

Impact House, a hostel in Lisbon allied with the SDGs

On its 2019 Sustainable Travel Report Booking.com concluded that 55% of the travelers are more likely to make sustainable travel choices than they were a year ago. But barriers include a lack of knowledge and available or appealing options.

So, consumers want to become more sustainable in their travels but do not seem to find the offer to match their aspirations. This is a great motivation for companies in the tourism sector to change their practice to more sustainable ones and for new companies with more social and environmental purposes to emerge.

That was the case in 2018, when Rita and Diogo (founders of Impact+) decided to create another brand of the company: Impact House, a hostel committed with sustainability and NGO support in Lisbon.

To define and to keep improving our business in a sustainable way we could trust the SDGs as guidelines. We always saw the SDGs as our common goals as society that could only be attained with the contribution of all, governments, citizens, and, very importantly, companies. Independently of size, age and sector.

In the tourism sector particularly, we knew the high risks of having a negative impact on host communities and natural resources. Therefore, we were aware of the importance of giving our contribution to change the sector aligned with the SDGs framework.

Although we have practices and examples in all 17 Goals, we decided to choose 5 SDGs to share what we are doing in our sustainable hostel, Impact House.

2 – Zero hunger

We are working to establish long-term business partnerships with small and local food suppliers, giving preference to NGOs.

To make sure we minimize our food waste, we make accounts of the number of meals we have to make every day. We include our guests asking them to let us know when they are not going to have dinner or lunch, so we can adjust the quantities of food.

If we have any food excess, we donate it to NGOs that make sure the food will be given to individuals or families in need.

4 – Quality Education

We are committed to give work opportunities to students at Impact House to learn how we work in the sustainable tourism sector. We have partnerships with tourism schools and universities and welcome interns every summer.

Informal education is very important for us, we believe that volunteering is a great way to learning. Part of Impact House clients are engaged in international volunteer programs managed by the sister brand ImpacTrip. So, we not only make sure our guests have all their needs met to fully take part in their volunteering, but also, we invite all our guests to enroll in spontaneous volunteer activities to help our partners NGOs.

Everything we do related with sustainability and NGO support we communicate and engage our clients. Our goal is to raise awareness and the levels of social and environmental consciousness.

7 – Affordable and clean energy

At Impact House our electricity is exclusively from renewable sources. We made a contract with our energy supplier that finances the company investment in renewable sources of energy.

We have in place the energy basics: Led lights and efficient home appliances, our guests and employees are incentivized to use public transportations in their daily commuting or trips among many other small initiatives to save energy.

We also offset the Impact House CO2 emissions that we can't avoid and we are working to calculate our own and our supply chain GHG emissions to achieve our 2030 commitment to be Net Zero.

12 – Responsible consumption and production

We have a procurement policy that explicitly states our preference for non-profit and local suppliers, that recommends to analyze other options before buying new, and disregard for products packaged in single-use plastic. We are working hard to restructure our supply chain to be more aligned with our sustainability principles.

We also extend these belief to our clients as we donate clothes, shoes, and hygiene products that are no longer used by our clients to NGOs that support homeless people and we incentivize our guests can swap clothes between them by using the swap spot, enlarging the life of fashion products.

Finally, we separate plastic, glass, paper and batteries for recycling, and we separate organic waste and compostable waste to use in our vermicompostor and then fertilize our food garden. Again, we engage our clients in the whole process.

17 – Partnerships for the goals

This SDG is probably the most important for us because it is connected to the mission of the company Impact+. Our mission is to support our social and environmental non-profit partners.

At Impact House, social and environmental partners are preferred suppliers and donations receivers. They are at the heart of everything we do, from the social shop where we promote and sell their products, to their art exhibitions we host every month, not forgetting the agenda of events we promote every week where these partners organize activities and raise awareness to different causes.

These are some of our best practices, we hope some of them give inspiration to more companies in the tourism sector to be more sustainable and allied with the SGDs - we all gain with that.

We invite you to see *in loco*, our doors are open to everyone.

Written by Mariana Teixeira



Mariana has dedicated her time and energy to managing companies, organizations or projects with positive impact. She is a pessimistic-idealistic professional, obsessed with inequality and social problems and driven by purpose. She believes that social businesses will lead the change the world needs!

Dance and gastronomy are her favorite ways to know a new culture and she trusts in the power of tourism to make the world smaller and the people closer.

Mariana became a keen problem solver thanks to: her work experience in CSR consultancy, management challenges in both the private and social sectors, a master's degree in development economics, a lot of volunteering hours and many adventures as a solo traveler.