

Good Practice in Community Tourism Learning

Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College | 2026

Title*

Learning Tourism through Community Fieldwork and AI-Assisted Project Design in Talin

Name of the VET Provider

Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College, Armenia

Thematic domain

Innovation; Digital; Entrepreneurial; Creating partnerships/skills ecosystems.

Green is a supporting theme through local food, rural tourism and proposed reuse of an existing building; environmental outcomes have not been measured.

Introduction*

Our college connected vocational tourism education with the practical needs of rural communities in the Talin area of Aragatsotn, Armenia. The challenge was to turn historical and cultural attractions, local hospitality and agricultural resources into a coherent tourism experience in an area with limited visitor services and visibility.

The practice is documented in the 2026 graduation research paper “Stone Tales, Rural Calls” by third-year Tourism student Tatev Petrosyan, supervised by Karine Grigoryan. It combined research, route development, a field trial, community dialogue, cost calculation and a SWOT analysis. The paper records a trial group of 16 participants aged 16 and above. The exact dates and duration of the educational activity are to be confirmed by the college.

The route linked Yerevan, Talin Cathedral, Dashtadem Fortress, Garnahovit and Akunk before returning to Yerevan. During the visit to Akunk, students discussed a local family’s planned hospitality enterprise and developed the “Lusa” guesthouse and gastronomic courtyard concept, using AI tools to visualise possible transformations of existing spaces.

Stakeholders and Partners

The primary beneficiaries were tourism students applying their knowledge in a real destination and engaging with local service providers. Rural hosts and residents were also involved in exchanging ideas about local tourism opportunities.

The college provided the educational setting and academic supervision. The paper credits Stella Sarukhanyan, founder of “Hay Gyugh” NGO, with professional advice, support for community involvement and guidance on the route. Yeghishe Grigoryan, identified in the paper as the Garnahovit community head, welcomed and accompanied the group and supported the visit.

Siranush, founder of “Serven” guesthouse, hosted the group, presented the accommodation and offered food based on local products and traditional recipes. In Akunk, Sona Avetisyan and local school pupils introduced the village and its heritage. The Avetisyan family shared its plans to transform an unfinished building into a hospitality venue; mushroom cultivation was already taking place on the ground floor. No external donor or formal funding arrangement for the educational activity is identified in the paper.

Impact*

The documented result is a practical learning experience with concrete outputs: a developed and tested itinerary, a route map, destination descriptions, a pricing exercise, a SWOT analysis and a hospitality development proposal with AI-generated visual concepts. Students participated in discussion with Sona Avetisyan and suggested ideas for adapting and furnishing the building. These activities provided opportunities to apply tourism planning, costing, analysis, communication and digital visualisation skills.

The visit created direct dialogue between college students, a local NGO, community leadership, hospitality providers and school pupils. It brought attention to local heritage and small rural enterprises. The paper provides a qualitative narrative of these encounters and photographs, rather than a formal evaluation of learning gains.

The proposed “Lusa” model could connect locally grown mushrooms, food services and accommodation, retaining more visitor spending locally and reusing an existing structure. These are anticipated benefits. The paper does not establish that the proposed venue has opened or provide measured changes in income, employment, visitor numbers, environmental performance or migration. It also does not document repeated delivery of the educational practice.

Innovation and Success Factors*

The educational innovation is the combination of an actual route trial, local stakeholder engagement and student-generated enterprise ideas within one graduation research project. Students moved from describing a destination to identifying service gaps and proposing responses to a real family’s plans.

AI-assisted visualisation made proposed changes to unfinished rooms and the building easier to communicate. These images are design concepts, not evidence of completed construction or validated architectural plans. The “Lusa” proposal linked a three-room guesthouse and a gastronomic courtyard with the family’s existing mushroom cultivation.

Successful replication requires teacher supervision, willing local hosts, informed community participation, access to transport and destinations, and time for research and reflection. Students need basic tourism planning and costing skills, access to appropriate digital tools, permission to use site photographs, and guidance to distinguish real conditions from generated imagery. Local ownership of business decisions is essential.

Constraints*

The field research identified limited food-service and accommodation provision, uneven service standards, insufficient visitor information and access difficulties on some local roads. The educational project responded by linking heritage sites with available local hospitality and obtaining advice and practical support from the NGO and community representative. Students also proposed ways to expand services in Akunk. The paper does not show that the wider infrastructure problems have been resolved.

A further constraint is the limited evidence base: no before-and-after skills assessment, structured participant feedback or follow-up business results are included. The route pricing table also uses different group sizes for participants, meals and guiding. Its assumptions should be reconciled before the figures are reused in teaching or commercial planning.

Lessons learned*

Fieldwork becomes more useful when students analyse a real local need and produce a practical output. Combining heritage visits with discussions about hospitality and local food helps students understand how separate services form a tourism product.

Local hosts, community representatives and experienced NGOs contribute knowledge that classroom research alone cannot provide. Their involvement should begin during route planning.

AI visuals can support communication of a proposal, but must be clearly labelled and checked against the actual site. Attractive images do not establish technical feasibility or business viability.

Future delivery should include a consistent costing model, student reflection, host feedback and follow-up records. These would strengthen evidence of educational value and show whether the practice produces repeatable results.

Replicability and/or up-scaling

The approach can be adapted to other tourism programmes and rural destinations: students research local assets, consult stakeholders, develop and test an itinerary, calculate costs, analyse service gaps and prepare a proposal responding to a host's actual needs. AI visualisation can be included where useful.

To extend the practice across student cohorts, the college could introduce a common project brief, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, fieldwork checklist and feedback form while allowing each community to define its priorities. A shared portfolio should distinguish activities completed, proposals made and outcomes verified.

National or international replication would require suitable local partners, teacher preparation, transport and fieldwork budgets, consent for photography and publication, and adaptation to local heritage and service conditions. Repeated trials and comparable learning and partner feedback should precede claims of wider validated impact. Any implementation of the hospitality proposal would need a separate feasibility review, financing and applicable permissions.

Contact details

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Related resources that have been developed

The Armenian-language graduation research paper "Stone Tales, Rural Calls" (Tatev Petrosyan, 2026, supervised by Karine Grigoryan) includes:

- Research on Aragatsotn and the Talin area's tourism resources.
- The developed and tested route, a map and descriptions of its stops.
- A route pricing calculation and SWOT analysis.
- Photographs documenting locations and the community visit.
- Appendix 1 with the "Lusa" guesthouse and gastronomic courtyard proposal, including AI-assisted visual concepts alongside photographs of existing spaces.

The college can provide the paper subject to its sharing permissions. No separate training manual, video or public resource repository is identified in the source.