

World Tourism Organization



UNWTO

Summary

Study on Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage



Tourism and
Intangible Cultural Heritage



Introduction

Why Tourism & Intangible Cultural Heritage?

Intangible Cultural Heritage is embodied in those practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills, as well as in associated objects and cultural spaces, that communities and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Transmitted through generations and constantly recreated, it provides humanity with a sense of identity and continuity.*

This global wealth of traditions has become one of the principal motivations for travel, with tourists seeking to engage with new cultures and experience the global variety of performing arts, handicrafts, rituals, cuisines, and interpretations of nature and the universe. As celebrated on World Tourism Day 2011, 'Tourism – Linking Cultures', the **cultural interaction** spurred by such encounters **prompts dialogue, builds understanding**, and, in turn, **fosters tolerance and peace**.

One of the challenges currently facing the tourism sector is to contribute to the identification, protection and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through tourism development.

* Based on the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

Fostering the responsible use of this living heritage for tourism purposes can provide new employment opportunities, help alleviate poverty, curb rural flight migration among the young and marginally-employed, and nurture a sense of pride among communities. Tourism also offers a powerful incentive for preserving and enhancing intangible cultural heritage, as the revenue it generates can be channelled back into initiatives to aid its long-term survival.

Intangible cultural heritage must be thoughtfully managed if it is to survive in an increasingly globalised world. True partnerships between communities and the tourism and heritage sectors can only occur if all sides develop a genuine appreciation for each other's aspirations and values. Tourism stakeholders need to acquire an awareness of cultural heritage management practices, while heritage managers must endeavour to comprehend the complex phenomenon of tourism and its *modus operandi*. Through mutual understanding, both can build on their shared interest in cultural assets, in close consultation with local communities, the ultimate bearers of mankind's intangible cultural legacy.



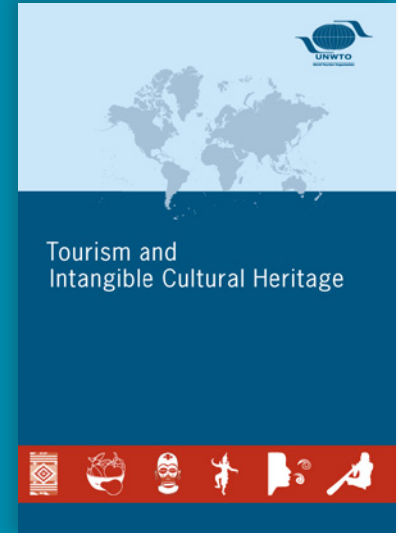
UNWTO Study on Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNWTO commissioned its first **Study on Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage**** to address these issues.

Objectives of the Study

The UNWTO Study on Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage aims to:

- Provide baseline research on the interlinkages between tourism and intangible cultural heritage, including risks and opportunities;
- Investigate government-led actions, public-private partnerships and community initiatives in terms of tourism development and intangible heritage;
- Discuss practical steps for the elaboration, management and marketing of intangible cultural heritage-based tourism products;
- Present relevant case studies and best practices from UNWTO Member States; and
- Recommend guidelines to tourism policy makers and other stakeholders, suggesting actions to foster tourism development through the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.



Through an extensive compendium of case studies and best practices, drawn from across five continents, the report offers in-depth information on, and analysis of, government-led actions, public-private partnerships and community initiatives. These practical examples feature tourism development projects related to six pivotal areas:



** The publication will be available towards the beginning of 2013 at the UNWTO E-library: www-e-unwto.org



Highlighting innovative forms of policy-making, the key issues featured in the publication draw special attention to community development, planning, training and empowerment, the limits of acceptable change of cultural assets, traditional lifestyles vs. tourism development, funding schemes and government support.

The study further recommends specific actions to stakeholders, so as to foster the sustainable and responsible development of tourism by safeguarding and incorporating intangible cultural assets into the policies and business operations of all relevant actors in the sector.



Understanding the links – When integrating intangible cultural heritage into tourism planning and development, all relevant stakeholders must be well versed in both concepts, and fully aware of the links between the two.

Defining tourism products – ICH assets may be developed as cultural tourism products by:

- Creating cultural spaces or purpose-built facilities as venues to showcase ICH;
- Combining or bundling attractions to create a themed set for stronger market appeal;
- Developing new tour routes, circuits or heritage networks;
- Using existing circuits or reviving networks, such as pilgrimage routes; and/or
- Using or reviving festivals and events.

Successful marketing requires a sound understanding of the products on offer, the target market and underlying industry conditions. Defining tourism products helps to identify the types of tourists and markets that should be targeted, while training in entrepreneurial skills and branding can help communities effectively communicate heritage values through tourism products.

Identifying stakeholders and establishing participation mechanisms – Key-players connected to intangible cultural heritage assets must be clearly identified, and their opinions taken into account, to ensure sustainability. Incorporating feedback from different perspectives into management, product development, marketing and business strategies is essential.

Maintaining authenticity – The commercialisation of living culture poses challenges, as it may entail the simplification of heritage for the purposes of transmission. A balance must be struck between commodifying ICH tourism products to make them commercially viable, while preventing them from becoming over-commodified. Models of presenting and promoting ICH products which provide the greatest benefit to host communities, while meeting the needs of tourists, foster tourism development that safeguards core cultural values.

Creating partnerships – Genuine partnerships are required between all relevant stakeholders, particularly governments, the private tourism sector, NGOs, and local communities. Community-based tourism projects allow for direct communication between communities and the tourism and heritage sectors while sustainably developing cultural assets as tourism products.

Setting limits of acceptable change (LAC) – To mitigate the tension between tourism development and control over cultural identity, constant dialogue is imperative between communities and the heritage and tourism sectors on the “limits of acceptable change”. A proactive approach to the creation of tourism products should be adopted, in which assets are transformed with the close involvement of local stakeholders, and whereby local space versus tourist space is negotiated with sensitivity.

Balancing education and entertainment – Showcasing the best of living culture to tourists in an attractive way involves providing a balance between education and entertainment. Participatory workshops for visitors in the visual, performing or culinary arts are a useful way of providing profound cultural experiences in which hosts can directly communicate their core values.

Developing ICH based tourism projects:

Major challenges and management strategies

Seeking short-term rather than long-term gain – The value of heritage-based tourism products exceeds all immediate and particular economic benefits they provide. The use of assets should be culturally appropriate and sustainable, thus stakeholders must be educated and consulted continuously to ensure that heritage is not regarded simply as a tool of income-generation. Tourism's benefits are also more likely to be enjoyed in the long-term, if, for instance, money is reinvested into community projects and training programmes.

Ensuring cultural dynamism – Care should be taken to help cultures remain dynamic and endowed with the knowledge to ensure that their intangible heritage endures. Participation in tourism can be a powerful catalyst for local cultural reproduction and revitalization, and cultural exchange is an acknowledged positive effect of communities opening up to tourism.

Need for research and monitoring systems – Assessing the performance and sustainability of ICH tourism products is necessary for ensuring their responsible management. Monitoring systems can evaluate whether goals have been reached or thresholds breached. Research also plays a key role in the successful management, marketing and delivery of quality experiences for travellers, while simultaneously safeguarding living heritage.



Key recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the Study, the following recommendations are considered of universal importance for all tourism stakeholders.

Key recommendations

- Form partnerships with other key-players so as to ensure that the interests of all are taken into consideration, while simultaneously maintaining the authenticity and dynamism of the ICH in question.
- Support efforts to review, formulate and implement national legislation to:
 - ensure that tourist guides are required to receive training and licenses, and that their fees are appropriate to their qualifications and experience;
 - prevent the sale of sacred and culturally significant artefacts;
 - protect the intellectual property rights of communities with regards to ICH products used in souvenirs and other items (such as traditional music CDs, food recipes, cosmetics and medicines);
 - introduce tax exemptions for socially responsible tourism businesses, particularly in their first year of operation.
- Provide input for statutory frameworks, especially in terms of the monitoring of tourism development;
- Manage the impact of tourism development on ICH so that all stakeholders can enjoy the benefits of engaging in ICH activities, performances and practices, while safeguarding core heritage values;
- Establish projects with communities, the heritage management sector and educational institutions to document ICH assets that are either disappearing or undergoing revitalisation/change;
- Support initiatives that follow international best practice for documentation, the use of information technologies and the communication of ICH values;
- Work with relevant stakeholders to devise strategies for the creation of new T&ICH products, improving links to existing products, and marketing products responsibly;
- Promote performances of local culture that provide useful information and do not disrespect core cultural values;
- Support the sale of ICH-related goods through official outlets and licenced retailers, such as museums, airports and hotel shops, with appropriate displays;
- Adopt and promote quality accreditation schemes for handicrafts;
- Participate in the design of specific principles to guide the management of tourism and intangible cultural heritage, given that current codes and charters do not deal with both subjects simultaneously.

HANDICRAFTS AND VISUAL ARTS

SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS, FESTIVE EVENTS

MUSIC AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

Making Art for Livelihood – Scroll painters village in West Bengal, India

Contributor and photo credit: Amitava Bhattacharya, Founder, Contact Base - “banglanatak dot com”

The *Making Art for Livelihood* project, initiated in 2004 by the Kolkata based social enterprise “banglanatak dot com”, began by targeting 3200 artists in six of the most economically disadvantaged districts of West Bengal. The undertaking recognized that tapping into the creative talent and heritage of communities offers alternative pathways for sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation. Positive links between culture, tourism and livelihoods were created because the initiative invested in the capacity and confidence building of the communities over an extended period, well before the introduction of tourism. The project unequivocally demonstrates that cultural heritage may be used as a concrete means for local empowerment and the improvement of people’s lives.

Funded by the Indian Government (2005-2009) and the European Union (2009-2011), the project conducted a baseline study on Knowledge Aptitude and Practice of the practitioners, trained artists to improve the quality of their

output and their business skills, created Self Help Groups (SHGs) with their own bank accounts, helped to provide artists and their families with health insurance, and created links to new markets and audiences. Well-managed community resource centres and festivals are important components of its marketing strategy, which contribute to transforming villages into cultural tourism destinations.

Frequently visited by international tourists, several scroll painters (patachitra) from the West Medinipur district, have learnt English and had the opportunity to exhibit their work abroad. Living standards have improved drastically, with average incomes rising from INR 500 (USD 9) per month in 2004 to INR 7000 (USD 126) in 2010. Many brick houses with sanitary latrines have been built, and some 60% of the villagers now have access to electricity.

As over half of the 311 Patachitra artists are women, their empowerment has afforded them an active role in the process, ranging from their involvement in performing and participating in exhibitions and workshops, to managing their households, ensuring the schooling of their children, maintaining standards of hygiene, developing SHGs clusters, and organizing tours.



Case studies

Social practices, rituals and festive events



Kozara Ethno Festival, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Contributor and photo credit: Mladen Šukalo, Senior Associate Expert, Banja Luka Tourist Board, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

First held in June 2005 with the assistance of the European Union and the City of Banja Luka, the four-day festival has acted as a catalyst of rural tourism development in the Kozara Mountain region. Conceived within the framework of the strategies for agricultural and rural development at the national, regional and local levels, the project was launched and supported by local residents, the Banja Luka Tourist Board, and members of local cultural associations. Currently funded by the local municipality and the Ministry of Tourism, in 2011 UNDP supported efforts to establish connections with intangible cultural heritage, notably in terms of the research and documentation of ICH, the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities, training, tourism development, and marketing.

As part of the festival, each village has a marketplace displaying eco-food and handicrafts. While promotion focuses on events held in direct connection with the festival (i.e. attending dance classes), visitors are also encouraged to

explore the living culture of the villages. In 2010 alone, 400 participants from eight European countries frequented the festival, as well as more than 10,000 visitors, of which between one to two-thirds were tourists. A further 1000 visited the area at other times of the year.

Local residents are actively involved in the entire process, benefiting from specially-tailored training courses, workshops and empowerment schemes in the fields of rural tourism, the conservation of traditions, sustainable development, legislation, and access to funds. Cultural associations are involved in the collection and analysis of information on cultural heritage, hospitality, village planning, cultural programmes, and the supply of locally-produced food and beverages.

Tourism has had a positive impact through cultural exchange, thus improving the understanding and direct participation of local residents in the preservation of their traditional values. Limited financial resources and relatively low levels of entrepreneurship, infrastructure, and ecological and tourism awareness pose significant challenges. However, the number of applicants for training courses has been exceptionally high, confirming their commitment to the project on a long-term basis.

Case studies

Music and the performing arts

Festival International de Folklore et de Percussion de Louga (FESFOP), Sénégal

Contributor: Babacar Sarr, Founder and Chairman, FESFOP

Photo credit: UNWTO

The overall goal of the festival is to reinforce responsible tourism as a generator of economic and social empowerment for local communities, while safeguarding and valuing the rich cultural and musical heritage of Senegal. The cultural assets of the city of Louga are currently being used as a sustainable development engine which can address pressing issues in the region, notably economic difficulties and the emigration of local youths.

Running from the end of December to mid-January, the festival allows tourists to discover the intangible cultural assets of the community they are visiting. Activities include folkloric evenings animated by local storytellers, visits to a newly established local museum of musical instruments, and workshops in storytelling, the local language and percussion, the latter featuring prominent musicians from a range of cultural backgrounds. Visitors are also encouraged to take dance

classes and join dancers during performances.

Since the festival's inception in 2002, the non-profit organisation FESFOP has been in charge of its cultural content, while the Association for the Development of Keur Serigne Louga (ADKSL) has addressed matters of accommodation and artisanship.

The FESFOP Tourist Village, which provides infrastructure for tourists, received funding and support from various local and international sources including UNWTO and the Italian NGO CISV. Tourists stay either at the FESFOP encampment or are welcomed by host families of ADKSL, where they engage in daily activities such as cooking traditional culinary specialities. Above all, the project illustrates the challenge of making culture an engine of economic and social development in a region and a city that are melting pots of different ethnic groups.



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 154 countries, 7 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 400 Affiliate Members.



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