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A Collective Memory Work Reflection on Planning and Pivoting to a Virtual TEFI11 Conference

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Introduction

COVID-19 brought the world to a standstill, resulting in the most severe disruption to the global tourism sector in modern times. According to The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2021) Barometer, global international tourist arrivals fell by 44% between January and April 2020. The disruption caused by the pandemic resulted in a loss of US$195 billion in international tourism receipts. Prior to the pandemic, urgent concerns about the impact and sustainability of tourism were mounting. Overtourism, and the anti-tourism sentiment, the climate crisis, the availability and quality of tourism work, oppression towards minority and marginalized groups, and concerns regarding the capacity of communities to absorb tourism, continue to attract both media and scholarly attention. As global travel restrictions begin to ease, and the world looks towards a 'new normal', the immediate priority is to protect jobs and businesses. However, if the unsustainable nature of tourism is to be addressed, the unlocking of the sector is an opportunity to think radically about the purpose of tourism for a more sustainable future. Accordingly, the return to tourism should occur by recentring our purpose. This will require a radical, racial, ethnic, intersectional, able lens, and set the standard for other sectors and disciplines to follow.

It was within this context, and in support of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative's (TEFI) ambition, to move beyond business as usual, that the 11th TEFI conference invited contributions from educators and practitioners, to radically challenge and debate the purpose of tourism. Purposeful tourism is about creating sustainable places to live, work and visit, based on creating value that is more than the pursuit of profit. Purpose is intentional and requires a commitment to iterative learning, and reflexivity about one's decisions, behaviours, and choices. A purposeful tourist must be honest and demonstrate restraint regarding the amount, and types of travel one chooses to embark on. A for-purpose business strives to deliver more than just profit, often delivering social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits because it's the right thing to do. The goal of TEFI11 was to reflect on the transformative role of tourism to peoples, places, and the planet. Clearly, the contemporary health crisis amidst many other crises affecting the sector, necessitates we think deeply about the role of tourism. The aim of this conference report is provide readers with some insight via a memory work reflection, shedding some light on how we felt during the conference planning, how and why we chose to pivot to a virtual event given the onset of the pandemic and some of our key learnings.

Guided by collective memory work (CMW) (Haug, 2000; 2008) we use our memories here, to reflect our experiences planning and pivoting to host TEFI11 as our first ever virtual conference. Our

reflections reveal the impetus to do so, given the complicated and evolving crises leading up to, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. CMW is a participatory action-oriented approach, inviting research participants into the research process as co-researchers (Kivel & Johnson, 2007). Memory work facilitates the process to recall, examine, and analyse memories and experiences within a broader cultural context (Kivel & Johnson, 2007). Furthermore, it is a method that entails a collective discussion of the written memories of individual participants (Small et al., 2011; Thomsen & Hansen, 2009). Importantly, CMW permits research participants into the research process as co-researchers. The experiences reflected in the memories shared here, reveal some of the thoughts, feelings, concerns, and opportunities mutually from personal and professional perspectives of three scholars, TEFI champions, and conference organisers. Our memories presented below, were an outcome of several virtual meetings, and our reflexive practice, encouraging us to consider our memories of organising TEFI11 during the pandemic. Following the drafting of our memories, we shared our 2-page reflections, which led to group discussions, finding similarities and differences, and gaps. Our group discussions encouraged us to expand our memories and establish the themes which are presented below.

Leading up to the Conference

1. *Wrestling with the Pandemic: Implications for our Conference*

Brendan- It was late February 2020 and planning for the TEFI11 conference to be held at York St John University, York, UK, was gathering pace. Abstracts had been reviewed and accepted, guest speakers arranged, rooms booked, catering ordered, visits to local places of interest planned, and a draft programme prepared. The conference theme had been agreed: *What's Tourism got to do with it? Re-purposing tourism: engaging our radical in tourism education.* As someone who had attended many TEFI conferences, I was excited about the prospect of hosting the 11th TEFI Conference. I also felt a significant sense of responsibility. It was a privilege to be asked to host the conference, and our organising committee were keen to ensure the conference was in the spirt of TEFI: collegiate, thought-provoking, responsible, and inspiring. It was during this particular morning that a colleague, who is also a close friend, and a member of the conference organising team, burst into the office: "Brendan we have to postpone TEFI! COVID-19 cases are growing!" I was deeply frustrated about the prospect of postponing. So much hard work had gone into organising the conference by everyone involved. Perhaps my naivety, combined with a lack of urgency by which the UK government were responding to the virus, I was sure the pandemic would be over by June in time for TEFI11! Indeed, my Head of Department reassured me, that once the clocks change for British Summer Time in March, we would see the end of the pandemic. However, as the weeks progressed, the situation worsened. York had recorded the UK's first cases of the virus and on the 9th March Italy imposed its first national lockdown (New York Times - Horowitz, 2020). Countries were starting to impose travel bans, conference funds were being cut, and suddenly, the prospect of a face-to-face conference became unrealistic. Delegates started to contact us asking about our plans for the conference, some withdrawing altogether. It was clear this crisis would not be over by June. With reluctance, I contacted the TEFI committee and suggested we postponed until next year.

2. *Re-centring our Commitment to Futures*

Johan- It must be possible. Other conferences have been hosted virtually before, what is holding us back? The TEFI executive conference planning team got together virtually in mid-March and after hearing the dreaded words, "we will have to postpone the conference" I posed the question I have considered theoretically before, regarding the meaning and intentions of conferences (Edelheim et al, 2018). Limited discussions leading up to COVID-19 flirted with the idea of virtual conferences (see Hopkins et al., 2016 and before that Høyer & Naess, 2001 as well as Høyer, 2009 who at an early stage acknowledged the link between conference travel and environmental pressures as exceptions) though, these mostly felt like theoretical contributions to the literature. I mean, sure, it's been a possibility with interactive platforms where collaborators can share material in real time, that's not new, and I have taught from a distance in regional Australia some fifteen years ago, using classroom software allowing me to load whiteboards and presentations onto interactive platforms, where students attended and contributed to classes. But, somehow, as long as travel was as easy and convenient as it was, before the onset of COVID-19 causing borders to close, introducing curfews, and banning mass-gatherings, doing conferences virtually just felt like an idea that would never take off! Because part of the joy with conferences is that combination of *work*: we are encouraged by our employers to attend; *intellectual stimulation*: we get to listen to cutting edge research and inspiring keynotes; conferences provide opportunities for networking and *connecting* with colleagues and friends, and, importantly attending conferences is an impetus to *visit superb places* that we otherwise may not have had a reason to go to (Rowe, 2018; Zhang & Zhang, 2020).

3. Grappling with Virtual Discomfort

Karla- So, we are going to have to reschedule the conference?!…it's so unfortunate…the onset of the pandemic has put a damper on our conference plans! When will we meet again? I was really looking forward to seeing our network at York St John. Brendan has made some stellar contacts with the tourism sector in York, and I was really looking forward to the workshops we have been crafting with Dianne. I was also getting my three-year old pumped for the trip. Gracie was excited to meet other TEFI kids and we had never attended a family-friendly conference before. Damn pandemic, I'm sure we will be able to reschedule for next year!

Pardon me? Johan, um can you repeat that? You think we should transition our conference to a virtual event? We have four months to go…how will we possibly do that? We are a future-oriented network right! I get that…oh-my-god what have I gotten myself into?!?! Hmmmm, I clear my throat. I feel my palms starting to sweat. Is that Adelaide crying? No, she is in the middle of a blissful nap. Who uses their innocent five-month-old baby as an excuse to defer planning a virtual conference? Sentiments from previous undergraduate students start to race in my mind when I previously asked students to visually document their micro-leveraging efforts in a community development class. "This is *REC* not *tech!*" one student lamented on a discussion board! I struggle with my email…clearly, my technological capacity is nil…I think I am the reason we have tech support at my university! How will I contribute to virtual conference planning? How will it be possible to chair a conference at home, mutually negotiating a baby, and three-year-old. This is going to be impossible…and Brendan already had our conference program drafted!

Managing the Pivot

1. *Taking TEFI Online: Challenge Accepted!*

Brendan -One thing we promptly ruled out was to try and run the conference like a live conference would have functioned, in one go. I listened to my colleagues who wisely suggested that we need to have breaks from sitting in front of screens, and we needed to rethink the idea of delivering live presentations in real-time. The reason for the latter was the risk of technological glitches that would mess up schedules, and that would contribute undue stress to our presenters (Sá et al., 2019). So, we asked delegates to pre-record their presentations and this created flexibility, allowing attendees to listen to presentations at a time that suited them, from anywhere around the world. We wanted our time together to provide opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations and allow for questions to our presenters – supporting two-way communication, that is what makes conferences worthwhile. The presentations then could function as precursors that would be available to attendees at any time that suited them beforehand, but also afterwards as material that one could go back to, and use in other circumstances, such as teaching. Our collection of pre-recorded conference presentations now serves as a library linked to the conference program on TEFI's website.

2. *Recognising the Appealing Features of a Virtual Conference*

Karla- After the initial shock set in, there were several redeeming features of harnessing a virtual conference. We considered the opportunities regarding diversity and inclusion, both professionally, more broadly for our TEFI network, and personally (Black et al., 2020). We could be among the first to creatively think about how to connect outside of our face-to-face meetings. No one knew how long the impacts of the pandemic would last, but what became increasingly palpable in our grappling of the pandemic, was that this is not going to be over soon, as we consistently learn about new variants and the inequalities the pandemic has shone a light in regard to vulnerable groups, financial insecurity and the vaccine rollout. Furthermore, the realisation of the speed in which COVID flew in, we realised, this may not be the only pandemic we live through. We also realised that a virtual conference had the potential to include scholars, particularly junior and emerging scholars, who may not have had the financial capital to support conference attendance.

Johan- TEFI stands for *Tourism Education Futures Initiative*, the "*futures"* orientation recognises our commitment to never rest on our laurels serving as the impetus to continually push boundaries. Early in 2020 we began noticing on TRINET several conferences retracting or postponing their conference dates. By March 2020, no tourism conference had announced a virtual event. This was an opportunity to rise to our name and commitments as worldmakers. The conference planning team met in York, and the subcommittee of TEFI executive involved in planning the conference met monthly virtually. I was at the time serving as chair of TEFI, and was eager to go ahead with the conference as planned in 2020, and keen to create something new where TEFI could show its open-mindedness to the larger tourism community. We discussed different portals and options, and we realised that we could create a rather low-tech, but inclusive conference, by combining several existing programs and platforms to serve our purposes. TEFI is about challenging the status quo, inspiring innovative, values-based learning, and re-thinking tourism education for a dramatically changing world. With this is mind, and as a *Futures Initiative*, this was an opportunity to hold the first virtual tourism conference. I was personally thrilled we accepted the challenge hosting the first ever virtual TEFI conference as I had been reading about how similar moves had happened in other fields (e.g., Fraser et al., 2017; Thatcher, 2006).

Karla- Much of our scholarship leans into critiques regarding the sustainability efforts specifically in the tourism sector. Our fly in and fly out mentality to attend conferences, deliver keynotes, workshops, examine graduate research, and program curriculum etc. has contributed to the climate crisis (Spinellis & Louridas, 2013). We are very much a part of the problem! Our consideration of alternatives is imperative especially in responding to important questions around what we want our legacy to be, both to our planet and to our scholarly community. Particularly centring the well-being and mental health of Early Career Researchers, who we as TEFI, invest so much in. In addition, technology is no longer a barrier, with most people acquainted with online environments and working remotely. Considering moving our conference online amplifies the importance of a network focused on tourism futures. Pausing to reflect on the much-needed changes and transitions in our thinking, actions, and behaviours deserved more attention. Racing is something we are well too versed in, particularly in North America, as we race to publish more than our peers, and seek invitations to present our work on global stages. Neoliberal rhetoric has engrained in us *publish or perish*, work harder, produce, produce more, you are not producing enough! Honing our leadership as a network was important to us and acknowledging and recognising sustainability as a value is/was imperative in this time.

3. *Considering Virtual Design & Delivery*

Brendan- There were two major factors to consider when re-designing the conference to host online. The first was how to facilitate an online conference. We explored a range of different options, and software packages. Some were more costly than others. However, it quickly became apparent that all we needed was a Zoom account and a YouTube channel. Not only are these platforms easy to use but it also helped to significantly reduce the cost of running the conference. The impact of which meant the conference fee was significantly reduced, thus helping us facilitate a more accessible and inclusive conference (Rowe, 2019; Falk & Hagsten, 2021). The other major aspect to consider was how to schedule an online conference. What would the running order look like? How might we re-create the traditional parallel sessions? How will delegates interact and have meaningful conversations? How would we facilitate the strong sense of community found at TEFI conferences? These questions were more pressing than deciding which software package or platform to use.

Johan- TEFI conferences have generally been small, mostly joint sessions where all participants take part together, and only on rare occasions have we had concurrent sessions to choose between. This was a feature we wanted to maintain online to foster community. We were keen to create a conference that was collaborative and purposeful, with time for debate, conversation, and virtual networking. Research has found that one of the major reasons for people to attend conferences is not presentations or academic content, but connections made between attendees (Wei et al, 2017). With that in mind, we settled for a conference programme that included a mix of synchronous or asynchronous sessions. Throughout the conference we scheduled seven 'Interaction' sessions. These replaced the 'parallel' sessions traditionally found at conferences. Each session was themed (e.g., engaging narratives, co-creating and purposefulness, activating and delivering, engaging our radical, empowering and activating educating etc.). All presenters were asked (at very short notice) to create a recorded video presentation which was available to view via the TEFI YouTube channel prior to the start of the conference. Delegates were encouraged to watch these videos in advance of each interactive session. Each interactive session was then an opportunity to discuss and reflect upon these presentations, with presenters providing a summary of their work, followed by 10 minutes of questions and discussion. These interactive sessions

were highly successful, encouraging delegates to avoid 'death by PowerPoint' and instead facilitate meaningful and purposeful conversations.

Karla- We were cognisant that this was the first online conference many of us had attended. It quickly became apparent that clear guidance and detailed communication was needed in advance of, and during, the conference. We executed the conference keeping in mind there may have been other delegates with limited technological know-how, like myself. All delegates were sent an interactive conference programme, which included instructions on how to join each session, links to pre-recorded presentations, session etiquette, and how to access technical support. Each morning, an overview of the day was sent to delegates and we used social media platforms to facilitate conversation. Everyone swiftly adapted their plans to accommodate a virtual conference. With very little notice, all the presenters created video presentations, our workshop facilitators adapted their plans and enthusiastically took-up the challenge to move their workshops online, and our keynote speakers, Dianne Dredge, founder of the Tourism Colab (talk entitled *Transitioning to the Next Economy*) and Gavin Bates, founder of Adventure Alternative (talk entitled *A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall: Observations on Tourism and Leadership from the top of the World*), were also not deterred by the prospect of an online event. For this, we were very grateful!

Hosting a Meaningful and Hospitable Virtual Conference

1. *Facilitating Important Dialogue*

Brendan- As mentioned, we were keen to create a conference that re-created the collaborative and strong sense of community found at TEFI conferences. Connecting with delegates and spontaneous conversations are an important part of any conference attendance (Henderson, 2020). Facilitating this online was harder than anticipated. The conference programme had been carefully designed to ensure sufficient time in each interactive session, but also to give people a break from sitting in front of a screen. A typical conference day was between 6-7 hours and that is a long time to sit behind a computer screen. A 'Mingle Space' was therefore included in between each session to enable delegates to take a break from their PC, as well as facilitate those impromptu conversations. Incorporating this mingle space element was an important tool in aiding communication. During these times, a holding slide was shared which informed delegates the theme of the next session and when the next session would start. However, rather than spontaneous conversations erupting, the Mingle Spaces were often very quiet, with people who choose to stay at their desk, staring blankly at the screen. It was not until the final day of the conference, after the penultimate session, where a holding slide was not shared, did those spontaneous conversations we were hoping for emerge. On reflection, the need to facilitate communication, prohibited conversation, with the holding slide as a barrier.

The chat function of Zoom became a great space to share ideas, comments, and connect. For some delegates speaking up in public can be unnerving, particularly online. However, delegates were encouraged to post questions or comments in the chat box. This was monitored by the session chair who could then share the question on behalf of the author. The private chat function between delegates was another great way to chat with friends or connect with someone privately.

2. *Bringing a Wee Bit of York to our Delegates*

Brendan- In preparing for the conference, we were excited to share our great city and university with the TEFI community. York St John University was founded in 1841 as a teacher training college and has been at the forefront of Higher Education for over 180 years. Its mission is to transform lives through the power of education and this ethos is embedded throughout the institution, and within its values and philosophy. The city of York is a major tourist-historic destination, but faces challenges regarding the economic, social, and environmental impacts felt by tourism. Given the conference theme and York St John's mission, York and York St John were the perfect place to critically examine purpose, and the potential it holds to facilitate the transformation to a less harmful, and regenerative kind of tourism.

They say that the best conversations take place over a cup of tea! With the move to an online conference, we were still keen to help facilitate meaningful and purposeful conversations. And given the TEFI community would not be able to visit York in person, we quickly decided that we needed to send a little piece of York to them! A box of Yorkshire Tea was sent to each delegate in advance of the conference, as a token of our gratitude for their involvement, and to help facilitate those fruitful conversations.

3. Sharing a Cuppa in the garden

Karla - "Johan" I begin to type in the chat function "Do you have time for a night cap (your time) after lunch (my time)? Could we catch up before the next session?" "It would be great to go over our conference wrap up together". "Sounds good Karla. I will set up a room". Following lunch, I plugged my computer into the only receptacle on the deck adjacent to the sliding door. I thought because the sun was shining, I would take my laptop outdoors and cozied into a Muskoka chair under a shaded tree facing the back garden.

This outdoor fresh air-break brought Johan from indoors at the conference 'in York' to the Canadian outdoors on a typical sunny summer day. In the background, Johan was exposed to the robins chirping, and the soft winds swaying the branches and leaves in the tree behind my camera. "Apologies Johan". I started off saying. "I may have mentioned earlier, I am at my parents place for the duration of the conference. Nana and Papa are helping us with the kids". Aside from the summer's day, Johan was also exposed to several family members including my parents, children, and partner, who passed the screen behind me nonchalantly. I was appreciative of Johan's patience. He later reflected, he gained some insight into the simultaneous reality playing out in front of "my eyes and ears", and as we finished our talk and headed back into the conference room, he felt as though he had a break.

Johan- A vivid memory for me from the conference is, as so often is the case at conferences, from between two sessions. The conference was running on Atlantic time, suitable for attendees in Europe and North America, a tad more challenging for those of us living on Pacific time on the other side of the world. I attended the conference from late evenings, until early mornings in Japan, sitting in a mostly dark room, listening to the summer night sounds on the street outside. I watched all presentations in the afternoons ahead of the conference days (nights), and I could then focus on attending live sessions during the conference, and chat with other attendees hanging around in the room between sessions.

4. Enhancing Opportunities for Intergenerational Learning and Mentoring

Johan- You know the feeling when you hear a brilliant presentation by a colleague, and by the time you catch up after the session somebody else is already talking to them? and you need to hurry onto the next session before you have had time to discuss the thoughts that were born earlier? Well, could virtual

conferences be a solution for this problem? I guess yes and no. Yes, in the sense that there is no time lost running anywhere, and it is therefore possible to catch up with others. No, in the sense that you are not physically in the same space, and you do not know where that colleague is heading after their presentation (Niner & Wassermann, 2021). Are they on a lunch break from their day-job? Is it in the middle of the night for them, and they will go to bed straight after having done the presentation? I found still that it was easy to do these short meetings, and it was a feature that enriched my conference experience too.

Karla- What occurred to us, is that trying to catch the attention of scholars, who delegates may not have previously met face to face, may present some challenges. Keeping in mind the best interests of graduate students and early career researchers (who we hope to continue to attract in TEFI), who may be in their early stages of developing their networks was something we thought we could have done a better job supporting. Following the conference in a debrief session we considered opportunities for facilitating workshops at the outset of the conference. This idea was reiterated in dialogues we carried out with some of our partner networks (e.g., CAUTHE and RESET) following the conference.

Discussion

Lessons Learned and Keeping our Sight on the Future

Pivoting to a virtual offering of our conference for the first time, opened our eyes to many challenges. One of the questions top of mind, especially in the context of the academy, is whether we will ever travel to conferences and meetings again like we did pre-COVID-19? The inequities we have been exposed to during this pandemic and specifically the roll out of the vaccine, makes it increasingly apparent that we will be confronted with this pandemic for years to come. COVID-19 will probably be an endemic illness in the world from now on. Related to this, some nations have returned to lockdown, shut down, made the decision to keep their borders closed, or have restricted their entry, and required long quarantine times. Other places might be deemed too dangerous to travel to for employers to compensate travel. Thus, travelling as we had become used to, in the past might never happen again. Maybe TEFI could serve as a support for various career progressions in the future, offering all conferences either in virtual, or in hybrid modes, so that they will be inclusive for those who cannot, or do not want to travel. This may be considered business as usual and considering TEFI's role will be important.

1. *Considering Energy Consumption in Hosting Virtual Events*

Naturally, a virtual conference is not climate neutral. Even though a virtual conference is less energy intensive than an international conference with air travel and land transport included, it is not without its own carbon footprint (Spinellis & Louridas, 2013). There is a large hidden energy consumption in all of our virtual realities. Taylor quotes Greenpeace in claiming 'If the "cloud" was a country, its electricity demand would rank fifth in the world', and it is only set to increase from here onwards (Taylor, 2020). Streaming videos and connecting people via meeting platforms requires large data centres to be powered up and cooled down. The energy consumed is thus much more than just the individual computers that participants use to attend. It is important for conference organisers, and scholarly networks to continually critically engage with ways to reduce energy consumption considering the climate crisis.

2. *Better Communication and Promoting TEFI Scholarships*

In our reflections after the conference, we realised that we had not adequately promoted scholarships for students, research candidates, and early career researchers to attend. TEFI has in the past

been a low-hurdle entry point to tourism academia and the world of conferences. The community has welcomed in young researchers, though often through projects or joint publications with established colleagues. When the conference pivoted to a virtual offering, this was not as common anymore, and the great tradition of advertising for attendance scholarships did not happen. It was a pity, as this virtual conference maintained the safe and caring atmosphere established at our face to face TEFI offerings. For future conferences we need to have a clear strategy for how students, candidates, and ECRs should be able to apply for sponsored attendance.

3. *Lending Support for TEFI delegates to Attend, be Present, and Contribute to the Virtual Conference*

One suggestion Hopkins et al., (2016) proposed in their article on academic mobility in the Anthropocene was that employers should start to classify virtual conferences more like regular conferences. Specifically, the suggestion was to acknowledge virtual conference attendance with a leave of absence granted from other duties, financing not only the participation fee, but also a stay at a local hotel so that the attendee could focus fully on the conference. This suggestion provides several benefits. Such support would benefit conference attendee, alike Johan's memories shared here, who may attend the conference from different time zones and ensure they may do so without disturbing their family members throughout the night. Furthermore, having a break from teaching regular classes on limited sleep, would allow delegates to learn everything they could from the conference and make meaningful contributions. Having the space and time to engage in the conference would also avoid the feeling of "virtual jet-lag" following the virtual conference because of sleep deprivation. This stay-conference idea could provide benefits to the regional tourism economy.

4. Local Community Engagement

One of the many highlights of a TEFI conference is the opportunity to engage with the local community, whether through live presentations, field visits or hospitality. Whilst the conference committee had exciting plans to engage with York's local community, the move to an online event limited the scale and scope of this. For those of us able to work from home, our world narrowed to the scale of a laptop screen. For the conference, this meant the delights of being able to visit and experience York as a destination were not possible. With more time, a virtual conference might consider more innovative virtual forms of engagement, whether that be a virtual walking tour, augmented reality (AR), Google Arts and Culture experiences, or other technology-enabled methods. Whilst taking a virtual tour is not without its limitations, it does enhance the accessibility of activities, experiences and destinations and enables delegates to experience the conference destinations.

5. Keeping in Touch

Following the conference and aligned with Karla and Brendan taking on their roles as co-chairs of TEFI, we hosted two re-envisioning workshops on the theme: 'co-creating a TEFI vision'. The goal was to facilitate a discussion and organise our thoughts concerning how we can co-create the future of TEFI. The two interactive brainstorming and ideation sessions included a discussion on TEFI's core values, vision, and purpose, considering what TEFI should be known for, and how we may co-create a strong resilient organisation. A strong theme which emerged was a desire to harness the value of connecting and collaborating with conference delegates following our TEFI conferences. Many participants were keen for a space to continue to network, engage, and check-in with the TEFI community. With that in mind, we launched TEFI Power Hours. These Power Hours provide opportunities to connect and check in with TEFI members in between conferences. Led by international thought leaders, each Power Hour supports

professional development, space to co-create regenerative solutions, and talk through ideas that are personally relevant, and important to the communities in which we serve.

6. Intergenerational Learning, Support, and Mentorship

TEFI is invested in transforming tourism education to prepare students as responsible citizens and agents of change. As scholars, we are naturally curious, and we know that learning is continuous. As such, and in the spirit of continuing to engage the TEFI community in between conferences, we offer professional development opportunities, supporting intergenerational learning, and mentorship. Specifically, we invite faculty, graduate students, and industry partners to co-create solutions and support our network in being recognised as global leaders and change agents, both within the classrooms and within our communities. These opportunities for learning, support, and mentorship are more important for early career researchers, than 'seasoned' academics often appreciate, but also for academics who do not feel at home in a competitive environment of publication pressure, a focus on bibliometrics and ranking tables.

7. Importance of Connection and Reaching Out during a Pandemic

The importance of connecting was reiterated in many of the memories shared. If we had cancelled the conference, we would have disappointed ourselves, those in our network, and those attending TEFI for the first time. Finding ways to connect is perhaps even more important now than ever before, given the heavy weight of contemporary crises we are faced with. Karla's memories, clearly denoted feelings of being overwhelmed, as she navigated between being on parental leave, in a lockdown context, when day cares closed in Ontario; in addition to trying to grapple with co-organising and co-hosting a virtual conference. Initially, the weight of the situation was defeating; however, working with colleagues and friends, and seeking the support of her family during the conference, allowed her to see the opportunity of the virtual conference, and its opportunity for strengthening the TEFI network. Furthermore, Johan's memories, revealed the challenges faced when trying to attend a conference in a completely different time zone. Doing so, clearly had implications on his entire household. The personal and professional concerns drawn attention to in our memories, highlights the importance of community which has always been important to TEFI. Additionally, showing and leading with purpose and care was, and is, crucial to support one another's' mental health.

8. A new model of conferencing

The pandemic has dramatically changed attitudes towards conference organisation and attendance. Prior to the pandemic, many academics were frequent flyers. However, COVID-19 forced many conferences to cancel, postpone, or move online. Klöwer et al. (2020) has reimaged conferences and suggests three measures which would reduce travel emissions associated with international conferences. The conference alternatives include, choosing accessible venues where low-carbon alternatives to air travel are encouraged, increase virtual attendance, and a move towards biennial conferences. These guiding principles will certainly inform the future organisation and hosting of TEFI conferences and events.

Final Thoughts

Our memory-work reflections and subsequent discussions drew attention to how we felt during the conference planning stages, offering of the virtual conference, and subsequently, considering how

we may enhance our TEFI network with inclusivity and futures at the forefront. While the pivot to offering the conference fully online required tenacity, specifically, on behalf of the local organising committee Brendan was leading, many opportunities emerged upon an evaluation of our decisions. A goal of memory work is enhanced consciousness. The process of individually reflecting on the lead up to our decision to pivot to a virtual offering of TEFI11, has encouraged us to be more reflexive. Our virtual conference led us to consider ways to re-engage our network by inviting those interested to engage with us in two re-envisioning workshops. This exercise led us to the discovery that our network desired further meetings in between our biannual conferences. With this learning, we facilitated a number of Power Hours in 2021, mutually providing formal professional development workshops, and informal drop-ins for our network. Our focus on professional development opportunities further led to co-design a symposium with one of our partners, Tourism RESET planned for April 27 and 28, 2022. This symposium called “Intentionally Co-Creating Holistic Caring Spaces for our Post-Graduate Students and Early Career Researchers” plans to further centre important members and future members of our network.

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