



Beyond cities:

How Airbnb supports
rural revitalization

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Introduction

As interest in travel and tourism grows, passing 10 percent of global GDP in 2017, Airbnb is bringing the economic benefits to communities around the world that haven't shared in these benefits in the past.¹ With 97 percent of the listing price going directly to hosts, and 42 percent of guests' spending occurring within the neighborhoods where they stay, the financial impact of home sharing can be significant for atypical travel destinations.

This is an **especially promising value proposition for the vast parts of the world that start where cities end**. In 1900, 12 cities had populations of 1 million people or more. Today, about 500 do.² **As the balance of the global population has shifted to cities, so have government resources and business capital, causing a widening gap in economic opportunity between urban and rural areas.**

¹ World Travel and Tourism Council, *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017*.

² [Population Reference Bureau](#) and [The Globalist](#), July 30, 2015.

At Airbnb, we believe home sharing can help close this gap by enabling many people beyond cities to benefit directly from the tourism boom, rather than keeping the growing profits in the hands of the traditional hospitality industry. Home sharing creates new economic opportunity where people live, supplements incomes that have stagnated, diversifies incomes that are at risk, and lowers the pressure people may feel to move. Home sharing also helps rural communities welcome more visitors, including for major events that can bring unprecedented infusions of revenue, without having to invest in permanent infrastructure which corporate hotel chains have been disinclined to build in these areas, anyway.

While Airbnb's work in cities receives the most attention, our growth beyond them—including in all 11 countries studied for this report—is outpacing our growth within them as we work with local governments to support rural revitalization. In Latin America, our fastest-growing market, guest arrivals at rural listings in Argentina have quadrupled in the past year and rural listings have tripled. In Japan, guest arrivals outside cities have grown by 267 percent.

\$1.06 billion

2016 income for Airbnb non-urban hosts in the 11 countries studied for this report³

8.5 million

2016 guest arrivals at non-urban listings in the 11 countries studied

Many rural communities around the world have had little investment by corporate hotel chains. In the countrysides of Ireland and France where we are supporting government campaigns to increase tourism, we've been able to watch home sharing transform the traditional tourist season in real time. In Korea and Taiwan, vacation spots known only to locals are leveraging home sharing to enter the global spotlight, while in Japan, home sharing is helping to revitalize areas afflicted by natural disasters and declines in population. In India, rural women are finding new livelihoods through hosting, a few listings at a time. **The majority of Airbnb rural hosts are women in every country studied for this report except for Brazil (where 49 percent of rural hosts are women).**

In other areas that are popular for outdoor recreation, Airbnb expands the economic pie by making travel more accessible for families and others in need of affordable options. In our new partnership with the National Park Foundation, the nonprofit partner to the US National Park Service, Airbnb will work with the Foundation to make it easier for guests to find places to stay around 10 parks across the United States. In Latin America, we are supporting government pushes for eco- and agritourism.

³ Countries studied exclusively for this report include: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and the US. Additional content included for Ireland and India.

Of course, in many countries, our non-urban listings are still a small fraction of our overall communities. This is especially true for relatively new host communities in Asia such as Japan, Korea and Taiwan, as well as in Latin America. In Australia, on the other hand, fully half of our available listings and 56 percent of our guest arrivals are outside urban areas. In the US, where nearly one in five active Airbnb listings are rural, rural host income approached \$500 million in just the past year.

Airbnb hosts beyond cities are using home sharing to address challenges that can differ vastly from those faced by our urban hosts. Some of these challenges linger from the Great Recession and other regional or state economic recessions: in some rural areas, a lack of mobility is keeping people in place despite little opportunity; in others, new ways to earn a living are needed to keep young people and families from leaving. Taiwan, where we are helping the government create more opportunity by promoting locally known holiday destinations, is home to the youngest non-urban hosts, with an average age of 39. France, where official concern is growing over its aging rural population, is home to the oldest rural hosts with an average age of 50.

Increasingly, though, rural areas are facing challenges related more to a future made uncertain by technology and climate change than they are tied to the past. Droughts and extreme weather can wreak havoc on the economics of agriculture, but the debts farmers and ranchers undertake to keep going are constant obligations. Automation threatens mining and trucking jobs and the rural economies that depend on them. Support for entrepreneurship is scarce as cities seem to corner the market on investment and technological advances.

Airbnb, on the other hand, is a technology platform dedicated to empowering people, including by working around the blockers preventing most rural areas from seeing the returns of growing tourism. Outside of popular vacation-rental markets, tourism isn't as established an industry as it is in cities and less infrastructure is in place to support travelers. Payment systems can be part of this missing infrastructure. In some areas where Airbnb now operates that are well beyond cities, we've learned to adjust our payment processes to make them fit with local approaches, such as acceptance of India's Permanent Account Number cards for nonprofit organizations, installment plans, and Brazil's Boleto, payable in local banks or post offices.

Availability of data can be another missing piece of infrastructure. Particularly in emerging markets, stronger data collection is needed to assess hosting's economic impact on the communities in which we operate and improve the quality of offerings for guests. Airbnb is thrilled to be partnering with the World Bank Group, a leading international development institution and one of the largest combined finance and technical assistance providers in tourism development, on initiatives including a study on the development impacts of home sharing and pilot projects in areas we jointly identify as emerging tourist destinations.

From our campaigns to help promote the small villages of Italy and towns of France, to our growth in parts of the US that aren't traditional tourist hotspots, to our efforts in Asia to open up their countrysides to more travelers and train new hosts, our work outside the cities with which we are more commonly linked is among the work that make us most proud. For all the doubling and tripling of our growth in some areas, we're overjoyed to be making a difference for an isolated village of six residents in Italy, a group of eight women in rural India, and a city devastated by disaster in Japan.

This report describes through host stories, partnership details and data how we holistically help benefit the rural communities Airbnb hosts call home and in which our guests increasingly feel they belong.

Europe

FRANCE

Marielle Terouinard, Châtillon-en-Dunois

Marielle is a passionate, 44-year-old host living in the French countryside. She was born in Paris and lived in Australia and Ireland before settling in Châtillon-en-Dunois, where her father has been the mayor for 37 years. Châtillon-en-Dunois is located about two hours' drive from Paris in the center of the country, and she says she would never leave the area for any reason.

Marielle's mission is "to make the countryside great again." That's why, 14 years ago, she founded Agricool, a local organization that aims to make the village more dynamic. She regularly organizes open-air rummage sales, tombolas, local painting exhibitions and sports events. Marielle has always been very engaged in connecting people and building relationships, and loves when people meet and share good times together.

Sharing her home on Airbnb has given Marielle another way to help make connections. "Airbnb is one of the best ways ever for the French villages to be known in France, but also around the world." She sees Airbnb as a movement and a worldwide community, and thinks home sharing enables a new way of getting in contact with a very specific and local way of living. Her next challenge: creating an "Airbnb Open Doors Day" with other hosts!

When Marielle hosts, she shares everything she can, making fresh fruit salad for her guests each morning, providing them with tips for strolls through the area, and always giving her departing guests a jar of homemade jam. "This is my way of saying 'thank you!'" Marielle's Airbnb income helps support the housework and her love of gardening, but she hosts to meet new people and share the beauty of her way of life.

France is one of world's the most popular places to visit, but too many visitors see too little of all that France has to offer. The country has a rich rural history and even today, is home to nearly half a million farms; more than half its land mass is cultivated.⁴ Yet, of the country's 18 regions, the three most popular for tourists—Île-de-France (Paris), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (Lyon and the Alps) and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (Provence, Marseille)—account for more than half of all

⁴ [France Ministry of Agriculture](#), February 1, 2017.

tourism revenue, and the five most popular tourist destinations are concentrated in the greater Paris area.

The terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice and subsequent drop-off in tourism emphasized the need for France to encourage travel to other parts of the country. In 2016, the Foreign Minister called for the country to “reboot tourism.”

Airbnb responded with “Maisons de France by Airbnb,” a marketing campaign to promote travel to all of France’s regions with the goals of drawing visitors beyond Paris, bringing tourism spending to areas that had seen comparably little of it, and providing an outlet for national and regional pride at a time when the French identity was under attack. The campaign included a [nationwide contest](#) to identify the most iconic Airbnb homes and hosts in every region of the country. Hosts on Airbnb nominated their listings, which were studied by a panel of recognized heritage and tourism experts who recommended a short list that was then voted on by the public; 40,000 people cast votes. We also celebrated the winning hosts and listings with events designed to draw further attention to these areas. Throughout 2016, Airbnb also regularly published regional economic impact studies showing how hosts help distribute tourism [across France](#).

Home sharing is creating more economic opportunity at a time when France’s rural areas have been showing real signs of strain. One third of French farmers earn less than €350 per month through farming, and many small farms have gone out of business in the past 20 years.⁵ Young people are decamping for cities and the welfare of the aging rural population is a growing concern.

Annual income for Airbnb hosts in rural France has risen dramatically since 2015, from €49 million that year to €105 million in 2016. Rural listings grew from 25,000 in 2015 to 47,000 in 2016.

88%

**Year-over-year growth
in rural listings**

60%

**Of rural hosts are
women, compared to
57% in cities**

50

**Average age of rural
hosts, the oldest of any
country studied**

A separate January 2017 [study](#) by the French think tank Terra Nova and Google France highlights how Airbnb brings tourism benefits to remote communities. Defining “remote communities” as places where geographies and economies are isolated from urban centers, the

⁵ LesEchos.fr, “[Un agriculteur sur trois gagne moins de 350 euros par mois](#),” October 11, 2016.

report finds that these communities represent 2 percent of France’s population and 10 percent of its villages. In 2015, 4,500 Airbnb hosts spread across 1,170 villages welcomed more than 90,000 guests and earned more than €10 million. According to the report, there are no hotels in two-thirds of the remote communities where Airbnb hosts list their space.

The Terra Nova report also urges policymakers to “support the growth of the collaborative economy in remote communities by offering stable and supportive legal frameworks. This economy improves the utilisation of underutilised shareable goods. The potential positive impacts of its development for these communities deserve specific attention from public authorities.”

IRELAND

Niamh and Richard Marsh, Curraglass, Cork

In Lisnabrin House, a Georgian property in rural East Cork with a 300-year history of warm welcomes, Niamh and Richard Marsh and their children credit Airbnb with the perfect opportunity to open their home and continue this tradition of hospitality.

Over the years, local publicans, restaurateurs, transport providers, talented musicians and neighbors have all helped Niamh and Richard ensure that their guests feel welcome and are immersed in local traditions and activities. According to Niamh and Richard, whether guests are families, newlyweds or someone looking for a tranquil country retreat, the local community is key to ensuring they take a little bit of Ireland home with special memories and new friends.

“We have met wonderful and interesting people from all over the world. With guests arriving back from a day’s fishing with fresh salmon from the Blackwater, participating in the local Vintage Car Rally over the Vee, walks along the coast at Ardmore and through Lismore Castle Gardens, or often joining us for celebrations with family and friends, our lives have been enriched by these experiences. We have forged strong relationships in the community as we all work together to promote this hidden part of Ireland in the Bride Valley.”

As Ireland’s global standing as a technology hub grows, Airbnb is working with Irish officials and NGO partners to help ensure that all of Ireland is lifted by the technological and economic opportunities afforded by the sharing economy.

For many parts of Ireland not served by the traditional hospitality industry, home sharing is giving these communities a way to benefit more from tourism, particularly from visitors who wish to venture beyond Dublin to spend time exploring the countryside. Many rural communities shrink outside of traditional holiday periods as people with country or seaside homes close them up for winter and depart for cities. These latent assets and their unrealized economic potential are now being tapped through short-term holiday rentals, helping to keep these communities vibrant throughout the year. We see evidence of the tourism season lengthening: seasonal businesses operating for longer, new food offerings launching, and greater investment in tourist amenities.

In November 2016, Airbnb released [a study](#) of our economic impact in Ireland with a special focus on its communities beyond Dublin City and County. The findings “clearly illustrate the positive impact which the sharing economy is having on rural Ireland,” Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD commented upon the launch. Between September 2015 and August 2016, the dates covered by this study, 6,000 hosts beyond Dublin City and County welcomed 331,000 inbound guests, typically earning about €2,700. The average host age beyond the Dublin area is 47, and far more hosts are women than men: 67 percent of all hosts beyond the Dublin area are women (versus 60 percent of hosts within Dublin). Eight percent of hosts in these outlying areas are retired, and the average number of years they have lived in their hometowns is 20.

€22 million

**Income earned by Airbnb hosts
outside Dublin City and County**

€123 million

**Estimated economic activity
generated by Airbnb outside Dublin
City and County⁶**

We are grateful to Failte Ireland, the country’s National Tourism Development Authority, for the ability to partner with them toward identifying ways in which home sharing can contribute to the success of regional tourism campaigns. Our latest collaboration is on Failte Ireland’s “Ancient East” campaign, highlighting 5,000 years of history, all accessible within just a few days spent outside greater Dublin. Airbnb will launch a digital storytelling campaign profiling local residents and hosts across four of Ireland’s rural counties.

In addition to supporting rural Ireland through home sharing, Airbnb also looks for ways to support Ireland’s national conversation about technology and how to foster more start-ups and entrepreneurship outside of Dublin, such as through our sponsorship of National Digital Week in 2016.

⁶ Study dates September 2015 through August 2016.

ITALY

Faye, Tuscany

Mother of two wonderful girls, Faye and her husband have chosen to live in Italy on the Tuscan hills because she loves nature and was looking for a new beginning after many years spent abroad.

It all started in 1999 when the couple undertook a complete restoration of the Lavacchio Farm, returning it to productivity. Situated on the top of Montefiesole's hill, Lavacchio Farm is just 18 km from Florence and is a typical family business, surrounded by an enchanting series of rolling hills covered with olive groves and vineyards, located between the towns of Sieci and Pontassieve.

Since restoring the farm to productivity, Faye and her family have applied the best traditions to the production of organic wine and olive oil, combining old handcrafted methods with the most modern techniques. In the park of the farm's main house is a centuries-old cedar of Lebanon, which has become the symbol of the farm. Lavacchio Farm has been one of the first to join the programs of organic production, based on the philosophy that Faye has always pursued: to harmonize the farm's activities with the balance set by nature. She is happy to share her passion for organic products and her km0 philosophy with her Airbnb guests.

With more UNESCO World Heritage Sites than almost any other country and thousands of small villages dotting its countryside from north to south, Italy has immense potential to use home sharing to democratize tourism, involving more people and more communities in the tourism industry while at the same time, relieving some the pressure from the increasing flows of tourists to its largest cities. As former mayor of Rome and Airbnb advisor Francesco Rutelli has observed: “You’ve got Rome, you’ve got Florence, you’ve got Venice, but you’ve also got hundreds and hundreds of destinations that are tiny cities that are wonderful places—countryside, seaside, mountains that are absolutely unique in the world. So a sharing approach for the tourism in our county is also very, very positive for the economy.”

74%

Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals in rural areas

€72.3 million

Income earned by rural hosts

Agri-food is incredibly important to Italy's global image and its economy, accounting for around 8 percent of the country's GDP. Italy is the first in Europe for PDO, PGI and TSG products⁷ and is the world's leading wine producer. Through our "Made in Italy" campaign, Airbnb will support the Italian agri-food industry and the unique cultural heritage it represents. Made in Italy will promote genuine Italian food and call out food products that pretend to be Italian. We will customize trips to the country's rural areas and organize visits to the leading producers of authentic Italian food. Guests will speak with local farmers about Italian food growth and production. Our goal for the campaign is to provide tourists with tools to become more conscious consumers of genuine Italian food products, preserving a tradition to help Italy build a better future.

Italy's *agriturismi*, country houses and estates that grow produce or make food or wine, are a major asset as interest in agritourism grows. Airbnb's "Small Villages" campaign is designed to promote tourism beyond Italy's famous cities to these far less populous areas where tourism spending can make a significant difference. Home sharing gives guests a way to linger where they historically have had no accommodations due to an absence of hotels, and provides an infusion of revenue which, even if seasonal, can help sustain a village throughout the year.

One such village, Civita di Bagnoregio in Viterbo Province, is home to just six residents during the wintertime. Known as "the dying city" for its geographic isolation, the small village is connected to the surrounding countryside by a one-kilometer bridge suspended at a height of 70 meters (perhaps emblematic of a challenge facing most rural Italian communities in the form of a lack of efficient transport). In 2016, Airbnb's Italian community collected more than 2,000 signatures to support the village's candidacy as a World Heritage Site, and Civita is now short-listed for this designation.

We are excited about the next round of communities we will be promoting for the Small Villages campaign. The Italian Ministry of Culture declared 2017 the year of Borghi ("small village"), and Airbnb is supporting the effort by investing further in the revitalization of more small villages beyond Civita, as well as designing a nationwide marketing campaign to help promote non-urban travel circuits.

⁷ PDO = Protected designation of origin; PGI = Protected Geographical Indication; and TGS = Traditional Speciality Guaranteed.

As our co-founder and Chief Product Officer Joe Gebbia said at the launch of the Small Villages campaign, the aim “is to celebrate the heritage of these areas through art and design, while providing concrete ways for the towns to sustain their cultures and traditions.” In early 2017, we worked with Civita’s Mayor to transform one of its historic buildings into an artists’ colony and Airbnb listing. “Casa d’Artista” is the first public building to be offered through the Airbnb platform, and Mayor Francesc Bigiotti is the first sitting mayor to become an Airbnb host. Revenue from bookings will help support the building’s maintenance and fund other preservation projects in the village.

SPAIN

Francesc, Palma de Mallorca

Francesc is a freelance web designer who decided to quit the city for rural life and is now living on the outskirts of the municipality of Palma de Mallorca and hosting travelers through Airbnb.

Airbnb opened a door of alternative opportunity for Francesc. While he was living in Berlin three years ago, he discovered the world of sustainable living and decided to go back to his native island of Mallorca to create his own small oasis. His reference for rural life is his great grandfather, who was the last member of his family to work in agriculture.

Francesc bought a piece of land and a house in poor condition and has since rebuilt it with his own hands. He owns a henhouse and a vegetable garden and hopes that one day, his home will be totally self sufficient. At the moment, he lives alone and lists one spare room on Airbnb. □ The income allows him to pursue this dream of a rural life.

At his home, Francesc’s guests find an atmosphere of peace and harmony. For many of them, it is an opportunity to help harvest crops or gather eggs for their meals for the first time! And for Francesc, home sharing is enrichment—a way to create meaningful relationships across cultures and an opportunity to meet travelers of different backgrounds who might also share his own philosophy of life.

Spain’s interior reflects many of the trends afflicting rural areas around the world: agricultural jobs gradually being replaced by automation and dwindling economic opportunities to keep young people and families in the area, sending them to cities to find work and leaving behind an aging population at increasing risk of social exclusion. In Spain, spotty broadband service in many rural areas also complicates efforts to expand tourism beyond cities and leverage it to rejuvenate the countryside.

According to a recent study by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities, half of Spanish rural jurisdictions already are at risk of extinction caused by depopulation: "There are already 2,652 villages that have less than 500 inhabitants. Of these, 1,286 (almost two out of 10 Spanish municipalities) have less than 100 registered residents. This is 48 more than in 2015, and 358 more than in 2000."⁸ In all, according to the study, nearly 5,000 Spanish towns and villages are suffering the consequence of aging populations and little to no generational change. A few years ago, European and US media covered the trend of whole villages in Spain being put up for sale.⁹ Across Spain, more than 3 million homes are empty.¹⁰

Spanish policymakers have made a priority of developing smart policies that will yield more economic opportunities to bring young people back to rural areas and support older citizens still living there. Rural towns have limited resources to equip and market their destinations, and digital tools and sharing economy platforms can amplify the impact of smart policies. As Francesc's experience illustrates, home sharing is providing one such opportunity as a stable source of income where such sources otherwise are scarce, while also helping to bring tourism to destinations trying to market themselves to international travelers.

Later this year, Airbnb will begin partnering with our host community, other sharing and digital economy brands, policymakers and rural towns on an initiative to support the sustainable development and promotion of innovative rural destinations. The "Lab de Destinos Rurales" ("Rural Destination Lab") will aim to develop smart responses to the main challenges confronting Spain's rural destinations.

€20.2 million

Income earned by rural hosts in 2015

€40.9 million

Income earned by rural hosts in 2016

Spain is home to one of the smaller Airbnb rural communities, but growth has been steady: rural listings have increased 63 percent year-over-year while guest arrivals have grown by 110 percent. A majority of rural Spanish hosts, 54 percent, are women and the average age of rural hosts is 46, versus an average age of 43 for city hosts.

⁸ Spanish Federation of Municipalities, "Rural depopulation in Spain 2016," February 7, 2017.

⁹ Example, example, example.

¹⁰ The Guardian, "Scandal of Europe's 11m empty homes," February 23, 2014.

Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA

Sharyn, Upper Lansdowne, New South Wales

Sharyn is a grandmother and aged pensioner living on a peaceful block with scenic views of the volcanic peaks and sandstone escarpment of Coorabakh National Park. She is an author of three published books and has won many awards for her short stories. A nature lover and environmental activist, she also has worked hard to develop this property to be wildlife-friendly, as well as creating vegetable, fruit, and herb gardens, to live in an environmentally responsible way.

Occasionally sharing her home on Airbnb helps Sharyn pay for essential services on the property that she cannot do herself, like slashing (mowing the grass and leaving it as mulch). Without this income, Sharyn would not be able to continue living in the place and community that she loves.

Her guests stay in the main bedroom of her home, sharing her kitchen and living areas and the popular sunny verandah, as if with friends. They come from all over the world, many from city backgrounds, and from the countless conversations, interactions and appreciative reviews, Sharyn knows that Airbnb hosting like this is a unique way for visitors to learn about her country's rural culture, wildlife, and sustainable living.

Across regional and remote Australia, communities are grappling with how best to respond to a series of significant, intertwined challenges. The stubborn gap in income, employment and economic opportunity between the city and the country. The exodus of people, particularly young people, leaving in search of better opportunities and services. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. The dependency of local businesses and economies on volatile commodity markets.

While Sydney is Airbnb's fifth largest market in the world, the Australian countryside is now home to roughly half of our community in the country overall. Last year, 50 percent of all unique Airbnb listings in Australia were located in the country, up from 47 percent in 2015. Year-over-year growth in listings in the countryside was 79 percent.



A majority of all Airbnb guest arrivals in Australia last year, 56 percent, were at listings beyond urban areas, up from 53 percent in 2015. The percentage of total Australian host income now going to hosts in the countryside is likewise approaching the halfway mark: in 2016, it was 49 percent, up from 45 percent in 2015.

Without the cost or delay of having to build any new infrastructure, attractions or amenities, Airbnb is making it easier and more affordable for tourists to explore regional communities—a priority for Australia’s government, whose latest [International Visitors Survey](#) finds that regional Australia has seen a 29 percent increase in international tourist arrivals and spending over the past three years. This democratization of tourism is injecting new revenue and catalyzing growth. A recent Deloitte Access Economics report found that Airbnb contributed \$1.6 billion to Australia’s GDP and supported more than 14,000 jobs.

By creating a new regional revenue stream and boosting tourism in Australia’s countryside, Airbnb also is helping local communities diversify their economies, reducing their exposure to downturns in traditional, volatile sectors such as agriculture and mining.

AUD \$287 million

Total hosting income for rural hosts in 2016

1.7 million

Guest arrivals at non-metro listings in 2016

127%

Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals at non-metro listings

While Airbnb does have a host community in the sparsely populated Australian Outback, most of our non-metro host community extends along the country's coastline: in the east along the Great Barrier Reef, in the southeast stretching from north of Brisbane to west of Melbourne, and in the southwest along the coast extending outward from Perth. We also have a significant non-metro host community in Tasmania. A majority—53 percent—of Airbnb hosts beyond Australia's cities are women.

Australia's Outback is one of the least populated areas in the world, with a handful of major centers (e.g., Alice Springs, Birdsville, Broken Hill and Coober Pedy, among others) that service its three main sectors: pastoralism (running cattle, sheep and other livestock), mining and tourism. Given its remoteness and the great distance between towns, with some roads only accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles, travelers to the Outback often stay in one of these more urban areas before striking out across the desert interior. Airbnb's Outback hosts provide classic Australian hospitality and are quick to give advice on how to enjoy the stark beauty of the landscape and stay safe in the inhospitable deserts of Australia's Red Centre.

INDIA

Maya Patel, Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)

Maya Patel, one of the SEWA hosts, had a heartwarming response from her very first Airbnb guest, Daniel, who came from Spain. Having little knowledge of English, Maya was worried about her ability to communicate with international guests. But she and Daniel quickly developed their own sign language through hand gestures.

Maya says, “He asked me to wake him up at 10:00 am and he had breakfast with our family. He even helped my mother-in-law grind spices and wheat. He loved our food, especially the tea, so much so that he had tea multiple times a day. I am happy that Daniel bhai (“brother”) liked our home and left us a very gracious review.” As he was leaving, Daniel told Maya that her family’s warm hospitality made him feel at home.

Learning from her first guest experience, Maya is planning to purchase mosquito repellent and make more repairs in her washroom in order to create a more comfortable home for her guests.

Airbnb’s work in India sums up many of the challenges—but also the greatest rewards—that we have encountered in helping areas beyond cities realize the economic benefits of travel. Home sharing is beginning to provide livelihoods in India’s rural communities where women in particular face otherwise extremely limited options to provide for themselves and their children.

In the six months since we formalized our [pilot project](#) with the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in late 2016, we have made exciting progress in supporting the economic empowerment of rural women through home sharing. SEWA represents 2 million self-employed women living primarily in India’s rural areas. The focus of this partnership on women’s economic empowerment was the first of its kind for Airbnb, and one we plan to use as a model in other parts of the world.

For the pilot project in the Indian state of Gujarat, the Airbnb team arranged for the local SEWA hosts to gain understanding of best practices through visits with some of our top-rated, most experienced hosts in India. We also arranged hospitality and skills training workshops to support the SEWA hosts in listing their homes on Airbnb.

In addition to language barriers and low levels of technological and financial literacy, payment processes were a key obstacle for which Airbnb, in collaboration with the SEWA hosts, developed workarounds. Airbnb’s payment process needed to be revised to accept Permanent Account Numbers (PAN) for Trusts that Indian organizations like SEWA use for tax

accountability—an example of the nature of initial barriers we are seeing and gradually working through to help travel benefit more people and more communities.

Coinciding with the release of this report, we are pleased to announce that all eight SEWA homes in this pilot project are now listed on Airbnb and accepting bookings, and the SEWA hosts already have welcomed more than 10 guests in the past two months! Encouraged by the experience of current SEWA hosts, 10 more SEWA members have come forwards to list their homes on Airbnb towards the end of this month. We look forward to expanding the initiative beyond the Gujarat pilot to include SEWA members in other parts of India.

Our second collaboration in India, with the state of Andhra Pradesh, also focuses on providing livelihood opportunities, in this case for rural artisans. For artisans who are identified by the state's tourism board as potential hosts, Airbnb arranges training in hospitality standards and offers support in creating truly unique experiences for travelers.

In our newest partnership, Airbnb is thrilled to be working with the World Bank Group, a leading international development institution and one of the largest combined finance and technical assistance providers in tourism development, on initiatives including a study on the development impacts of home sharing, and pilot projects in areas we jointly identify as emerging tourist destinations. Airbnb also will support hospitality skills training for new hosts in the Asia-Pacific region and encourage demand through destination marketing. These joint efforts will focus on both emerging destinations in rural areas and marginalized areas within cities that governments are looking to revitalize. While we have discussed India and Sri Lanka as possible initial project markets, the scope of the partnership is regional with the option to extend it to others.

JAPAN

Keiko's family, Wakayama

Wakayama prefecture is well known for its divine mountains, forestry and fruit farms. Peaches, plums, persimmon, strawberries and other kinds of fruit are grown in the region. Keiko's family mainly farms peaches. Her husband moved to Wakayama about 20 years ago, and after starting with a smaller patch of land, he too has become a successful peach farmer.

Keiko and her family used to accept volunteer workers from all over the world to help on the farm during their peak season, all living together like a family in their home. In 2015, a French couple who were volunteering on the farm introduced them to Airbnb. After taking in guests for years, it seemed natural to Keiko's family to start hosting through Airbnb.

They liked it from the start. Compared to the intensity of hosting volunteer workers, staying together, working together and eating every meal together, the Airbnb relationship between host and guest gives them a more balanced life. Some guests come to their listing just to relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery, while some do like to help with the farming. Keiko's two small children love to play with foreign guests, which their parents believe is good for their education. Hosting on Airbnb also provides Keiko's family with extra income to help them bridge the gap between the investments they have to make for a successful peach harvest and the actual harvest time.

Even when guests stay for a short period, Keiko says, we trust them and they trust us as we open up our home. By doing so, everyone can be like a family and build a sense of belonging that helps make Keiko's family lives more fulfilling.

Over the past year, five million Airbnb guests arrived at all 47 prefectures in Japan, where the National Diet just enacted legislation giving the green light for home sharing, ensuring that Airbnb can continue to help revitalize Japan's rural economies through the benefits of tourism. The focus of our rural revitalization efforts in Japan has been helping local governments rebuild their economies after natural disasters and retain their workforces by providing opportunities residents might otherwise feel compelled to move to cities to find.

A longtime major hub for mining and steel production, Kamaishi City had largely transitioned to the service industry by the late 1980s due to the decline of Japan's steel industry and the closure of the city's foundries. Then in 2011, Kamaishi was devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. Kamaishi also faces the serious challenges of a declining birthrate, aging population, and as is the case nationwide, a rising number of empty homes; Japan overall

is predicted to have 20 million empty homes within the next two decades.¹¹ Kamaishi's population is projected to decline from 36,078 to 21,503 by 2040.¹² Even so, there have been encouraging developments: imports through Kamaishi's port have increased dramatically, the Hashino blast furnace has been registered as a World Heritage Site, and new roads have opened.

Airbnb is proud to partner with Kamaishi City on its efforts to revitalize its economy through its "Open City Strategy" to increase civic participation and expand the network of those who are connected with the community. We are grateful to play a role in this effort by empowering more people to share their homes and helping Kamaishi scale up its accommodations for the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

Our first act was to arrange for prospective local hosts to meet with experienced hosts from other prefectures to hear directly from them about best practices, especially for home sharing on farms. We also created a Kamaishi City Guidebook in partnership with local high school students. The Guidebook emphasizes the best spots from which to enjoy Kamaishi's natural beauty, the history of the steel industry, and traditional matsuri festivals in which locals take great pride.

Another Airbnb effort to support revitalization of Japan's countryside, our Yoshino Cedar House was constructed in collaboration with the village of Yoshino and respected Tokyo-based architect Go Hasegawa using traditional design techniques and local materials. The listing is managed by the Yoshino community and proceeds support the community.

While our host community outside Japan's urban areas still represents a small fraction of our overall community here, their numbers have grown considerably within the past year. Twenty-two hundred non-urban Airbnb listings in 2015 more than doubled to 5,300 in 2016. Guest arrivals more than tripled from 70,200 to 257,500. Host income nearly quadrupled, from ¥666 million to ¥2.5 billion.

141%

Year-over-year growth in non-urban listings

267%

Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals at non-urban listings

Beyond Japan's cities, a majority of Japanese Airbnb hosts—53 percent—are women, a marked difference from Japan's cities in which 56 percent of our hosts are men. The average age of our

¹¹ Bloomberg, "Why 8 Million Homes Lie Empty in Japan," September 20, 2015.

¹² <http://kamaishi.webcrow.jp/>.

non-urban hosts is 42, with 11 percent of our non-urban hosts being age 60 or older, whereas the average age of Airbnb urban hosts in Japan is 38, with just 5.3 percent of urban hosts being age 60 or older.

A recent Urban Land Institute panel of technology and real estate experts in Tokyo "agreed that restoring civic pride to provincial towns and villages and including the population in the benefits of tourism were the crucial factors in bringing life back" to Japan's countryside and coastal areas.¹³ Online booking platforms such as Airbnb, one expert noted, are critical to this effort because the fees are so much smaller, with hosts keeping much more of the income.

KOREA

Airbnb's recently signed memorandum of understanding with Korea's Gangwon-do commits us to helping the province scale up its available accommodations, including accommodations outside its cities, as it prepares to host the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Games. "Through this agreement, I am hopeful that the promotion of [...] Gangwon's tourism marketing, and improving quality of rural lodging facilities gives strength to solving the accommodation shortage for the Olympics and boosting local tourism," State Governor Choi Moon-Soon said at the January signing ceremony.¹⁴

The partnership is the latest of many collaborations between Airbnb and local governments facing the prospect of hosting major events for which they don't have enough places for visitors to stay. Airbnb provides an alternative to building permanent infrastructure—or at least, building as much permanent infrastructure—that can tax local treasuries and the environment, while helping communities take full economic advantage of the hosting opportunity. We work with local governments to help them put their strongest foot forward on the global stage. Gangwon-do already is the leading holiday destination for Koreans, but officials expect 400,000 foreign visitors to attend the 2018 Winter Games.

The agreement builds off our previous work with the province of Chungcheongnam-do to promote non-urban tourism and scale up accommodations for Korea's 97th National Sports Festival. That agreement included cultivating new hosts in the provincial countryside, applying analytics to reviews to help hosts provide better services, and promoting the local culture. For that partnership, Airbnb became the first non-Korean company to receive the Chungnam Governor's Award for Appreciation and Excellence in early 2017.

¹³ Urban Land, [Airbnb, Smaller Hotel Operators Helping to Revive Japan's Hinterlands](#), May 30, 2017.

¹⁴ Official press release [here](#).

106%

**Year-over-year growth in listings
beyond metropolitan areas**

194%

**Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals
at non-metro listings**

Our newest agreement with Gangwon-do also includes the development of a Guidebook to help visitors experience more of the province, and support for our local host and guest community in case of natural disasters.

Other Airbnb partnerships in Korea that look beyond its metropolitan areas include our work with the state Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture, which oversees non-urban home sharing and bed-and-breakfasts, to generally increase hospitality options and revitalize the rural economy. We were gratified by the Jeju Governor Won Hee-ryong's recent endorsement of home sharing and Airbnb ("I should list my extra bedrooms on Airbnb"), as Jeju is the leading holiday destination for Korea's city dwellers.¹⁵ Jeju Airbnb hosts welcomed 180,000 guest arrivals in 2016.

Airbnb's hosts beyond Korea's cities take enormous pride in showing visitors their homes and what makes their communities special. Korean women make up a greater share of our non-urban hosts, at 53 percent, which is slightly higher than the percentage of hosts in Korean cities who are women: 51 percent.

¹⁵ Source.

TAIWAN

Steven, Guanxi, Hsinschu County

Steven is an Airbnb Superhost living in the Guanxi area of Taiwan's Hsinschu county. Two years ago, he left his high-paying job in Taipei to return to Hsinchu to take care of his family's home, which he lists on Airbnb. The home is more than 100 years old, overlooks a rice field, and was a private school before it became a family dwelling. "I wanted to build a system to sustain my old house," Steven said. "And so I began using Airbnb."

Steven has since hosted more than 100 guests, all of whom delight in the peaceful, tranquil setting and the kindness of their host. While just about an hour's drive from Taipei, Steven's home is nestled in the Hsinschu countryside among farms, rice fields and historic villages. Since returning there, Steven has dedicated himself to drawing more visitors to the area. He started the Guanxi Art Festival and the Niulan Theater Group to promote the arts in the community. He also plans trips for his guests and other visitors, leading them to vegetable farms to pick fresh produce and exploring the streets of the old villages in the area.

Airbnb is working actively with Taiwanese officials to transform the island's eastern coast into an international tourism destination with the goal of providing new opportunities for residents of coastal communities through increased tourism spending.

We have partnered with the local governments of two beautiful coastal areas, Hualien and Taitung, to promote travel to *minsu* in Hualien and Taitung (*minsu* is the local reference for bed-and-breakfasts). Notably, the Chairman of the Hualien Travel Association was quoted commending Airbnb's efforts in promoting travel to Hualien: "The majority of online travel agencies usually asked (sic) hotels and *minsu* in Hualien to lower the price or inform *minsu* they are going to increase commission. Airbnb is totally different and has a vision. Hualien tourism industry and *minsu* operators are truly appreciated (sic) that Airbnb is willing to invest marketing resources in Hualien and Taitung and present beautiful Eastern Coast to tourists around the world."¹⁶

103%

**Year-over-year growth in listings
beyond metropolitan areas**

116%

**Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals
at non-metro listings**

¹⁶ www.ksnews.com, October 4, 2016.

Total guest arrivals at non-metro listings in Taiwan have jumped from 89,100 in 2015 to 192,400 in 2016. Host income from non-metro listings has more than doubled, year over year, from NT\$101 million in 2015 to NT\$210.8 million in 2016.

Through our partnership with the Taitung and Hsinchu governments, an effort to enhance business competencies among Taiwanese young people and *minsu* operators, we also are designing a series of programs for these groups. In Taiwan's non-metropolitan areas, the average age of Airbnb Taiwanese hosts is 38, making this our youngest non-metropolitan host community of all 11 studied for this report. Women make up the majority of Taiwanese hosts in non-metropolitan areas, at 53 percent.

Americas

CANADA

Laurel, Rocky View County, Alberta

Laurel is the owner of Spirit Winds Ranch, a lifelong horse lover and an Airbnb Superhost. She started hosting on Airbnb as a way to support her life on the farm and to help fund the Spirit Winds Horse Centre. Hosting has allowed her to maintain the farm and dedicate her life to the land and the horses.

Laurel invites her guests to work the horses, on the farm, and take part in her Equine Assisted Learning program, a series of holistic equine and nature programs for children with anxiety, ADHD and sensory processing issues. Her work involves saving and rehabilitating older horses and providing them with a meaningful and peaceful life. She grew up on a ranch, so hosting comes naturally: her family always welcomed and entertained people on their farm. Airbnb has allowed her to continue this tradition as well as share her knowledge.

Airbnb also has become Laurel's retirement plan, and it has given her the freedom to quit her other work and dedicate her life to hosting on the farm and rehabilitating horses. With her income from hosting, Laurel plans to continue enhancing the farm, contributing to her local economy and sharing her life on the ranch with her guests.

As Canada's urban economy becomes more knowledge- and technology-driven, Canada's rural economy remains heavily dependent upon agriculture and natural resources, sectors prone to the effects of climate change, automation and fluctuations in commodity prices. Young adults in rural areas face fewer job prospects and younger, less established farmers face slim profit margins and struggle with the debt required to keep farms running year to year. Many young adults in rural areas simply move to cities, a dynamic Canada's new leadership is now trying to address, often speaking to the goal of helping the country transition between its natural resource economy and its natural "resourcefulness."



The emerging urban-rural age gap may be reflected in Airbnb's host community.¹⁷ The average age of our rural hosts in Canada is 48, whereas the average age of our urban hosts is 40, one of the widest age gaps of the 11 countries studied for this report.

Home sharing is helping the farmers, ranchers and energy- and mining-dependent households of rural Canada lead and sustain the lives they want to live in the communities they love. Fifty-nine percent of rural Canadian Airbnb hosts are women (compared to 56 percent of urban hosts in Canada), the second highest percentage of rural women hosts of any country included in this report after the US.

140%

Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals

93%

Year-over-year growth in rural listings

¹⁷ [Statistics Canada](#), March 3, 2017.

Income earned by Airbnb's rural Canadian hosts also is growing steadily. Rural hosts earned CAD\$66.8 million through Airbnb in 2016, more than double the total from 2015: CAD\$28.4 million. As more evidence points to how home sharing provides more economic opportunity and helps hosts in rural areas diversify their income, our hope is to work with Canada's local governments and NGOs to promote home sharing in the country's more rural areas as we are working with them in Canada's cities.

LATIN AMERICA

Adhara Luz and Daniel, *Altér do Chão, Pará, Brazil*

In 2014, we decided to leave São Paulo for a change of scenery and energy and moved to Alter do Chão, in Pará. It was the best decision we could have made! Adhara was born here and her parents founded the NGO Saúde e Alegria (Health and Joy). She ended up growing up between riverbank communities and the natural life of the forest and the Tapajós River. Daniel was born in São Paulo, near the Tietê River, in a totally urban environment. This contrast between our extremely diverse childhoods has always been very rich for us.

After living together for three years in the city of São Paulo, we decided to travel for eight months, backpacking between Asia and Europe. When we returned, the big city no longer made sense for us. Everything seemed weird and deep down, we knew we needed nature close by in order to be happy and fulfilled.

And so we decided to live in the Amazon! Daniel closed down his film production company and Adhara let go of the freelance gigs she was working on. Adhara already worked in experience trips and tourism, which eased everything during the transition. Airbnb ended up being the perfect complement for our jobs in tourism, because in addition to the itineraries and trips, we were able to start hosting as well, gaining extra income. Our home ended up becoming a reference in the town and we helped out a lot of friends who later joined the platform, as well.

Our work is to create a safe and beautiful bridge between the city life and the forest life, sensitizing people about just how essential it is for nature to be balanced so we as humans can be balanced as well. We like to play in reverse: the city is exotic, not the forest! Humanity has gone through over 10,000 years in nature and only a handful of decades in the cities. So, the city is the exotic one, right?

Rural areas in Latin America and the Caribbean face challenges that are similar to the US but are exacerbated by the staggering regional economy. Many who live in rural areas in the region

depend on informal economic activities; lack infrastructure and access to social services including education and health care; and are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters and climate change. Other challenges for citizens outside Latin America's sprawling cities include a severe lag in access to technology, which represses rural entrepreneurship.

Encompassing Mexico, South America, Central America and the Caribbean (including Cuba), Latin America is Airbnb's fastest-growing market. Our growth in Latin American rural areas is keeping pace with our growth across the region as a whole. In Brazil, for example, rural host income has increased threefold from R\$8.3 million in 2015 to R\$25.2 million in 2016, and guest arrivals in rural areas likewise have more than tripled, from 27,800 in 2015 to 94,400 in 2016. The same is true for Argentina: rural host income has increased threefold from ARS\$8.9 million in 2015 to ARS\$30 million in 2016, while guest arrivals have quadrupled from 5,600 in 2015 to 22,300 in 2016.

220% and 191%

Year-over-year growth in rural listings, Argentina and Brazil

298% and 240%

Year-over-year growth in guest arrivals at rural listings, Argentina and Brazil

Both countries see great opportunity in alternative tourism to their more rural areas, including for their own citizens residing in their cities. In Argentina, the focus is on agricultural tourism, drawing more attention to the country's farms, *estancias* and *fincas* (stock farms and ranches). In Brazil, the focus is on promoting ecological travel, leveraging the country's astonishing natural sights from the world's largest rainforest, to the largest wetlands, to the largest waterfalls system. We have partnered with Brazil's Cataratas Group to ease and promote travel to parklands managed by the Group, which include the famous Iguazu Falls. Airbnb's work with Brazilian officials began when we helped the new city of Palmas and its rural surroundings scale up its accommodations for the first World Indigenous Games in 2015.

Brazil is also the focus of innovative new payment options developed by Airbnb that make it easier for rural hosts to benefit from growing interest in tourism. Because only a small percentage of Brazil's population have internationally accepted credit cards, Airbnb began accepting payments through local credit cards (i.e., in Brazilian Reais), in installments, or

through Boleto Bancário, a coded bank payment form that can be paid in local banks, lottery stores and post offices. Recognizing that we need to keep our approaches consistent with how people are used to living and earning, we are experimenting with ways to accommodate other payment systems that are commonly used in Latin American countries.

Airbnb has an office in Brazil and is excited to be opening new offices in Argentina and Mexico soon, effectively quadrupling our staff in the region within the next two years and increasing our ability to help Latin American governments engage in destination marketing and open their countrysides to travelers.

UNITED STATES

Alan Colley and Dabney Tompkins, Tiller, Oregon

When Alan and Dabney built a replica fire lookout tower on private land surrounded by the Umpqua National Forest, they intended it to be a weekend getaway from Portland. Then they decided to quit their jobs and move to the lookout to live off the grid. To their surprise, the couple quickly befriended people living in communities in the South Umpqua Basin.

Alan and Dabney's lookout has become a popular Airbnb [listing](#) booked by more than 150 guests each summer. Modeled after US Forest Service fire lookout towers built in the 1900s and updated with modern features including running water, the listing is located 10 miles outside of the unincorporated town of Tiller, Oregon. The entire town, save for the church, fire station and a couple of private properties, was recently sold to a private buyer.

Alan and Dabney feel strongly that rural tourism can generate jobs, commerce and growth. Their lookout tower is completely booked from May to October, bringing guests from around the US and as far away from South Korea and Guatemala. The listing serves as a launching point for day trips to national and state parks and nearby Oregon communities. Seven couples have gotten engaged at the listing, and those are just the proposals Alan and Dabney know about!

This year, Alan and Dabney are hosting two weekend retreats that will bring dozens of people to camp on the land around the lookout tower and feature cooking, campfire music, yoga and other activities led by area residents. They hope the retreats become a catalyst for tourism in the region. While the physical distance from their neighbors is now much greater than when they lived in Portland, the couple says they know their neighbors far better in rural Oregon.

Airbnb was founded in San Francisco in the midst of the Great Recession as a way for people to turn their greatest expense, their home, into a more fully used asset—a way to cover the household expenses, pay the rent or mortgage, and even avoid eviction or foreclosure. Hosts also use their Airbnb income to support their own travel or entrepreneurship.

Even as rural areas of the US struggle with record-low mobility and other lingering effects of the recession, their technological future seems more fraught than positive as jobs in manufacturing, energy and eventually trucking get automated, while funding for startups and entrepreneurship increasingly flows to cities.¹⁸ Airbnb, in contrast, is a technology platform that empowers people rather than displacing them. In addition to hosts keeping 97 percent of the listing price, up to 50 percent of guest spending in the US occurs in the neighborhoods where they stay. By giving more people and more communities the chance to benefit directly from growing interest in tourism, home sharing can be part of the solution for America's rural areas.

\$494 million

Earned by rural hosts in the past year¹⁹

In every US state, our rural hosts' Airbnb earnings represent a sizable percentage of typical rural household income, ranging from five percent to as high as 20 percent in states such as Hawaii and California (20.3 percent and 20.1 percent, respectively). While many parts of the country beyond cities still lack Airbnb listings, guest demand has risen steadily, suggesting more room for growth: 3.3 million guest arrivals occurred at rural listings in the US over the past year, a year-over-year increase of 138 percent.

Forty-six of the 50 US states have seen at least 100-percent year-over-year growth, and 19 have seen 200-percent growth or higher. While parts of the US known for their resorts and national parks, such as the Mountain West, Northeast and West Virginia, have the highest percentages of Airbnb hosts in rural areas, the states seeing the fastest year-over-year growth are in the Midwest and South: states such as Oklahoma (434 percent year-over-year growth), Illinois (330 percent), Arkansas (309 percent), Missouri (298 percent) and Alabama (288 percent).

In less than 10 years, our growing rural host community has overtaken the presence of corporate hotel chains in rural America and unlike the chains, puts the economic returns of tourism growth directly into people's pockets. The availability of certain types of data in the US allows us to illustrate how rural investment by big hotels compares with the presence of the Airbnb community. Many rural areas have almost no hospitality infrastructure at all, while in

¹⁸ CityLab, February 2, 2017, and Kauffman Foundation, "State of Entrepreneurship 2017."

¹⁹ All Airbnb US data cited in this report, unless otherwise stated, dates to February 1, 2016 to February 1, 2017.

others that are popular for outdoor recreation, Airbnb expands the economic pie by offering more options that make travel more accessible. We are thrilled to be partnering with the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America’s national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Airbnb will work with the Foundation to make it easier for guests to find accommodations around 10 parks across the country. In 2016, the National Park System hosted a record-setting 331 million visitors, with the Grand Canyon alone seeing almost 6 million visitors.

18.4%

Of active listings are in rural areas

12.5%

Of hotel rooms are in rural areas

In 43 of 50 states, Airbnb’s share of supply (i.e., active listings) in rural areas is greater than hotels’ share of supply (i.e., rooms). In West Virginia, fully three-fourths of active Airbnb listings are located in rural areas, while just 32.7 percent of West Virginia hotel rooms are—a 42.3 percentage point gap. In New Hampshire, 71.9 percent of active Airbnb listings are located in rural areas, while just 33.1 percent of hotel rooms are. In Montana: 64.1 percent to 28.1 percent. In Wyoming: 65.9 percent to 31.5 percent.

The opportunity we provide our community to leverage growing interest in travel includes demographics that may face fewer traditional opportunities to earn. The average age of an Airbnb rural host in the US is 48; the average age of an Airbnb urban host in the US is 42. In 14 states, the average age of our rural hosts is over 50.

The US is also home to our highest percentage of rural women hosts of the countries studied for this report: 62 percent of all Airbnb hosts in rural America are women, who account for 56 percent of our urban hosts. In eight states, two-thirds or more of rural hosts are women: Wyoming (69 percent); Alaska and Maine (67 percent); and Ohio, Missouri, Maryland, Washington and Montana (66 percent).

Growing our community beyond cities.

Airbnb's rural hosts and guests are a vital and vibrant part of our community, and we look forward to partnering further with local policymakers and NGOs to bring the benefits of home sharing to more households beyond the world's cities. While all Airbnb hosts receive the same company-provided 24/7 support and protections regardless of their location, we are dedicated to making sure our host trainings, best practices, and programming are tailored to suit their individual communities' needs and what makes them special.

Beyond the Airbnb platform, members of our host community in dozens of locations around the world have self-organized into Home Sharing Clubs that meet regularly to discuss hosting best practices, work with local businesses, volunteer in their neighborhoods, and advocate with local policymakers for fair short-term rental rules that allow for responsible home sharing. Of our 168 Home Sharing Clubs launched to date, including 90 in the Americas, 53 in Europe and Africa, and 25 in the Asia Pacific region, a number of them are based near rural areas and positioned to welcome and support rural members—including Clubs in the states of Bahia in Brazil, Maharashtra in India, and Oregon in the US.

As part of our recent commitment to support the establishment of 1,000 Home Sharing Clubs around the world by the end of 2018, we are investing in new online and remote organizing resources to reach more hosts in rural areas and help them connect with each other. Every Home Sharing Club receives our organizing toolkit and a dedicated, hosts-only webpage where Club members can discuss upcoming events, share content, ask for support, and give advice. We also provide branding for each Club and through mentoring, generally support their efforts to realize their vision of impact in their respective communities. But again, we are mindful of the need to tailor our engagement with each Club based on their specific local goals.

Disaster response.

During and after a disaster, temporary housing for the displaced and for relief workers can be hard to find. This is especially true for rural areas with less hospitality and other infrastructure that can accommodate large groups of people; shelters can quickly get overwhelmed.

65

Disaster response activations globally since 2012

Inspired by the generosity of some Airbnb hosts who opened their doors to survivors of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, we launched a Disaster Relief Tool, which makes it simple for hosts to voluntarily open their homes to displaced survivors and relief workers who are deployed to support the response. Since that time, we have built a comprehensive Disaster Response Program that includes the tool and more.

Our travel credit program helps relief organizations quickly secure accommodations. And in partnership with a growing network of local government and relief agencies including the US Federal Emergency Management Agency, we provide disaster and emergency preparedness educational materials to Airbnb hosts, help arrange community emergency preparedness trainings with local experts, and use Airbnb communication channels to notify hosts and guests about significant emergencies. Our [agreement](#) with Kamaishi City in Japan, which was devastated by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, includes supporting the local government in disaster response planning.

To date, Airbnb and our host community have responded to 65 disasters including events in rural areas, from flooding in South Louisiana and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, to wildfires in the mountains of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and Fort McMurray, Canada.

Conclusion.

At Airbnb, we look forward to working with hosts, policymakers and NGOs to thoughtfully extend the economic and travel opportunities home sharing already is bringing to parts of the world beyond metropolitan areas. Whether by opening up countryside to travelers through accommodations that did not previously exist, or scaling accommodations in rural resort areas so they can welcome more guests, Airbnb helps people and communities benefit from the economics of tourism in ways they historically have not, and likely otherwise would not.

As rural areas grapple with a difficult combination of old and new economic challenges, the opportunities for extra income made available through the Airbnb platform can shore up household budgets and help revitalize whole communities, and these opportunities can never be automated.

Methodology.

Countries studied exclusively for this report include: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, Taiwan and the US. Previously published data included for Ireland.

EUROPE

France, Italy and Spain. We used ESRI's population density data to define any area outside of major cities with less than 150 people per square kilometer as “rural.”

Ireland. The mentioned analysis was based on all travel to and within Ireland during the one-year period from September 2015 through August 2016.

ASIA PACIFIC

Australia, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. We identified listings outside of major urban tourism markets.

AMERICAS

Canada. We identified listings outside of major Canadian metropolitan areas as “rural.”

Brazil and Argentina: We identified listings outside of major urban tourism markets.

US. US data in this report, including the individual-state breakouts, uses internal Airbnb data covering the period of February 1, 2016 to February 1, 2017. We collected all listings actively available on the Airbnb platform during this period and their latitude and longitude coordinates. Using this information, we assigned each listing to the Census block in which it was situated for the 2010 US Census. We then categorized each listing according to the Census designation of “Rural,” “Urbanized Area,” and “Urban Cluster.” The Census defines an “Urbanized Area” as a location with more than 50,000 residents and an “Urban Cluster” as a location with 2,500 to 50,000 residents.²⁰ For this report, all listings within “Urbanized Areas” and “Urban Clusters” were categorized as “urban” and the rest were categorized as “rural.”

²⁰ <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/urban-rural.html>