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Stories of circular economy in tourism

CIRCLE2



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[CIRCLE2](#): VET and SMEs on the road to CE

Stories of circular economy in tourism

The interviews we are presenting here were carried out as part of the CIRCLE2 project and aim to report on the application of circular economy principles in the tourism sector, at various levels.

We interviewed six people, starting in Lithuania - the project's lead country - and then moving on to the countries of the other partners: Italy, Turkey, Slovenia, Spain and Scotland.

These are stories of self-employed people, owners of micro and small businesses and experts in different sector of tourism: a tour guide in Lithuania, the owner of a small B&B in Italy, a food culture researcher and head of Tarsus Slow Food in Turkey, the manager of a network of event facilities in Slovenia, one ALSA manager in Spain and, finally, an expert of events management in Scotland.

This document is dedicated to students and teachers in vocational education and training, as a source of inspiration for their educational activities, but we believe it may be of interest to all those who are about to look at the circular economy from a multifaceted point of view.

The interviews are also available on [Youtube](#).

The CIRCLE2 team

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WELCOME TO SLOW, UNIQUE AND CIRCULAR TOURISM EXPERIENCE

INTERVIEW WITH DAIVA TANKŪNAITĖ

Interview by Panevėžys Training Centre

CASE STUDY: SLOW TOURISM

Daiva Tankūnaite



I am Daiva Tankūnaite. My great passion, love, and work is tourism. I have been in this industry for over 30 years. I believe that I have found my vocation. I am a tour guide, tourism lecturer, giving lectures and various courses for guides. Together with like-minded people, we founded Slow Tourism Association in Lithuania.



Kelionių agentė
DAIVA TANKŪNAITĖ





Images: Daiva Tankūnaitė personal album

WHAT IS SLOW TOURISM?

There are a few important things about it. First, It should be mentioned that it is primarily like a social movement, born in cities and regions of the world. Maybe it started with food, fast food restaurants, when people wanted to eat differently, to eat better and tastier, to eat products grown in that region or country, made as always with love and warmth. And then obviously the idea spread to the concept of the slow city, and now we'd like to say that we'd all really like a slow lifestyle.

Slow food, slow way of life, and slow tourism.

A very important second essence is that 'slow' does not necessarily mean physically slow. Slow probably is an alternative to the experience, taste, sight, detention, feeling. For the senses, so that we could stop ourselves somehow, either in the pace of life, raise of the children, or in any kind of creativity, and thereby find rest or experience something profound.

It's just a movement, but still, everyone refers to the English word "Slow" and those four letters stand for "Sustainable", "Local", "Organic" and "Well-being". That is, what is called the spirit of place and we have also tamed another Latin name "Genius Loci". In some way, you feel good in one or another place because it has a certain energy, and it's not so simple to "unlock" it by clapping your hands.

WHO ARE THE CUSTOMERS OF SLOW TOURISM?

They are not slow, but they can be defined by different criteria of maturity. They are experienced. In other words, they are experienced and perhaps they want to sense more than to see. They often travel for the experiences they will have. Of course, they have seen and visited various places, and are seeking novelty. They understand that they will need to put in some effort for things to happen.

We can go to [Pasvalys](#) (Lithuanian town). Near it can be found Riaubonių water mill and the carder has been restored. Together with the community, and the people who create there, you can observe the authentic spinning of wool using the water-powered carder, and how the sheep's wool is sheared. Our coarse sheep, that graze on the lawn, are carded, afterwards, the wool is tied to the spinning wheel and after it is spun at the same place. You simply can even spin your own souvenir and take it home. What is most fascinating about it – the charm of all the people who take part in it.

I have an example when we organized Heritage Days, and we took a trip to the Upytė Crafts Center. Mrs. Vilienė, a famous craftswoman, simply instructed everyone to braid a traditional ribbon, the one that the youth love to wear on their wrist. And it turns out, that can be truly magical. Years ago, when the woman had no other means to calm herself, she spent her time at that weaving loom from Christmas to Easter. It used to be a kind of work and meditation, as she hadn't many other options. And we fell into that meditation. Everyone braids, still wanting to braid something for a friend or for a husband to take home. And I had to ask "Let's go, let's go", and they said "Wait, where's that slow tourism?"

God is in the details, in the simplicity.

WHO CAN BECOME PROVIDERS OF SLOW TOURISM?

People are already living in this way, and we find them. In other words, that person would develop that activity in one or another way. If we can say, this is where the structures of tourism businesses come into play. Guides and organizations come into action, actively seeking what to offer to clients. Most of the time, that person doesn't really want to sell himself. It's just like that. Or people meet each other at events, projects, conferences.

You have to love your city. If not, you have to respect it. First of all, you have to take responsibility, believe in what you are doing and then explore what you find interesting. It is essential to get to know the place and then, first and foremost, to look for people there. If you are heading to a lifeless place, either you must have something to say by yourself, or the view must be worth a million, or there must be a person there.

Small cities and villages
People of all ages
Artisans
Tradition
Cultural heritage
Passion and experience

Photo by Indrė Stulgaitė-Kriukienė | Work by Remigijus Kriukas "[Glasremis](#)"



WHAT EXAMPLE OF SLOW TOURISM COULD YOU GIVE?

As an example, we now have Bagotas [Ciba farm](#) in Kazlų Rūda. The family raises goats and they can't choose a path (whether milk or growths) and decided to organize family outings to the pine forest with goats. Children, together with their friends, go for a walk with the goat during their birthday celebration. Parents walk alongside, and later, then drink tea in the forest and talk about these animals. Photo sessions, which are essential mostly for everyone these days, are excellent.

Similarly, sustainability comes into tourism along with all other aspects.

Everyone gets very concerned when they arrive in Rozalimas (small Lithuanian town), where G. Petkevičaitė-Bitė's (1861 – 1943) Lithuanian educator, writer, and activist) mother is buried. People immediately start to worry that they didn't bring a candle to light.

Or in [Šiluva](#) (small Lithuanian town), where Eimantas Nekrošius (1952-2018) (famous director of theater) have been buried – “and here comes the worries from the group – we don't have a candle to light and put on the grave.” And then I ask everyone, “Who will carry that candle when we leave it here? Who will carry it? Should the relatives wait, gather them after six months at the graves?”

Mačernis (1921-1944) famous Lithuanian poet) is buried in the pine forest on a little hill overlooking his homeland. You have to walk several kilometers to get there and the candles are along all the way. So, when young people worry about a candle, I usually suggest, “Maybe it's better to gather them and carry those 3 kilometers to the containers?” It was greater than lighting a candle.

Photo by [Ciba farm](#)



The glass art studio “[Glasremis](#)”. The name Remigius Kriukas (Lithuanian glass artist) is known by many people. They have such an internal culture that the whole team carries that flag and we are extremely happy that they have rekindled their furnaces and opened for the public). And there's the situation when exceptional uniqueness comes into play. It's not necessary to hang a specific slow tourism flag here. We need to deliver a unique experience. Unique. And because it's like that, what we want for all groups. That's the most important thing – it's interesting for everyone. It's interesting for children, interesting for adults, and even for those who are harder to impress – for the generation in their forties. When there are jazz festivals, jazz music plays, furnace burns, and art pieces are born. We can also appeal to that complex segment, for whom we don't know what to offer, as it is just like that.

WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND AND WISH FOR FUTURE TOURISM SPECIALISTS AND THEIR TEACHERS WHO WANT TO STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

We recently spoke with a student who was writing a science work about heritage. I had a simple recommendation. First of all, you need to go out into the city yourself. Yourself. And look at all this. Otherwise, it won't work. And the question from the teachers, the people who teach – have you been there? So, in short, first and foremost, those young people must experience it. They must experience it themselves.

THE BIG CHALLENGE OF A SMALL B&B



INTERVIEW WITH ARIELLA KRISTIANSON

Interview by Bluebook srl

CASE STUDY: ACCOMODATION

I have lived here for twelve years and my business, Verdmont, is a small bed and breakfast that has grown over the last nine to ten years. One of our guiding principles is to try to be as inconspicuous as possible. That way, when people go on holiday they can be sure that they don't cause any further problems for the environment.

Photo by Ariella Kristianson at Verdmont



Solar panels, solar thermal
LED lights, heat pump
80% reduction of emissions
Collection of rainwater
Environmentally friendly detergents
Biodiversity protection



WHAT ACTIONS HAVE YOU TAKEN FOR ENERGY MANAGEMENT?

Our biggest investments have been in this field. Over the past ten years we have used solar panels to cover a large part of our energy consumption, but to reduce the energy impact in all rooms, we have also implemented solar thermal. Of course, we have reduced energy consumption with LED bulbs and by using solar also for lighting in the garden. Another decision we made for winter heating was to install a heat pump, which means we reduced our emissions by 80 per cent because it is super-efficient and a great way to heat. As far as energy is concerned, we also offer charging for electric vehicles.

WHAT ABOUT WATER MANAGEMENT?

Water management is more complicated in an old building because if it is a new building, you can build a system to collect rainwater and greywater and recycle it. We had to modify our house a bit, so we rethought a system in which at least three bathrooms can use rainwater and grey water from the laundry - because a hotel laundry is huge and consumes a lot of water. So we made a system to collect the water and use it only for flushing and irrigation. Of course, we use environmentally friendly detergents with a very low impact, so there is no danger to irrigation; they don't harm the plants at all. We also have a large water collection system, which is also used for the pool in case of emergencies, when it cannot be topped up due to lack of water. The other thing we did was to install a small pond. In a way, it serves to collect water, because it collects rainwater from the roof, but another important aspect is biodiversity. This is not directly related to saving water, but it certainly helps the other aspect which is the naturalisation of our environment

WHAT ABOUT FURNITURE AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN?

Each room is individually furnished, they are all very different. Most of the pieces are second-hand and recuperated. If we cannot buy second-hand we try to make sure it is environmentally friendly, well made, designed to last or repairable. These are the main principles we consider with regard to furniture.

Regarding the supply chain, I would say that the most important thing for us is the food. When we prepare food, when we make pasta and pizza, we try to use local suppliers for all things, like flour and fruit. We always go to the organic market to buy from local farmers; there are some items that are really hard to get, but we always try to put local first. Besides, the organic farmers' market is a nice thing to be a part of. Once you get to know them, they put aside what you need and the next time they ask: "We have this now, do you want it?". So, in a way, it makes things a bit easier for lazy people; once you've made the effort to make that change. Of course, for most people, it is probably easier to go to the supermarket. But from a philosophical point of view, I think that helping small suppliers is more important, supermarkets will manage.

A MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL WORK IN THIS SECTOR

I think that in general, in all sectors, we are in an era of change, so I would say that the most important thing is to become aware of these issues, such as circularity and sustainability. Once that awareness is created, do not be afraid to talk and act on it, because there are a lot of people who may have invested in their business and never considered this as something to invest in, maybe they never thought that this is a change they should make. So I think the real value of young people, at least from my point of view, is that they can bring new perspectives and energy to bring about the necessary changes. This is a big challenge and, I think, the main problem is that many people have not yet thought that they need to change. So a young person is the perfect person to lead organisations forward, also because young people are the ones who will benefit the most from this change.

Verdmont venue



LOCAL FOOD CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Boost the local farmers economy
Relationships between locals producers and tourists

INTERVIEW WITH YASMINA LOKMANOGLU

Interview by Tarsus Ticaret ve Sanayi Odasi

CASE STUDY: PLACES OF INTEREST



Yasmina Lokmanoglu



Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us.

Since its beginnings, Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people in over 160 countries, working to ensure everyone has access to good, clean and fair food.

Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and change the world as a result.



Slow Food®

WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT OF EARTH MARKET?

The starting point of the [Earth Market](#) is the Tarsus Gastronomic Days. The producers we invited during the Tarsus Gastronomic Days made excellent profits. Then we founded the Slow Food Association - Slow Food Tarsus. The most suitable formula is the Earth Market concept of the international Slow food network. It takes place twice a month, every second and fourth Sunday.

DO YOU RECEIVE ANY SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS?

We get the biggest support from Tarsus Municipality and the Tarsus Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Tarsus Stock Exchange and Tarsus Chamber of Agriculture are also helping us. But the Tarsus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tarsus Municipality are always with us.

IF YOU WANT TO SET UP A STAND AT THE EARTH MARKET, WHAT REQUIREMENTS DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE?

First of all, it is not necessary to do organic farming. But you do have to prove that you are farming and breeding in an environmentally and animal-friendly way. Agroecological systems are very suitable for slow food. Secondly, if you do not want to produce but only do the processing, you have to use products that you buy at the market itself.

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN EARTH MARKET?

Besides the question of how food is produced, a big part of the focus on the circular economy and sustainability is in the attention to packaging. For example, paper material is a priority, baskets made of natural materials are used, plastic material is never used, packaging with materials suitable for recycling is accepted, and many things like that. Plus we place a lot of emphasis on reuse. This also has an impact on cost, which is higher compared to the average price of the same product. Natural packaging is very expensive in Turkey. In the end, people either come with their own bags or reusable bags are sold on the market.

WHAT KIND OF SEMINARS DO YOU ORGANISE IN THE MARKETS?

We provide continuous training. First of all, communication, life without plastic, respect for the environment and nature, gender equality and pesticide damage. We regularly hold seminars on these topics. There are at least one or two seminars every Sunday. Chefs explain waste-free cooking with products on the market. And we certainly teach children something environmentally friendly. For example, last week we explained how to produce solar energy. We held a workshop for children on how to use solar energy. The Earth Market contributes a lot to tourism in Tarsus. There is a lot of movement in Tarsus. You can tell by the number of people who come and the shopkeepers who open their shops. Before the earthquake, tours were also arriving. The arrival of the tours was very important for our Sunday Earth Markets. We were promoting Tarsus and making the products of Tarsus known. In addition, we were establishing a relationship between the producer and the tourist on the tour. I hope the tours will resume in the coming years. The Earth Market has become the centre of attention. Because you can't find such natural and genuine products and food anywhere. With the Slow Food guarantee, you can get delicious, pesticide-free or sustainable food the way you want it. You can have fun with your children. It was a very nice place of interest.

Photo by Slow Food International



FROM FIELD TO PLATE IN HALF A DAY

INTERVIEW WITH MIRKO LAZNIK

Interview by Solski Center Celje

CASE STUDY: FOOD MANAGEMENT



Mirko Laznik



Mirko Laznik is the manager of Hiša Lisjak. Hiša Lisjak holds five locations. It organises events such as weddings, business meetings, and life anniversary celebrations and prepares catering. Guests are delighted by the themed ambiances, the exquisite cuisine, and the innovative ideas and increasingly expect a responsible approach to the preparation of locally produced food.



WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THE FOOD CATERING SECTOR AT THE MOMENT?

The concepts “from the field to the table” and self-sufficiency gained momentum, and shortening the route from production to service is the main challenge. From cured meats to vegetables and fruit, it will be important to use all local suppliers. Authentic, home-grown flavours without artificial colours and additives.

WHAT IMPORTANCE DO YOU PLACE ON LOCAL SUPPLIERS?

We already have many suppliers who are practically our neighbours, from cured meat products to eggs, fruit, and cheese. Farmers may not have sufficient quantities, but things are improving in this area too. At every event, we plan the quantities carefully so that food is not wasted and as little as possible is left over. If there is leftover, we ask guests to take it and use it at home.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH LEFTOVERS?

People are very conscious, they are reluctant to throw food away. We also, if possible, use up the food. We make it a point to every guest to take food home and eat it the next day, for example for breakfast or for an after-party.

HOW INVOLVED ARE YOU IN THE LOCAL SCENE?

We participate in local events such as the Open Kitchen. We also organise an open kitchen as part of our own event, where we offer one dish to guests in the style of an open kitchen. Here we use as much seasonal stuff as possible. We do one course in the open kitchen in this beautiful area. Guests are outside enjoying what is thriving at the time.

Self-sufficiency
Local suppliers
Authentic flavours
No waste
Awareness

Hiša Lisjak venue

DO YOU SEE ANY NATIONAL INCENTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD MANAGEMENT?

We don't feel a particular incentive from the government, it's more from the guests. Guests want sustainability, they demand it. There are some calls for tenders at a national level, but we don't take advantage of that. As I said, the guests demand it and we try to adapt to their demands.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE KEY TO FOOD HANDLING?

We try to work as organically as possible and with as little impact on the environment as possible. We use whatever is available at the time of the year. In winter, for example, we don't have exotic foods on the menu. We try to order food optimally so that there are no leftovers. We use tap water, which is a privilege not everyone has, and we do not charge our guests for it.



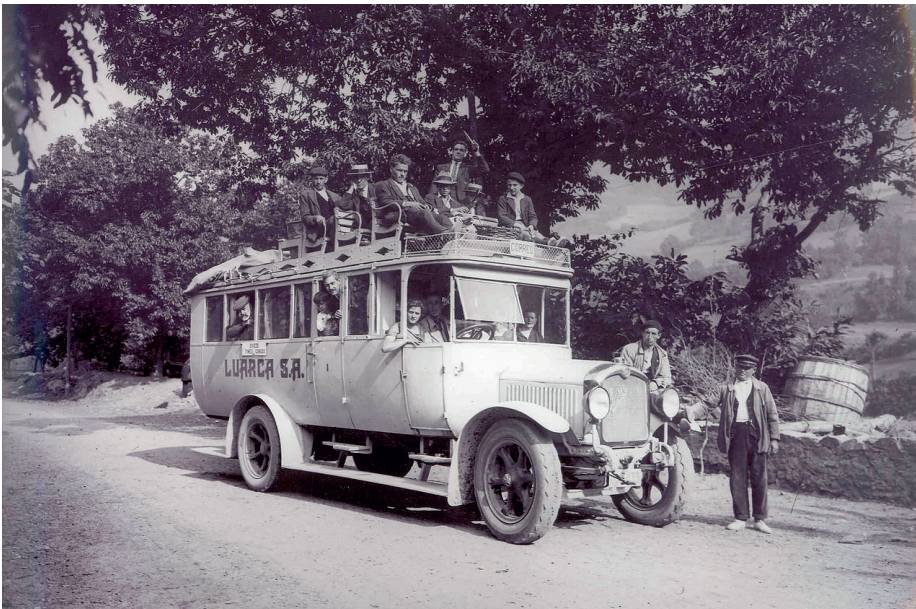
ON THE ROAD SINCE 1923

INTERVIEW WITH JAVIER DE LOS RÍOS VILLALBA

Interview by ACCI

CASE STUDY: TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

ALSA is a company born in Asturias which, on 5th April 2023, has turned 100 years' old. From its beginning, ALSA has always shown its entrepreneurial mindset. It was created to transport travellers by road and right now, it's a one of the main mobility companies in the whole World.



A Saurer coach of the line Oviedo-Cangas del Narcea in 1923



ALSA bus

DO YOU HAVE SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR TOURISTS?

Yes apart from our long haul services, which are reinforced during summer to provide a service to all those tourists who need to move around during the whole season. We also offer exclusive tourist services, like the ones here in Asturias, in Oviedo and in Gijón which are operated during the whole summer. These services, which show all the main locations of both Oviedo and Gijón explaining them with the help of an audio-guide, have been tremendously successful.

Apart from those, we also provide specific mobility services to beaches. For example, in Rodiles, we have a service which takes passengers from the town of Villaviciosa. We also have a service in Lastres, in summer, for the exclusive transportation of passengers only to the beach and the “star-service” of Asturias, which is the “Plan Lagos” service which does not operate only during summer, but also in other periods of high season.

It’s a service that takes place in a very singular environment as the Natural Park of the Lakes of Covadonga” is.

And with these buses, with this service, what we do is taking private vehicles off the road which, for us, has been a very important achievement.

But for the environment in The Lakes and in Cangas de Onis is even more important as, after all, the impact this measure has over the environment, on the animals who live there, is crucial, as, this way, we don’t disturb them so much.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

For us, it’s primarily and essentially a key goal in our strategy this change to a more sustainable means of transport for the environment. One of our proposals and objectives is that, by 2035 all of our urban service fleet may have reached zero emissions. For that, we are still studying all options and alternatives. Technology moves real fast and we are currently placing all our efforts and know-how in those alternatives. We’re not closed to any of them In all of them, whether it’s hydrogen, electricity, clean fuels...

Right now, the most mature option is, as we all know, the electric bus but we’re also currently working in projects involving hydrogen and other possible fuels.

9.719 employees
76.000 hours
of safety training,
quality and
environment
1.7 m of annual budget
in training, professional
development
reconciliation, equal
opportunities
and risk prevention.

Javier De Los Ríos
Villalba



EVENTS MANAGEMENT AND CE

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE TAYLOR

Interview by CGU

CASE STUDY: EVENTS MANAGEMENT



Steve Taylor



Steve Taylor is an environmentalist and economic development advisor who specialises in developing and implementing sustainability projects. Well known for his work with music festivals, he has been Sustainability Manager for events such as T in the Park, Lake of Stars Festival Malawi, Glasgow's Commonwealth Games Festival 2014 and Stornoway's HebCelt festival, securing Greener Festival awards for each event.

He has provided award winning work reducing greenhouse gas emissions for schools, sports clubs, business and community groups. With projects ranging from an environmental review of the African Cup of Nations Football tournament in Ghana, to the development of a community allotments project in Glasgow, he has helped reduce carbon footprints for over 100 projects.



WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON ISSUES ENCOUNTERED IN SUSTAINABLE EVENTS MANAGEMENT, ACCORDING TO YOUR EXPERIENCE?

In terms of “T” in the park was very important. We protected the environment and prevented pollution entering the watercourses, and that was our priority. Other festivals - it’s been about reducing waste. Others it might be about reducing power or a little bit of all of these, but one that is increasingly important because it’s such a high carbon emitter is getting people to a festival site by public transport, and not in an individual car.

- Creativity
- Innovation
- Market opportunities
- Tailor-made strategies



T IN THE PARK festival

EVERY STRATEGY TO MAKE AN EVENT SUSTAINABLE WOULD NEED TO BE ADAPTED TO THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EVENT ITSELF.

WHAT ACTION HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED FOR THE HEBCELT FESTIVAL?

The bottle deposit scheme that we run at the Hebridean Celtic festival, Heb Celt in Stornoway is the bottle deposit scheme. First of all, it was run by Zero Waste Scotland which made the finance available for us to hire deposit return equipment, so we use biodegradable beer cups, they went into machine. It was successful because we made it fun. We made it a little bit like a lottery, sometimes you took your turn putting a cup in the machine and every so often there was a winner. And okay, usually it said you haven't won anything but every so often a ticket would come out and you get a prize. That meant that people especially children just wanted to try it again and again. It took plastic bottles, which was separated by the machine. It took the biodegradable beer cups and it separated with almost a 99% accuracy. We had to take out the odd plastic bottle, but it's really effective at separating. The event was independently monitored and evaluated and we got a recycling rate of 85%. But that showed that making it fun, people got involved. They wanted to participate and they kept the arena unbelievably clean. People would come up to me and say I've never seen it so clean, because kids would go around picking up the beer cups and trying their luck putting it in the machine. We made it fun and educational entertaining. So, people got involved, and the management, back of house to keep those separated schemes and take them to the right place. That's really important because sometimes waste stream can get mixed up after they've been separated.

CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT CIRCULARITY CAN LOOK LIKE AT EVENTS MANAGEMENT?

The Laker stars festival in Malawi, we work very closely with the community and there are two schools in the area. One of them, when I visited the school, I noticed that the school children were sitting on a concrete floor learning in front of the teacher, there were no desks. I spoke to the headmaster of the school. And he said to me, what are you going to do with the stage at the end of the festival, it was a wooden stage that we built specifically for the festival. We gave that stage to the school and they then converted the stage into desks. When I went back a year later, I went into the classrooms and the children were sitting at these desks made out of the stage that the festival had been using, that artists have played on. That to me is a great Circular Economy story. They use their skills and their efforts. They just needed the wood which they couldn't afford to buy normally.



[Lake of Stars Festival Malawi](#)

Take responsibility, believe in what you are doing, explore what you find interesting.

Daiva Tankūnaite

We are in an era of change, so I would say that the most important thing is to become aware of these issues.

Ariella Kristianson

Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and change the world as a result.

Yasmina Lokmanoglu

Guests want sustainability, they demand it and we try to adapt to their demands.

Mirko Laznik

One of our proposals and objectives is that, by 2035 all of our urban service fleet may have reached zero emissions.

Javier De Los Ríos Villalba

Circularity is all about keeping things in the loop by being creative and finding alternatives that avoid materials from going to landfill.

Steve Taylor

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