

CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM

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The Challenge

One of your city's principal economic development objectives is to attract a broad array of out of town and out of country visitors and to provide activities that encourage visitors to come and to extend their stay additional days. The array of visitors should include individuals attending professional and business development meetings and seminars who will be interested in "add-on" tourist opportunities and days, as well as tourists looking for opportunities for adults and families to be entertained and educated. By focusing on development of cultural and heritage tourism, and analyzing your city's potential carefully, you can use a tool successfully employed by many other communities

What is Cultural and Heritage Tourism?

Cultural and Heritage Tourism is a tool of economic development that achieves economic growth through attracting visitors from outside a host community, who are motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution (Silberberg 1995). Such travel is focused upon experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts and special lifestyles, values, traditions, and events.

Tourism is widely recognized for its tangible outcomes (job creation, tax revenues) as well as its less tangible outcomes (quality of life). It may be built upon a wide variety of attractions, including agritourism, arts tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, destination tourism, fairs, events and conferences, sports teams, recreation, and more. International tourism is the world's largest export earner and an important factor in the balance of payments in most nations (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2007). The primary focus of this tool to attract visitors is "cultural and heritage tourism."

Community Vitality: There is broad agreement that cultural resources generate economic vitality by leveraging human capital and culture to generate economic vitality through tourism, crafts, and cultural attractions. Programs based on such resources may restore, revitalize or strengthen a community or neighborhood by serving as a centerpiece for redevelopment and cultural renewal. They create vibrant public spaces integrated with natural amenities resulting in improved urban quality of life, and expand business and tax revenue base and positive regional and community image (Newman and Smith 2000). Also cultural resources may

contribute to an area's "innovative habitat" by making communities more attractive to highly desirable knowledge-based employees and permitting new forms of knowledge intensive production to flourish. This may be effective not only in large central cities, but in smaller communities and rural areas as well. It is also the case that cultural and heritage tourism can satisfy the cultural and leisure aspirations of the local community, providing residents with a greater sense of belonging to their homeland (Chang 1999) as well as intercultural awareness both within and outside a community. Cultural and heritage tourists stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of travelers thus making such tourism an important economic development tool (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2002).

Demand for High Standards: The global scale of tourism has created a series of challenges for many communities. With the growing uniformity of hotel architecture, restaurant chains, street furniture, etc, communities must safeguard local identities while meeting tourist quality and standards expectations. It is important not to compromise conservation and cultural values, and to balance sociocultural needs with economic gains (Nasser 2003).

The issue of authenticity is one that comes up again and again in cultural and heritage tourism, and this presents many local challenges. The natural instinct is to protect and preserve the "built" environment, but a good argument can be made that to rebuild may be a more appropriate way to accurately reflect a period or culture. These may be political decisions depending upon which period is being rebuilt and which period is being overridden or which values are being reflected. But heritage tourism has an exploitive dimension which is in conflict with conservation and cultural values. Tourist interest in religious institutions may make it difficult for them to operate as religious institutions rather than museums or tourist destinations. Clearly, sustainable tourism must contribute to both conservation and development objectives along with social equity and cultural values.

Reflecting the economic importance of tourism in general and cultural and heritage tourism in particular, there are many national and international organizations that provide expertise and support for these activities in both developed and developing nations. These include the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the European Commission, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Travel and Tourism Council, Organization of World Heritage Cities.

Why should communities focus on cultural and heritage tourism?

Europe is the world's top tourist destination and cultural and heritage tourism is a central dimension. In the last twenty years tourism in Europe has more than doubled to 12% of the GDP from tourism and tourism-related activities. It

accounts for approximately twenty million jobs, mostly in small and medium sized enterprises. And most importantly, tourism is expected to double in Europe in the next twenty-five years (European Commission 2002). This growth is attributed to the adoption of the Euro which has made travel simpler, liberalization of transport (airlines), new information technology which makes it easier for tourists to plan their trips, and the growth of new markets in Central and Eastern European countries. In fact the ten new member states of the European Union combined may generate \$62 billion of travel and tourism GDP and 3.0 million jobs by achieving average EU results (World Travel and Tourism Council 2004). Clearly, this area of the economy has the potential to speed the integration of new member states, particularly in areas of high structural unemployment.

Typical culture tourism in Europe includes festivals and events, banquets, music, theatre, shows, village and rural life (e.g. farms, Sunday markets), gastronomy, visiting/tasting local products, general sightseeing, village buildings and “atmosphere,” visiting historic and religious monuments or vernacular buildings and ruins, and famous people in the region (European Commission 2002).

Within the European Union, cultural tourism plays a particularly important role for German tourists. EU studies suggest that German culture tourists tend to be 45-64, above average income, mostly couples, better educated, more broadly traveled, more quality conscious, and regularly take holidays outside normal peak seasons. They travel independently rather than through tour operators or holiday packages, and stay seven days or less. We also know that German tourism is strongly influenced by quality and type of accommodation and food offered. Surveys suggest that one-half of German tourists expect small accommodations, businesses run by locals, and 41% expect local cuisine with local ingredients. They are looking for two and three-star accommodations rather than large luxury hotels (European Commission 2002).

What is included in cultural and heritage tourism?

The concepts of cultural and heritage tourism may include a wide variety of strategies and services.

Place Promotion. Place promotion refers to the use of heritage tourism as an approach to place promotion. This is typically focused upon an historic town such as Cape Coast, Ghana; Granada, Spain; Mdina, Malta; Antalya, Turkey. In each case the “community” is known for some particular set of historic events, common heritage, historic buildings and/or special events. In each case the objective is to attract groups of tourists both from the common heritage and others, to visit a community to observe and/or participate in activities, museums, festivals, etc., that celebrate the community’s lineage and historic significance (Agyei-Mensah 2006). Place promotion is an additional vehicle for motivating travelers. Gambia, West Africa holds a “Home Coming Festival” for the African-American Diaspora, marketing its important sites of the Atlantic slave trade.

One framework for place promotion is through the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), consisting of the 215 cities in which UNESCO World Heritage sites are located. This includes seven in Africa, 38 in Latin America, 20 in Asia and the Pacific, 125 in Europe and North American, and 25 in Arab states. OWHC provides information and training for municipal managers on issues related to both historic preservation and tourism development. Another example is the “European City of Culture” or the “European Capital of Culture” program which has recognized communities in which there was “special cultural events of European and international importance” (European Institute of Cultural Routes).

Closely related to place promotion is the concept of “hard branding” a cultural city based upon mega events such as a World Fair or a sporting event or a major annual festival. The European City of Culture competition is one example. The use of a “star architect” to design new facilities such as I. M. Pei’s Louvre, or Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Balboa may bring substantial attention to a community’s cultural and heritage potential (Evans 2003).

Cultural Districts. The concept of a cultural district within a community is designed to create a physical space in which individuals may easily recognize a concentration of both institutional and indigenous tourist opportunities focusing upon art markets, performing arts, museums and cultural heritage. Similar to the idea of an industrial district, the cultural district is intended to create economic growth through the development of small and medium sized firms which are integrated within the area and the local community (Santagata 2002). Santagata indicates that there are four models: *industrial cultural districts, institutional cultural districts, museum cultural districts, and metropolitan cultural districts.*

a. The industrial cultural district has positive externalities and is based heavily upon a specific strong pre-existing localized culture that has a tradition in arts and crafts which are not standardized, but rather are unique. Such districts are successful where there is a history of savings and entrepreneurial banking and open international markets. Examples include Los Angeles and the motion picture industry and Caltagirone, Sicily’s pottery district.

b. The institutional cultural district is an area with a distinctive label that gives it exclusive naming rights and instant or near-instant recognition (feta cheese, Italian wines, French Champagne within Europe). These policies are a part of the European Union economic and agricultural policies. Similar policies exist outside the EU based upon bilateral agreements. They provide protection from interlopers who might use the name of a product or a geographical area to promote lesser quality goods. In the most extreme examples there is a Denomination of Origin (DOC), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) framework in which legal, EU standards provide protection and marketing opportunities. This area will include an abundance of fairs and festivals linked to cultural local products and traditions such as wine, local cuisine, food, history of

castles, country manors and houses, landscape, cultural parks and tourist cultural itineraries and a tourist-hotel industry. These districts may be based upon music, arts and crafts, figurative and plastic arts and designed goods. Examples include the Piedmont-Langhe and Tuscany-Chianti districts in Italy.

c. The museum cultural district is a localized area usually located in a historical downtown area with density and critical mass. Public policy is clearly needed to create these districts, as they are dependent upon city zoning and planning policies. The creation of a museum cultural district will result in a demand for hotel services, as well as crafts and other cultural services. Similar to other cultural districts, a community may realize favorable consumption externalities, economies of scale and scope, externalities of time, and networking externalities. While many communities have small museums, the challenge of creating a museum cultural district is to build something in which the sum is greater than the individual parts.

d. A metropolitan cultural district is a “spatial agglomeration of buildings dedicated to performing arts, museums, and organizations which produce culture and related goods, services, and facilities (Sanataga 2002: 19). These are most common in the United States, including such cities as Boston, Charlotte, NC, Dallas and Pittsburgh. The metropolitan cultural district is not just a community in which there are many historical monuments, churches and museums like Venice or Florence. Rather, here culture is produced by creative people who need a place to work and distribute their work. Thus, “the metropolitan cultural district could be the best and most efficient means of producing culture through a visible agglomeration of artistic capital and organizations” (Santagata 2002: 11). Such a district requires an area where property rights are reasonably flexible and an organization charged with developing the project by planning and managing the cultural activities. These may be private business entrepreneurs or city planners. Planning for such a district requires (1) a range of primary artistic and cultural activities and institutions, (2) a secondary range of activities in which the production of culture is central (arts and crafts workshops, music studios, etc.), and (3) a third range of activities that complement the attraction of visitors and tourists (restaurants, gift shops, etc.).

Legacy Tourism. While heritage tourism is important, its boundaries are not at all clear. Heritage may include connections to history, art, science, lifestyles, architecture and scenery (McCain and Ray, 2003). It may be a part of a collective history and thus have broad appeal, but there is a subset referred to as “legacy tourism” where travel is linked to genealogical interests and a search for information or a desire to feel connected to ancestors and ancestral roots. In this case the tourist motivations need to be understood for marketing purposes, and local resources must be developed accordingly.

Cultural and Heritage Routes. The Council of Europe has provided support for the development of European cultural routes as a vehicle for tourism since

1987. Through the European Institute of Cultural Routes information and programs for cultural tourism have been developed. Support is provided to both individual tourists as well as tour guides. The objective of this program is to raise awareness of European cultural identity and European citizenship based on shared values and to provide opportunities for exchange and development, to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, to safeguard and enhance cultural heritage, and to give pride of place to cultural tourism (Council of Europe 2007). These routes have been themed to include pilgrim pathways, rural habitats, historical and legendary figures of Europe, Monastic influences, and many others. Specific examples include Via Francigena, Mozart Route, the Cluniac Sites in Europe, the Viking Routes, European Jewish Heritage Routes, and dozens of others. Beyond Europe, there are also such routes as the Silk Road, the Slave Road, the Iron Road, Roads of Faith, Spaces of the Baroque, and Roads of the Al-Andalusi Heritage (European Institute of Cultural Routes and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations 2007). These projects are intended to provide opportunities for individuals and communities to analyze global transformations, enrich the debate on the future of intercultural dialogs, promote new types of cooperation, become more familiar with the heritages of different areas, and contribute to economic and human development.

How is the tool operationalized (practical guidelines)?

Like all economic development tools, a community would be well served to begin its efforts in developing cultural and heritage tourism with some of the key elements of strategic planning in order to fully understand local conditions and opportunities and to set a strategic direction. The locality should empower an individual and an organization to take leadership in this strategic planning effort. This should include a SWOT analysis of a community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

There are a variety of steps and considerations that communities should take to effectively implement the tool of cultural and heritage tourism. Some of these will be taken up as a part of a comprehensive strategic planning process; others are a part of good program management. These focus on the cultural and heritage products themselves, support services, public works, education and training, marketing, planning, management and assessment/evaluation, and public policy actions.

Cultural/Heritage Product Development and Enhancement

- determine significance and distinctiveness (how unique from others)
- emphasize quality of the product (both real and perceived; understandable and enjoyable)

- arrange physical clustering of activities
- enable enhancement and renovation of historic buildings, monuments, museums, archeological and historical places
- develop special events and festivals (chamber music, opera, ballet and dance, arts and crafts, ethnic heritage, special holidays, modern music, ethnic music)
- develop minority cultural heritage facilities and programs
- develop small and medium sized handicrafts businesses that focus on locally themed and made items
- make all sites accessible for all people including those with physical handicaps; new lifts and entrances; discounts to children and pensioners and persons with disabilities
- arrange multi-lingual signage and programs
- tailor opening hours of sites to meet the needs of tourists

Support Services and Quality

- enhance mediating services such as tourist offices, tour operators, internet services,
- arrange inter-city transportation services – direct air links to key cities
- arrange intra-city transportation – taxi, bus, rail services
- support restaurants, hotels, souvenirs, shopping
- tailor opening hours of support services (including tourist offices) to meet the needs of tourists

Public Works

- analyze and support airport, rail and bus service facilities
- develop water and sewer services appropriate for hotels and restaurants
- design and construct public plazas and parks appropriately located for tourists

- signage
- consider accessibility of all facilities

Education and Training

- support education and training of local population in service quality and customer service
- educate and train local population in cultural areas (conservatory, youth and college-level music, arts and crafts programs)
- develop special training programs for owners of monuments and museums, as well as local businesses
- build community support and involvement
- create special education and training programs to involve older people in the delivery of services
- assist individual organizations in developing grant applications for outside support

Marketing

- brand, market and promote the city, its cultural/heritage sites and events as well as related tourism services
- package arrangements – with other cultural and non-cultural activities
- work with private tour companies to establish guided tours
- develop a profitable and competitive pricing policy
- develop/enhance electronic media – ministry and local tourism websites with photos; special event websites; private tour operator websites
- develop/enhance print media – souvenirs and brochures on locality, including each site and program; tourism materials for tour operators, investors, tourists and ministries abroad; commissioned books
- promote through elite and government official involvement – educational campaigns by President, mayor and other government officials traveling abroad

- commission a video documentary
- support cultural programs abroad by citizens or former citizens – ethnic cultural associations sponsoring ethnic festivals
- target professional associations and meetings to add cultural dimension to these events
- market internationally
- provide more information in more languages of main groups of tourists (English, German, Russian); audio guides; more information should be free

Planning, Management, and Assessment/Evaluation

- designate an individual and an organization to have lead responsibility for cultural and heritage tourism
- identify key organizations and individuals in the community, region and state
- assess all resources (sites, events and supporting services)
- conduct market research
- develop a tourism master plan (airport, hotel complex, roads, sports and leisure facilities and development of cultural activities to encourage medium-stay tourism),
- establish tourism guidelines
- coordinate and cooperate with others to create strategic partnerships (governments, nonprofit organization, private firms), thus providing support for small organizations with small budgets, achieving some economies of scale, and broadening the programs considered to be a part of the cultural and heritage tourism activities
- negotiate packaging arrangements (itineraries, support services, regional focus) with a variety of arrangements (cultural products of the same type, cultural products of different types such as festivals and art districts, cultural and noncultural products (hotels, resorts, retail areas, sports and outdoor recreation, bus tours, amusement attractions).
- conduct impact assessments, monitoring and tourism impact surveys (use accreditation and certification standards where possible and obtain feedback from tourists) to assure product quality

- emphasize management commitment and capability
- address seasonality challenges – unlike sand and surf tourism, cultural and heritage tourism has the potential of providing year-round attractions that are not weather dependent
- develop and enhance sister city relations
- advance plan all special events (2 years) in order for tourist organizations to take advantage

Public Policy Responsibilities

- review food and drink quality regulations to be sure that they are pragmatic to allow samples of local cuisine and local beverages
- develop an investment policy to support investments in cultural and heritage tourism
- fund public works enhancements and improvements
- create financial instruments and tax policies that stimulate the development of cultural tourism, such as abolishing real estate tax for a period of time if a building is preserved, renovated and restored, and if it's considered a monument of national significance with local cultural, historical and architectural interest; motivate owners to add value and keep building/monuments in good technical condition; local government loans; VAT refund for foreign tourists for purchases; quid pro quo for public access to at least a part of a building and appropriate times of access
- review, adopt and implement laws to protect cultural heritage from other pressures
- establish rules for sustainable cultural heritage and tourism development
- apply for grants and loans from other level governments and organizations
- introduce design rules for new construction so that new buildings harmonize with their surroundings

What conditions are necessary for success?

Cultural and heritage tourism has become a major source of revenue for many communities and states across the globe. Not only does it create jobs, but it has the potential of bringing in needed revenue from *outside* the community and

stimulating the local economy beyond the capacity of its own residents. There are many conditions and resources that are needed for success. Here we will highlight the most essential components.

Authentic cultural and heritage venues and programs. Each community needs to realize that cultural and heritage tourism is a competitive venture. Tourists have many options and can be selective. A primary draw is the substantive nature of the venue and program – its link to historic events/periods, people and cultures. There is a need to tell a story, to capture the audience, and to leave them with a sense of enjoyment, appreciation and understanding. The sites need to be developed or restored. Signage needs to be appropriate to telling the story. Staff need to be trained.

Transparent visitor's bureau with information on hotels, restaurants, and transportation services as well as key attractions for individuals and families. Tourists need to be able to easily discover all the needed information for a trip to be enjoyable. This means Internet web sites in multiple languages (particularly if one is targeting international visitors) and local offices centrally and visibly located at transportation points and near venues. These local offices need to be designed for their customers and staffed with individuals who are knowledgeable and trained in customer service. They need to have information on all aspects of travel – inter-city transportation, intra-city transportation, lodging, food, shopping, and health care, as well as the substantive cultural and heritage sites and programs.

Coordination of stakeholders: tourism, economic development, planning, infrastructure development. Successful cultural and heritage tourism requires the coordination of all aspects of travel and development. Before a site can reach its maximum potential, a community needs to develop all of the infrastructure requirements, ranging from water and sewer systems, roads, bus and train terminals and airports, to hotels, restaurants, and shopping districts and the cultural and heritage sites themselves. Starting from scratch, this is a long-term enterprise requiring careful planning and widespread involvement of key stakeholders. But even a community that has made some or substantial progress still needs to assess where it is and how much additional potential there may be for growth. In all cases this requires bringing together public and private officials, those directly involved in tourism (hotels, restaurants, transportation officials, private tourism agencies), those directly involved in economic development (public officials, banks, private developers), those directly involved in infrastructure (local and state officials), and those directly involved in the cultural and heritage tourism sites (public, nonprofit, and private organizations). Bringing these individuals together should result in a master plan, a strategic plan and buy-in from each sector.

Marketing: product development and support, targeting of clients, identification and development of market niche. A key aspect of a successful cultural and heritage tourism program has to be the development and implementation of a sophisticated marketing plan. This effort should be based on

a reasonable amount of research into potential client interests and the link to local opportunities. Each community needs to develop its own “brand” and to sell that brand in its web sites, advertisements and all marketing tools.

Development of necessary infrastructure: hotels, transportation, government capacity, amenities. Success ultimately means more tourists traveling to a community, staying longer, and spending more money. It means developing a reputation among tourists that a community, a site, a program, and the overall experience is worthwhile. This requires that all aspects of a visit be enjoyable. Thus, programs necessary for stimulating the development of hotels, restaurants and shopping and programs necessary for financing public works and targeting such activities on the needs of the tourists are essential. Support for the cultural and tourism site or program may be needed as well. Government officials may need to identify funds and programs to redevelop cultural and historic sites, train staff, and provide seed money for private, nonprofit and government owned and operated programs.

What are the complementary tools?

A number of economic development tools complement cultural and heritage tourism. It is difficult to separate other forms of tourism from this tool, as they all have many of the basic components linked to support services such as restaurants, hotels and retail services. These support services may benefit from micro loans for small and medium size businesses, ranging from restaurants to crafts. The development of local supply chains will optimize the economic potential within a community. Clearly there is a need for careful market analysis for restaurants, hotels and retail as well as the tourism sites themselves. Successful cultural and heritage tourism without training of heritage professionals, and arts and culture development is impossible. And all successful economic development should conduct periodic economic impact analyses to determine where they are and what their potential may be.

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