arrival & Opening → Welcome → Input to the Nationalpark Schwarzwald
10:30	Warm-up → Method for getting to know each other → Presentation round
11:00	Hike through the Nationalpark Schwarzwald
12:00	Input: Effectuation → Introduction into the logic of Effectuation and ethics of reticence → Practising the four principles of entrepreneurial thinking and behaving → Reflection exercise
13:00	Lunch break
14:00	Inspirational island: Existing initiatives in health tourism → Input to research status wilderness and health & wilderness and tourism → Exchange of experience about current health tourism initiatives (successful examples, challenges, problems, visions)
15:00	Hike through the Nationalpark Schwarzwald
	Practice: Dive into nature → sensory exercise
Ca. 17:00	Arrival at the hut: Rangerstation Tonbach
18:30	Joint cooking session → on the fire bowl → de-briefing and reflection

Tuesday, 17th September 2019:

Time	Content
8:00	Breakfast → prepared together
9:15	Energizer → outdoor morning activity as preparation to the creative idea generation part
9:30	Idea generation → for new health tourism initiatives → different creative formats → adapted to the outdoor context
11:00	Evaluation of ideas → Selection of the top ideas → definition of concrete next steps
12:00	Lunch break
13:00	Check-out → final round and feedback
14:00	Hike through the Nationalpark Schwarzwald
16:00	End of the workshop

1.4 Organizational preparations

In addition, further organizational preparations were carried out, e.g. Catering - emphasis was placed on regional healthy food; overnight stay - in the middle of the national park; hiking tour etc.



2. IMPLEMENTATION

In order to realize the goals mentioned above, the focus on the first day was to explore the context of a sustainable health tourism by inspirational islands, discussions and exchanges of individual experiences. The inspirational islands are presented below:

2.1 Effectuation

The Effectuation approach focuses on learning entrepreneurial thinking and acting through practical principles and an action-guiding process. It is based on Entrepreneurial research by Professor Saras Sarasvathy. She has investigated into four principles of entrepreneurial thinking and behaving:

- (1) **Bird in Hand principle:** When expert entrepreneurs seek to build a new organization, they start with their resources.
- (2) **Affordable Loss Principle:** Set affordable losses and evaluate opportunities based on whether the downside is acceptable, rather than on the attractiveness of the predicted upside.
- (3) **Crazy Quilt Principle:** Form partnerships with people and organizations willing to make a real commitment to jointly creating the future product.
- (4) **Lemonade Principle:** Leverage Contingencies Embrace surprises that arise from uncertain situations, remaining flexible rather than tethered to existing goals.

These principles are now at hands for any kind of stakeholders who are acting in an environment where it is difficult to predict the future and where a new logic for entrepreneurial behaving is needed. It can be understood as contrary to the classic management approach which consists of analysis-planning- goal setting-executing and is particularly helpful during the first steps of a (digital) disruptive innovation where planning and analysis usually does not help to take the next entrepreneurial step.





2.2 National Park Black Forest

The Black Forest National Park focus on the notion of "wilderness" by approaching it from different perspectives. In the field of environmental psychology focusing on health promotion, well-being and stress reduction, it has been well-known for decades that natural environments facilitate recovery from stress and mental fatigue. This is especially the case when these environments are perceived as fascinating and offer a contrast to every-day life. However, research on the effect of experiencing more or less "wilderness" on our well-being has been lacking up to date. In this context the Black Forest National Park is an ideal place to fill this socially relevant research gap. Researcher from the National Park conduct a field experiment focusing on wilderness-experience as well as restoration and health promotion on three hiking trails in the park. The experiment includes environmental psychological and geographical methods. In addition, each participant's heart rate is monitored in order to measure physiological reactions to the environment. The results of the study contribute to scientific research and are being applied by the National Park for health promotion and communicating the importance of nature conservation.



2.3 Definition of health

An extensive definition of health is constituted in the WHO definition from 1948 health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. So the focus is on a complex interaction and on the subjective aspect of wellbeing. The definition also emphasis the active part of each person. Activities in nature are intuitively known to be good for mental and physical health and enable people to have social contact as well the opportunity to enjoy common experiences.

Experiencing stress is a growing problem for many people, and it associated with impaired wellbeing. Finding opportunities to take a break from everyday life is increasingly important for countering stress symptoms and renewing depleted psychological resources. Recently, a growing body of literature has shown that nature experiences have a pronounced, positive effect for promoting psychological and physical wellbeing.



Restorative environments feature four components

- (1) **Fascination:** effortless attention as drawn by objects in the environment such as clouds or scenery
- (2) **Being away:** Restoration requires psychological and geographical distancing from aspects of one's usual environs, routines and situations
- (3) **Coherence:** immersion in a coherent physical or conceptual environment
- (4) **Compatibility:** a good match between personal purposes, environmental supports for intended activities

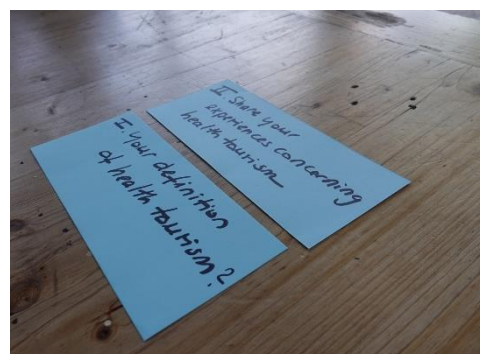
Especially experiencing psychological distance from everyday demands and stress seems to contribute to restoration of depleted cognitive resources for directed attention. Research has shown: nature has restorative effects.

2.4 Health tourism

The Market of health tourism has changed and is still changing. Four push factors for that were presented and discussed:

- (1) **Change of values:**
increasing awareness and consciousness for the own health, conscious about lifestyle and new (mental) diseases (e.g. burn out)
- (2) **Demographic change (high potential):**
change of target groups and new needs
- (3) **Change of supplier/ provider:**
medical-technical development, new networks, platforms and cooperation (e.g. hospitals corporate with tourism boards)
- (4) **New frame conditions:**
change in health care system, less support by health insurance more private/ self-paid patient

To develop a common understanding of sustainable health tourism and to share their experiences in that topic a group discussion between the participants was conducted. This showed that the participants have different views on what is meant by "health tourism". The definitions ranged from health-related and medical measures that are offered in the course of a cure, to preventive measures and trend topics such as yoga and forest bathing.



2.5 Ideation process

Building on the input from the inspirational islands, new ideas and offers for the health tourism sector were generated on the second day. For this different creative techniques were used adapted to the outdoor context. The idea generation process was based on the mindset of the Effectuation methodology. Thus, the focus was on the resources available to the people involved and on the affordable loss, based on whether the downside is acceptable, rather than on the attractiveness of the predicted upside. Furthermore, after Effectuation logic partnerships are formed with people who are willing to make a real commitment to jointly creating the future product, instead of waiting for the “right” partner.



From the ideas generated, first prototypes of natural materials were finally built in order to make the ideas visible. In total, seven new prototypes were built, either alone or in small groups. The ideas ranged from an app that sets incentives for collecting garbage, to nature experiences that are linked to the work context, up to building a community that offers a variety of nature experiences for a short or long stay. In a final feedback process, the ideas were further developed.

3. EVALUATION



At the end of the two workshop days, we collected feedback from all participants in a final round. They were very enthusiastic about the format and would also like to join in next time.



In particular, the composition of the group was highlighted as very positive: people with different age groups, professional backgrounds and industries. This allowed the participants to learn a lot from each other. Staying outside in nature was also considered as very good, as it was perceived as being healthy for body and mind and thus a good basis for working on new ideas.

3.1 Output

The goal was to experiment with methods and exercises outdoors as a catalyst for the development of new ideas and innovative concepts. Therefore we combined the innovation method Effectuation with approaches from nature and wilderness formation. That worked out very well. We have seen many parallels between the Effectuation mindset and natural phenomena. By letting nature developing on its own, new unforeseen things can happen which human beings would have been unable to plan. On a meta-level this reflects exactly the Effectuation approach where an entrepreneur does not exactly plan his / her objectives but finds out on the way. The way in which processes take place in nature can thus show us how we want to shape our own decision-making processes.

Concretely, we have the following **lessons learned** from the workshop:

- Physical exercise not only keeps the body fit, but also strengthens the mind and set it in movement and thus brought forth new ideas.
- Thinking and learning in nature is a great driver of innovation.
- The heterogeneous group grew together very quickly during the hike and thus formed a good basis for co-creation.
- Through different exercises in nature, curiosity was awakened and different perspectives were taken. Creative formats in nature allow innovations to emerge.
- As a result, we think nature has a positive influence on the creativity of the group.

3.2 Perspective

At the end of the workshop, exchange of email contacts between the participants took place so that they could work on their ideas after the workshop together. Finally it was recommended by the participants to conduct further workshops of this kind where movement in nature is linked to creative processes.