


Review

Sustainable Tourism as a Potential for Promotion of Regional Heritage, Local Food, Traditions, and Diversity—Case of Kosovo

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Abstract: Sustainability usually refers to the ability to maintain a certain standard of human lifestyle without causing environmental damage or any other destruction to nature and biodiversity. It is beneficial for human health and well-being in addition to socio-economic benefits and contributes to environmental integrity. However, as Robert Swan (1956) once stated: “the greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it”—this is true even today; namely, there are still serious threats to the planet and there is “a short time period” for action. We all have to be obliged to save the planet in which we live throughout our daily and local activities. In this study, the authors provide an overview of the meaning of sustainable tourism and its relationship to all global Sustainable Development Goals established by UN (2015) as one way to achieve a brighter sustainable future and society for everyone, leaving no one behind. More specifically, the case of Kosovo and its potential for the development of sustainable tourism is analyzed. In this case, the authors aim to present the potential to serve the local tradition, culture, diversity, and inclusiveness through sustainable actions in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; Sustainable Development Goals; culture; tradition; heritage; Kosovo



Citation: Tahiri, A.; Kovaçi, I.; Trajkovska Petkoska, A. Sustainable Tourism as a Potential for Promotion of Regional Heritage, Local Food, Traditions, and Diversity—Case of Kosovo. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 12326. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912326>

Academic Editors: Lóránt Dénes Dávid, Colin Michael Hall and Tanja Mihalic

Received: 1 September 2022

Accepted: 23 September 2022

Published: 28 September 2022

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1. Introduction

Sustainability is becoming an imperative in our daily activities and lifestyles in order to achieve an equilibrium between humans and nature for the wellbeing of the current and future generations. We are far from reducing the carbon footprint and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050; therefore, each action taken today should be focused for a better tomorrow. In addition, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) outline the global consensus on social, economic, and environmental targets that humanity is striving to achieve by the year 2030 (UN, 2015). Namely, UN established universal 2030 Agenda for SDGs and all countries committed to adhere or conduct them for a better future for the whole planet and life on it. As the 17 SDGs offer the world a new direction, such as living and working in a sustainable way, they can be applied in various ways of our everyday activities. In general, SDGs provide a wide range of global targets for the environment, society, and economy, and most of the countries were called upon to embrace an ambitious demanding set of challenges to implement those targets [1–10].

Moreover, UN SDGs present a wide range of opportunities for many businesses; for example, the development of innovative products and services designed to meet some or most of the SDGs will lead to new revenue streams, or cases when businesses look to align commercial strategies and sustainability policies with the SDGs that effectively enhances their license to operate [11]. In addition, companies will be able to form partnerships with

governments, non-governmental organisations, and other institutions or other companies to build stronger relationships in important markets. The tourism industry, which encompasses the hospitality sector, has become a major player in the world economy and could provide positive examples of its environmental, social, and economic commitments to sustainability. It is an important economic powerhouse of every country, plays a significant role in delivering sustainable solutions for the people and the planet, and facilitates prosperity and peace. In fact, it is the third highest world category in export earnings, representing 10% of the world gross domestic product (GDP) and 30% of the service exports along with that 1 out of 10 jobs in the world belong to this sector. Therefore, it has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the UN SDGs [12,13].

In the last decade, many international institutions such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and the European Commission, have established various guidelines, standards, and recommendations for integrating sustainable tourism into economic practice and monitoring overall sustainability efforts. In this context, in 2017, the UNWTO declared that tourism should be a vehicle for a sustainable development and a catalyst for positive change by adopting and applying sustainable business practices in many countries. UNWTO's knowledge and expertise in developing sustainable, responsible, and accessible tourism would contribute to better and healthy communities [12,14–17].

Sustainable Tourism

Each culture is a special case that could be discovered and explored in various ways, such as organized visits, manifestations, campaigns, etc.; therefore, tourism as an economic powerhouse could enable a strong revenue and valuable lifestyle within the country and the region contributing towards achievement and promotion of the UN SDGs [17,18].

According to the UNWTO, sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that meets the needs of tourists and the host regions, while protecting and enhancing the opportunities for the future. More particularly, the sustainable tourism is defined as “*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities*” [18].

Therefore, the main goals of a sustainable tourism are as follows:

- (i) avoiding the adverse impacts on the environment, natural resources, and local tradition and culture;
- (ii) ensuring the conservation of local ecosystems;
- (iii) generating income;
- (iv) new employments; and
- (v) increase the visibility and competitiveness of the country worldwide.

In particular, local and regional heritage and local communities are central pieces to be seen and explored by the tourists [19,20]. Investing in people, boosting infrastructure development, sustainable restoration, shaping better policies/laws as well as institutions, building resilience, stimulating entrepreneurship, fostering innovation and digitalization, and making sustainable use of biodiversity should be the core of our efforts to unlock the tourist potential growth while preserving destination's natural and cultural assets. However, based on some reviews and practical evidence, many countries have not successfully reached the stage of sustainable tourist offers and actions, yet they are far off implementation of sustainable ways of doing the business. On the other hand, there are some positive cases around the world that have made significant progress by embracing sustainable actions. In order to be in line with UN SDGs and to reach global sustainable norms and policies, a collaboration between stakeholders, local citizens, national authorities, and governmental institutions should be emphasized [21–27].

Sustainable aspects in the sector of tourism could be developed and further enhanced through a variety of educational programmes, training, and continuous improvement of the practices in the hospitality sector, collaboration between all stakeholders, and continuous governmental support. Special forms of tourism, such as sport tourism, agro-cultural

tourism, religious tours, kids/natural camps, diversity-oriented educational visits, or backpack tourism, could further support the sustainable tourism efforts of each country [19]. In this context, the case of Kosovo as an attractive region in the southern part of Europe is analyzed in terms of its potential for development of sustainable tourism. More specifically, the authors aim to present the potential to serve the local tradition, culture, diversity, and inclusiveness through sustainable actions in the tourism and hospitality sector.

2. Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals

Tourism and hospitality are potentially seen as major players amongst businesses contributing to the SDGs—something that is highlighted in the UNWTO (2018) report: *“tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the goals”*. Consequently, achieving the SDGs has become the over-arching agenda of global tourism—the tourism sector is perhaps better placed than any other industry to contribute to the implementation of SDGs while developing a wide range of market opportunities. Furthermore, the UNWTO suggests that as one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, tourism is well-positioned to foster economic growth and development, and provide income through job creation (UNWTO, 2018) [18,19].

A unique set of rural heritage, customs, and traditions in certain regions can contribute to the development of local sustainable tourism by relating the practices to the most of SDGs. Globally, poverty has been one of the persistent problems; many governments and social organisations all over the world are making efforts to overcome the poverty or at least to find way to reduce it in different ways. In this context, the question of “how can tourism be positioned to address SDG 1 (ending poverty in all its forms)?” arises. Often, the local (and rural) people depend on the surrounding natural resources for living, and any form of environmental degradation has a direct impact on their livelihoods, making them even poorer. Sustainable tourism organisations strive to include locals in the tourism value chain and in conservation of the natural resources, which are ways to lift these communities out of poverty. Namely, the tourism and hospitality sector are potential to employ local inhabitants, who indirectly contribute to the economic growth and development, and provide income through job creation, tour guides, staff in hotels, authentic cooks, “ethno houses”, or craft designs and manufacturing. This is especially valuable when sustainable tourism is a promoter of entrepreneurship and small businesses, as well as empowering less favored population groups, e.g., youth and women (which is also directly linked to SDGs 4 and 5).

SDG 2 (zero hunger), focused mainly on agriculture, can accelerate the agricultural productivity by promoting the local production, use of local and seasonal products in tourist destinations or hotels, and their integration in the tourist value chain. In fact, agro-tourism can generate additional income to local people and society, thus, will yield a socio-economic benefit. As a result, a rise in the income for local communities might be expected, which would lead to a more resilient world enhancing the value of the tourism experience and applying the profit to the other sectors and industries, which in turn will strengthen the empathy of living together and leaving no one behind.

Promotion of a good health and well-being, as SDG 3 suggests, could be accommodated suitably by adopting the above mentioned SDGs 1 and 2; in particular, providing local and seasonal food products offered and served in tourist places could bring additional higher nutritive values on the menu offers. Namely, locally grown food and produced foods instead of those that are imported and transported from destinations far from the touristic places are usually more nutritious, a better quality, and safer; at the same time, they contribute less to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), global pollution, and, in general, to climate changes (SDG 13). Moreover, tax income generated from tourism could be used to promote certain type of activities, e.g., improving the local health systems and services, promotion of healthy dietary habits, reduction in child mortality, improvement of the maternal health or care for people with rare diseases, opening new hospitals, schools or promotion of education and business for youth, minorities, and women (SDGs 4 and 5).

amongst others are closely linked to these activities, as well). Namely, well-being could be performed by several benefits such as financial, social, mental, physical, etc. Proper educational courses on sustainable tourism and hospitality will bring privilege to young generations to learn and adapt various sustainable options and business opportunities in tourism (SDG 4, quality education) irrespective to gender or religion (SDG 5, gender equality). Skillful and trained people in this sector are crucial workload to lead the sustainable tourism in the region, to be recognised, and to attract tourists from all over the world. Sustainable tourism is potential in promoting inclusiveness especially of youth, women, and people with disabilities, who should benefit from the proper educational process and trainings in this sector. Furthermore, empowering tourism businesses and platforms help women, youth, and others to engage in the work, to pursue business opportunities, and become financially independent, as well as actively contribute to their community's development, decision, and social life (SDG 5).

The efficient use of water in tourism sector is also one of the key drivers for sustainable business; water utilization should be focused towards saving the precious and important resources (SDG 6, clean water and sanitation) because approximately 1 billion people in the world lack access to potable water, while more than 1.6 billion lack access to improved forms of sanitation; therefore, the consequences for health and livelihoods due to poor quality water are significant. In addition, the use of clean and affordable energy (SDG 7) is very attractive nowadays and should be used in as many economic sectors and industries as possible. Tourism is an energy-intensive sector, and if the use of renewable energy is privileged for tourist places, hotels, and hospitality, then this sector will be a remarkable representative with a high sustainability marks. By investments in the clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce GHGs and mitigate climate changes in certain portions that are not negligible as well as contribute to sustainable cities and communities (SDGs 11 and 13).

Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) for every region is very important for the overall being of the country. As it was mentioned, sustainable tourism can create jobs and promote local culture and products which is in line with overcoming poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2); employing local people has positive socio-economic impacts and enables the conservation of biodiversity and habitat, which are closely related to opportunities for work for everyone (youth, women, SDG 5). Therefore, sustainable tourism is not only related to this SDG 8, but also contributes towards SDGs 10 and 12 (reduced inequalities, responsible consumption and production).

However, development of tourism is based on good infrastructure, too; positive impacts from this sector could influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative, and resource-efficient in terms of being less carbon-intensive or carbon-embodied, producing less GHGs, and utilization of sustainable materials, thus attracting not only tourists, but also other sources of foreign investment (SDG 9). This could be attributed to the local companies that can do most of the work related to touristic places, hospitality services or so, and will be a good example of growing the local civil and construction services and businesses, manufacturing capacities, etc. In this context, reduction in inequality (SDG 10) is also envisioned by sustainable tourism; namely, by engagement of local inhabitants and stakeholders in regional tourism, the businesses can contribute to urban development—to live and work in the place of origin, and having the opportunity of giving back to the local communities by good promotion, earning from job creation, or by supplying goods and foods to tourist zones. This means the overall local and national economic growth and other social and eco-benefits—all basic pillars of sustainability—are accomplished. These are all align well with SDG 11 (building sustainable cities and communities); it enhances the local well-being of communities rather than threatening their social or environmental sustainability (e.g., over-consumption that could have an opposite way of unsuitable exploitation of natural resources and spaces). In fact, sustainable tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promoting regeneration and preserving the cultural and natural heritage. This is directly linked to the next SDG 12: promotion of green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air

pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities that are beneficial for the whole society. The responsible consumption of natural resources and production (SDG 12) is close related to SDG 11 and means respect to the nature, resources, and biodiversity. Smart business ideas in tourism could promote activities related to efficient utilization of resources (energy, food, water), as well as reduce the level of waste and landfills including food waste and loss. In this way, sustainable tourism positively enhances the socio-economic and environmental attributes as a whole. SDGs 11 and 12 directly affect the SDG 13; “*climate emergency*” can be balanced by doing sustainable businesses—working towards mitigating the climate impact of economic, social, and travel activities. However, tourism contributes to, but also is affected by, the climate changes (SDG 13); therefore, by reducing its carbon footprint during doing “smart” and green activities (e.g., in the transport and accommodation sector), tourism can benefit from it and can serve as a good example locally or in the region, marking as a competitive by getting the prestigious certificates and international recognitions. This is just one way to become an attractive place for visitors, comfort stays and exploration by tourists, but at the same time to promote one’s own values (tradition, customs, culture, food, etc).

Without oceans, the balance and the life on the Earth will be disturbed. However, overfishing, oil spills, or plastic pollution are slowly degrading the quality and the “health” of the water and oceans. There are many institutions and tourist organizations, which are promoting and fighting for the life below water (SDG 14); the oceans are a good resource for different shells, fish, etc., which are used or served all over the world in markets and tourist places. Therefore, clean and healthy ecosystems in oceans are very important for the overall earth balance, no one needs consumption of heavy metals or microplastics through food items originated from oceans. Furthermore, SDG 15 (life on land) promotes biodiversity of the planet; for instance, the forests are lungs of the planet, hosting a wide variety of plant and animal species, as well as providing livelihoods to people dependent on their resources. The world’s growing population has a direct impact on the deforestation of millions of hectares every year (for living places, or making agricultural fields), pushing many species to be lost and never restore again. Therefore, by adapting sustainable lifestyle (tourism) routes, we are in a position to conserve and preserve the forests and to protect their biodiversity, offering tours and exploring their beauty, financing conservation or setting up eco-resorts in these areas. It is a natural heritage that many tourists would like to see and explore, or to settle in natural “lung” resorts known to improve the health and well-being, and it could also generate a revenue as an alternative to local communities and many other returns.

On the other hand, tourism is in a position to foster multi-cultural and inter-faith tolerance and understanding, laying the foundation for more peaceful societies. In general, tourism encounters between people of different nations and backgrounds (cultural, religious, ethnical) and different places around the world. It could enhance the society towards peace justice and strong institutions, especially in the areas of post-conflict societies (SDG 16). Moreover, tourism as inter-sectoral business, has the ability to strengthen the partnership between public and private, governmental and non-governmental institutions at the local, national, or international level all in line with the global SDGs. In these partnerships, people involved in tourism are in position to make cross-sectoral cooperation all over the world and conduct sustainable practices—sustainable development that is a winning combination—good for the people and all living beings and good for the environment, while making a profit and prosperity, SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).

Finally, a sustainable and innovative tourism sector is the one that generates jobs and promotes inclusive, low-carbon growth in line with all dimensions of sustainable development: the people involved, the planet, and the prosperity as well accommodate for socio-economic and environmental benefits in this business [12,13,24,28–30]. In this context, Figure 1 presents three main pillars of sustainability and all SDGs ordered per each of these pillars (as it is discussed above). There is no strict border between the social and economic

benefits, but also all of them are related to (or affect) in some way the environmental benefits.



Figure 1. SDGs divided between main pillars of sustainability for the concept of sustainable tourism.

Obviously, many of the SDGs were linked to the food supply: zero hunger; good health and well-being; clean water; good sanitation; and thriving industry, innovation, and infrastructure. The availability of a diverse range of safe, affordable, and nutritious foods is a hallmark of a prosperous society and sustainable business in tourism; in general, diets are the link between environmental and human health. Among the 17 SDGs, many experts even rank the food security and health (SDGs 2 and 3) higher than the climate action (SDG 13), all in the context of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) [30–35]. However, today across the globe exists many dietary patterns that are mostly far from sustainable, or reaching the carbon neutrality by 2050. Nutritional profile, economic cost, environmental footprint of most of the current diets are not adequate and sustainable. Namely, most of the diets around the world are lacking in essential micronutrients, some of them are high in compounds that are of health concern—high in sugar, trans fats, or have high environmental footprint, e.g., meat products. Most of these modern diets cause overweight and obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases that contribute to ~4 million deaths globally. Therefore, sustainable food systems are essential to be represented through sustainable tourism in addition to the fact that these systems could nourish a projected global population of ~10 billion by 2050. There are many strategies which recommend transformation of current food systems to sustainable ones, such as producing more nutritious food, sustainable food technologies, proper use of land, water, oceans, and protecting the land clearing, reduce food losses and waste, etc. This is very important to adapt and conduct not only between local inhabitants, but also in tourist and hospitality centres and be aligned with global sustainable principles and goals. In this context, there is a privilege if the offers are mainly focused on the plant-based diets/lifestyles such as a Mediterranean Diet or Nordic Diet that are good representatives of sustainable and healthy ways known worldwide [30,35–43].

3. Potential of Sustainable Tourism in Kosovo

The potential of a sustainable tourism in Kosovo is huge. This is a country with many faces—from an ethnical, religious, and cultural point of view, which makes it of interest for many tourists all over the world, who would like to visit and explore the country

and the region. The long historical roots of the country dated from BC—as the Kingdom of Dardania, then mentioned in the archives of Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, later becoming a seat of patriarchate of Serbian Orthodox Church, and later on occupied by the Ottoman Empire. This has been an intersection of many nations, civilizations, and religions that passed or stayed in the region, leaving their marks and affecting the local tradition and culture resulting in a plethora of habits, customs, and lifestyles in the modern-day country. Tourists who visit the region are gaining new insights in the history traditions, culture, diversity, and nationalities. Therefore, sustainable tourism is something that should naturally happen in the region, the sooner the better, enabling others to discover the beauty and rich inheritance of the region. It could be beneficial and of mutual satisfaction for everyone—for local people, but also for the tourism as an economic sector that can gain a reasonable revenue for the country, along with the socio-economic benefits. Namely, utilization of local and seasonal grown food, or food prepared by domestic people in the country should be found in touristic destinations and hospitality services; this means the tendency for job opportunities for the local people in the agriculture sector, in hotels, hostels, parks, etc. At the same time, this is beneficial for the planet and contributing positively towards climate changes since less transported and imported food items will be served in such destinations. In addition, fresh local and seasonal agricultural products are beneficial in terms of their nutritive quality and contribute to better health and well-being of the consumers. Promoting the seasonal local horticulture for better health and enjoyment could be one of the attracting quotes in the advertisement for a sustainable tourism of Kosovo. In this context, visits to rural sites, agricultural fields, mountains hiking or biking tours, archeological sites' exploration, fishing, hunting, and so on are just several points on the advertisement and tourist maps for Kosovo. Moreover, religious tours and visits to monasteries, churches, mosques or all together (Figure 2a) could be a special attraction for organised tours and events, sparking the interest of many tourists about the multi-ethnic inhabitants here and which events could be organized depending on the specific holidays, traditions, or customs of the local people. For example, Figure 2 presents a meeting point of different beliefs, traditions, and religious tolerance of nations that live in Kosovo together for ages; more specifically, a church and a mosque stand together in the same complex. Religious tourism with specific customs, lifestyles of the people involved, or the food of natural origin provided during the special festivals/holidays (e.g., Easter, Eid-al, or Eid al-Adha, etc.) could attract tourists to have a different look from the everyday “fast food services” in the modern societies. Tourists could be invited to take active roles in the preparation and degustation of certain food categories, and at the same time, to explore the customs and traditions of preparation of traditional dishes specific for certain religious holidays, such as special dishes prepared and offered for the people belonging to the Muslim religion, as it is shown in Figure 2b, etc.

Furthermore, promotion of the special herbs, spices, and medicinal plants in the region which have been used by the local people for ages could be an attractive topic for the tourists; organizing tours for collecting the herbs, plants, and spices in different regions of the country, then their preservation, remedies' preparation or their use for food preparation/cooking could be unique to the region (traditional kitchen). Alternatively, using some of the specific plants for the region in teas and herbal infusions along with the local traditions and their use to treat different ailments in the folk medicine. Furthermore, local grown berry fruits, especially the wild species, could be also attractive to visitors due to the numerous health and well-being benefits and yet the lack of knowledge of promotion that they receive [2,44,45].



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. (a) Two religious objects (Christian and Muslim) in the same garden: a church stands next to mosque in Ferizaj, Kosovo. (b) Traditional food usually prepared for some festive observations in Kosovo (photos taken by A. Tahiri, University of Applied Sciences, Ferizaj, May 2022).

All these mentionings could open a new area of activities to attract tourists and further exploration of local herbs, spices, and plants not only by the local inhabitants, but also by visitors that will bring them back to their countries and institutions, promote them or further investigate gaining novel knowledge about them, e.g., scientifically confirming the basic concepts in cooperation with local people. This is a great potential for further cooperation of institutions (academic, governmental, and non-governmental ones) with international universities or research organizations that are willing to promote the beauty and potential of Kosovo. In such way, building of strong institutions in the country is envisioned; they would provide further services and partnership with others in the region and wider, holding tight connections in science, academia, international known organizations/brands, etc.

Furthermore, hiking or green trails could be an attraction around the rivers and mountains in Kosovo. Organizing hiking or ski tournaments, or cultural routes around certain dates, important in the history of Kosovo, that also could bring a diverse value to the region. In addition, fishing and hunting in Kosovo could be attractive for the lovers of these sports. Organizing such events for the people from the broader region in specific

seasons of the year in accordance with the local laws/policies are other venues of the socio-economic bursts in the region.

In addition, opening souvenir shops with local motifs that reflect the tradition and culture, or branding some local products that are unique to the region, are also aligned to socio-economic benefits and overall well-being in the country. Alternatively, organic farms and registration local food recipes could be also beneficial for the country. This is an opportunity to increase the competitiveness and visibility of the region due to its unique cultural and natural potentials.

Overall, Kosovo and the region around are attractive parts of Europe for many tourists. Their geographical location is on the crossroad, where a diversity of nations, cultures, and traditions are intertwined: culture and heritage customs are sustained and kept by local inhabitants, but also by those who migrated far from the country [46–52]. Passing the traditions from generations to generations is holding the people and families; they are instilled in the lives of young populations that when they grow, they will not depart from the tradition (according to Proverb 22:6 says: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”) [45,53–55].

Finally, as Tarsitano et al. (2018) stated in their paper [43]: achievement of a sustainable good life and well-being in the region is a challenge of our milenium, we should conjugate tradition with the “technology”; it could be reached by adoption of several “Mediterranean ways”, such as sustainable tourism in addition to other recommendations that they stated in this work: sustainable farming systems, management of water resources, food value chain for local/regional development, reduce of food loss/waste /by-products by innovative approaches and nutrition, and suitable education.

The main attributes and benefits of sustainable tourism in Kosovo are summarized in Figure 3. In Figure 3, one can see that in addition to the main pillars of sustainability, society, environment, and economy, the culture aspect is added because it is an added value to the sustainable tourism in this country.

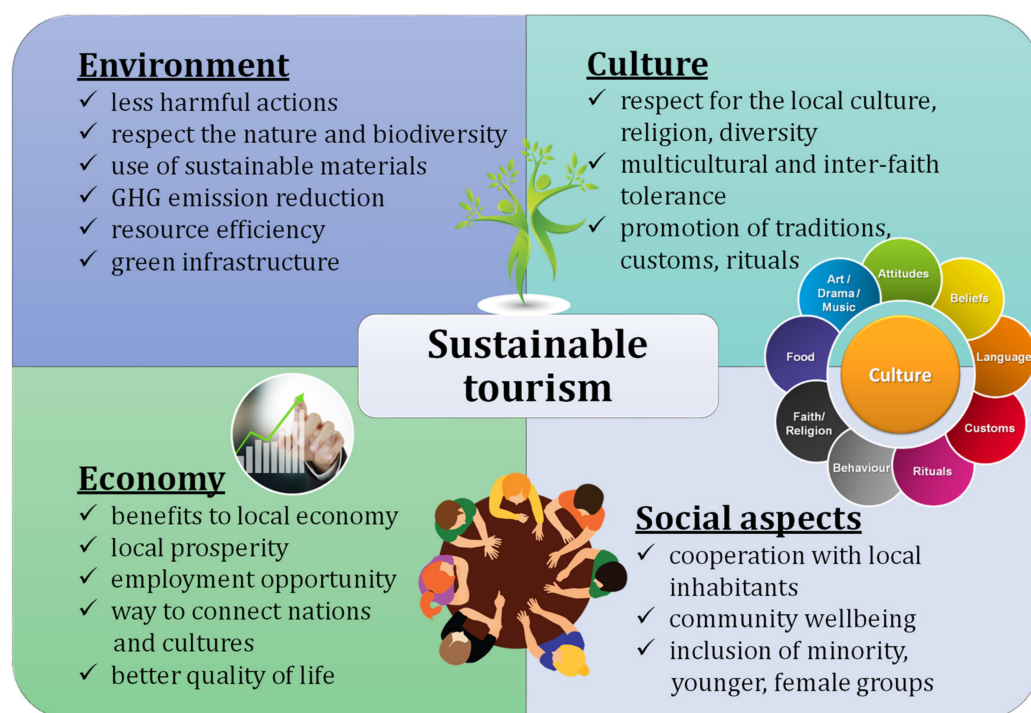


Figure 3. Main attributes and achievements of sustainable tourism in Kosovo.

4. Conclusions

With currently 1.2 billion tourists crossing borders each year, tourism has a profound and wide-ranging impact on society, the environment, and the economy. Representing 10% of world GDP or 7% of global exports, and 1 in 10 jobs belonging to tourism, it has a pronounced role to play in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda of SDGs. Yet, given the multitude of links it has with other sectors and industries along its vast value chain, it could be actually hard to achieve a truly sustainable tourism. It is a rich, challenging, and potent concept, but once achieved, it could help building a new culture or lifestyle of sustainability and peace in the region. On the other hand, the global population is expected to add an increasing strain on the food supply; everyone deserves a high-quality diet while minimizing the damage to the environment. Moreover, as the food supply becomes more globally integrated, it is important to ensure that it is resilient to economic, political, and natural shocks, as highlighted by the recent disruptions caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This should be taken into account, when planning sustainable industries, including tourism as well [1,12,56,57].

Seventeen global SDGs serve as a guideline to achieve sustainable cross-sector and cross-country business and partnership globally as well as in Kosovo. Collaboration, product development, changes in information, planning, and coordination are key points to achieve global goals and reach sustainable future in this business along with a shared vision and partnership with all internal and external members, companies, retailers, suppliers, and stakeholders. This is a long-term global vision for sustainable development, focused on achievement of a prosperous, socially-inclusive, stable economic growth, and environmentally sustainable future for humanity, the young generations, and the whole planet [58–60].

As Franklin D. Roosevelt once stated: *‘We cannot always build a future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future’*, we all, starting from large nations to the smallest communities (or rural villages), younger or older, should be engaged in accomplishing SDGs, reduction in GHG emissions, and properly understanding the mission of sustainable resources and sustainable tourism. Namely, all stakeholders from governments, universities, industries, various organizations and associations to the individuals should take efforts of working together in partnership to accomplish the urgent global challenges facing the world today. The young generation should be taught, educated, and enrolled in this mission, also in the concept of reaching a carbon neutral world, by utilization of renewable energy sources, sustainable resources/materials, learn about the sustainable practices not only in tourist destinations and places, but in everyday living and working sustainably in harmony with nature. Such practices are in line with main aspects of sustainable tourism with respect to the local traditions, customs, and biodiversity leaving no one behind, while solving some of the global problems, such as ending poverty, zero hunger, better health, equal education opportunities, and gender empowerment, while protecting the planet and building strong institutions and partnerships around.

Kosovo offers numerous opportunities for unique tourist events and development of sustainable tourism due to their excellent geographical locations, natural beauty and resources, the history and the heritage of customs, rituals, and traditions of the people living in the region. Many efforts have been done towards tourism development in the region, and yet a lot needs to be done towards sustainable tourism. Different institutions involved in the tourism and acting in harmony could facilitate the development and attractiveness of this industry in the region, which could serve as an example of how people of different ethnicities, religions, and nationalities could live together in a sustainable way. The history has taught us a lot—it has not been always a smooth path for the people in the region, but the turmoils and the conflicts of the past have built resilient nations living together today. Therefore, today’s communities in the region should be shown to the rest of the world with a pride, the history they have been through, and what they have to offer.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.T.P., A.T. and I.K.; methodology, A.T. and A.T.P.; investigation, I.K.; resources, A.T. and I.K.; data curation, A.T.P., A.T. and I.K.; writing—original draft preparation, A.T.P.; writing—review and editing, A.T.P., A.T. and I.K.; visualization, A.T.P.; supervision, A.T.P., A.T. and I.K.; project administration, A.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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