IMproving Sustainable Development Policies and Practices to access, diversify and foster Cultural TOURism in European regions and areas

Seto culture from Võru County. By Mati Kose Heiko Kruusi. #VisitEstonia

Newsletter No. 2

About IMPACTOUR

The IMPACTOUR project started on 1st January 2020. With a grant of M€2.9 from the European Commission, it will create an innovative and easy-to-use methodology and tool to measure and assess the impact of Cultural Tourism.

IMPACTOUR brings together multidisciplinary teams from the fields of data science and engineering, cultural heritage, tourism management and accessibility to devise a new, data-driven approach to managing cultural destinations.

The project aims to strengthen the role of Cultural Tourism as a driving force in the growth and economic development of sustainable European regions.

![IMPACTOUR logo] IMPACTOUR

Managing tourism impact on cultural destinations

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IMPACTOUR
Managing tourism impact on cultural destinations

Moving on from 2020 to 2021

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Welcome to this 2nd edition of the IMPACTOUR Newsletter, marking the end of the first year of the project. This Newsletter puts a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on cultural tourism. We report on our recent Webinar with the European "Pilot Destinations", learning from our collaborating teams how they have tackled "the year of COVID", how businesses and communities were impacted and the strategies that they have employed to continue their relationship with visitors. Our topical Guest Article is written by IMPACTOUR Advisory Board Member, Professor Greg Richards, who delves into the concept of "resilience" and highlights the power of "creative tourism" as a way forward for tourism and communities.

As everyone knows, **just one year ago** we could not have anticipated how all our lives would be changed so fundamentally – whether directly or indirectly – by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the past 12 months, some of our IMPACTOUR team were struck by the virus, happily without too serious consequences. All of us, to varying degrees, have experienced disruption in our homes and families, in our workplaces and working habits. Inevitably, our travel plans have also been curbed, both for leisure and for business. Cultural Tourism has been in the eye of the COVID storm, with attractions, destinations, businesses and whole communities left reeling from the impact. Many tourism and travel providers have seen years of work and investment devastated.

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Cultural Tourism Sector

The outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is considered the most significant global health disaster of this century and one of the most significant challenges that humanity has faced since the second World War. The pandemic has caused enormous disruption in all aspects of life, affecting all segments of the world's population. From March 2020 onwards, most countries took radical, unprecedented measures to counter the spread of the virus, resulting in the closure of museums and other cultural places to the public. Of the 182 states, 156 closed their museums and all cultural heritage sites and destinations. According to a report by UNESCO, 90% of museums and Cultural Heritage sites, more than 85000 institutions have closed their doors during the crisis, while nearly a third has significantly reduced their staff, and up to 10% face the danger of being permanently closed [1]. The required lockdown and social distancing have caused many cultural and heritage sectors to reappraise and revisit the innovative online and virtual methods for learning, exhibition, and outreach [2].

Economic and Human Impact
According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) report, Museums, "Museum Professionals and COVID-19", the anticipated reduction or loss of public funding, private donors,

ticketing, shops and cafes, the financial resources of all museums are likely to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic impact of the crisis and closure of museums and sites will impact the short, medium and long term institutional financial planning, regardless of their primary sources of funding. 12.8% of survey participants stated that their institution may close permanently, more than 80% of programmes reduced and almost a third of museums forced to reduce their staff [3].

The prediction is that there will be a reduction in scheduled projects and programmes in at least 80% of museums. This figure rises to 93% and 87% in the regions of Africa and the Pacific respectively. The percentage of museums that will have to downsize their staff is the highest in North America and the Pacific, but still appears to be an expected impact for at least 23% of museums worldwide. The pandemic will likely cause a long-term dramatic decrease in institutional income, predicted to last until the end of 2020 and possibly into 2021.

As identified in the October 2020 Europa Nostra report, "COVID-19 & Beyond: Challenges and Opportunities for Cultural Heritage", the pandemic has touched every part of the cultural heritage value chain: from research to conservation and protection, and from outreach to training and education. Over 7 million cultural and creative jobs are currently at risk. Employment in the cultural and heritage sectors is particularly vulnerable due to the prevalence of micro-organisations, NGOs and not-for-profit, self-employed, freelancers, and volunteers [4].

Digital Activities and Communication

As the ongoing COVID-19 experience indicates, the future patronage of museums and cultural sites is unpredictable and certainly under threat. In response, the sector – including Greece and to a much lesser extent Cyprus – has reacted rapidly in developing a more significant online and engaging presence [5]–[7]. According to ICOM 2020, museums have increased their digital activities by an average of 15%. The two most popular activities that museums have started since the lockdown, i.e. live events and online exhibitions, have increased respectively by 12.28% and 10.88%. Social media posting has also increased significantly by 47.49%, and quizzes by 19.21% [3].

The Digital museum map

Museum digital initiatives during the Coronavirus Pandemic set up by the University of Graz constitutes a first pilot-study, offering an immediate overview of various digital initiatives launched by museums around the world during the Coronavirus Pandemic [8]. The various initiatives are listed in the following categories: contemporary collecting projects; social media initiatives (i.e. local hashtags and targeted projects) [9]; streaming content; virtual tours; online exhibitions; game; educational content; and other types of activities (for initiatives not covered by the previous categories) [10]–[14]. By selecting an item, the user may read a short description of the activity and, if it exists, to explore the relevant website. The categories are intentionally quite broad because the map is still open to contributions (https://digitalmuseums.at/contribute.html) and they will be refined at a later stage [15].

It is also essential to consider that "while this demonstrates the innovation and creativity that characterise the cultural sector, as well as its ability to adapt to the crisis, it also highlights some structural weaknesses that have for a long time affected cultural institutions, in terms of resources and staff dedicated to digital activities and communication, and the level of maturity of the content produced" [3].

The Network of European Museums Organisation (NEMO) has analysed nearly 1,000 survey responses collected between 24 March and 30 April 2020 from museums in 48 countries, the majority from Europe. The survey findings resulted in recommendations for immediate action, for mid-term considerations and a long-term strategy. In addition to a recommended increase in overall economic support for operations, NEMO recommends greater investment in digital services and infrastructure for cultural heritage [16], as follows:

- Promote open access to cultural heritage and use digital on-line tools wisely. The crisis will accelerate the digitisation and access to culture and heritage, and heritage sites must find adequate alternatives to generate income through virtual broadcasting and virtual visits. Collaborating with artists and on online platforms might allow monetisation of these activities, which will be very much needed due to the decline in income from physical visits.
- Support digitisation and enhancing digital skills of the cultural heritage sector, with the aim to strengthen participation and access to culture and heritage by digital means.
- Invest in what makes museums unique: their collections and rich content. Fun, engaging and creative digital offers will be part of museums' digital future. This requires adequate resources to enable museums to compete with other digital services and provide state of the art cultural experiences online.

Clearly, increased support for the development of digital tools and increased online presence can be beneficial, but there are challenges and concerns. The 'digital divide', the gap that exists between people who have access to modern information and communication technology and those who lack access, is more evident than ever. Only 5% of museums in Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been able to provide online content. There are also broader existential issues such as whether museums are capable to remain relevant if people can only visit them virtually. If the digital has the capacity to provide COVID-related income losses and change visitor behaviour; or, whether exhibitions, which take years to plan and execute, can be transferred to the digital realm, in order to keep museums open [17]–[24].

The cultural and creative sectors are among the most affected by the current coronavirus crisis, and museums and cultural tourism destinations are no exception. Unfortunately, museums as we used to know them, will not be the same for a long time. Museum, cultural heritage stakeholders in general and travel agents actively involved in cultural tourism, professionals, scholars and patrons will have to adapt to the realities of this new order at the beginning of the 21st century.

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COVID-19 and mitigation strategies taken by IMPACTOUR Pilots Community
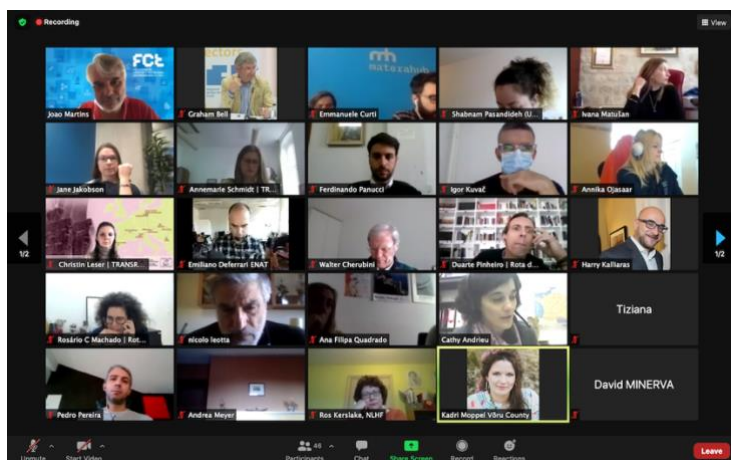
On 20th November 2020, IMPACTOUR Pilots' Community members joined together in an Online Workshop to debate and exchange information adopted as in local destinations COVID-19 mitigation measures. 46 participants actively participated in the workshop that lasted two hours and twenty minutes.

It is common knowledge that the tourism sector, which accounted for 9% of the worldwide GDP and 8% of total employment in 2019, and particularly the Cultural Tourism sector, which represented 37% of the tourism sector with a 15% annual growth in 2018, were deeply impacted by the current pandemic. Nevertheless, the actual pandemic can be seen as a test to our solidarity, cooperation and resilience as a society.

In the recent past, tourism has already suffered several obstacles. One can recall the 9/11 attacks, the SARS pandemic or the global economic crisis in 2009. However, the current negative effect of 60% drawback has reached a level difficult to be foreseen. As in past crises, the tourism sector must be able to rise up again and make a comeback based on resilience, optimism, daring and innovative approaches.

The quest for sustainable cultural tourism is undoubtedly connected with local communities. What can Cultural Tourism give to local communities in these times of crisis? It should be a leverage to increase their sense of pride, whether that lies in the cultural or natural environment. New ways of enlightening local communities should be pursued. They should learn how to cultivate resilience, to discover new ways of Cultural Tourism promotion and to better communicate their local cultural and natural splendours. Each place is unique and that should be advertised as a major attraction. Local communities, the ones more affected by the Cultural Tourism drawback, must be prepared, and should pave the way, contributing to the economic recovery.

The Sustainability / Green / Digital triangle could be the key to unlock hidden treasures and move towards new and more sustainable Cultural Tourism business models. Being differently affected, IMPACTOUR Pilots Community members also adopted different strategies to overcome COVID-19 problems. However, a common approach was the bet on the digital as a way to move forward. Different solutions were reported, such as digitalization of museums' content, digital campaigns

towards tourists, more and easily understandable digital information, digital events or digital marketing.

It was clear from the Webinar contributions that several destinations suffered a huge reduction in international mass tourism but an increase of local and cross-border tourism was reported by several members, for example in in hiking, cycling and other "active" holidays. This change of demand increased co-operation and flexibility amongst the stakeholders. Local tourism emerged as a way to mitigate the adverse pandemic effects. Dedicated campaigns in the local press were also reported as a means of diversifying local offers.

The sense of pride in local communities was also a strategy followed by many IMPACTOUR Pilots Community members: from storytelling, as a way to enhance their local identity, to local campaigns pointing out that local tourists can find on their doorstep the same that they usually look for abroad.

Governments (local and national) are also playing an important role, either by subsiding citizens to consider local tourism or by reducing taxes due by local tourism providers.

Above all, these distinct measures intend not only to prevent the collapse of local Cultural Tourism but also to keep at a high-level tourists' desire to visit them after the pandemic.

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Visit the IMPACTOUR Pilot sites at our website

Guest Article. Prof. Greg Richards. Tourism in challenging times: Resilience or creativity?

Prof. Greg Richards, University of Tilburg, School of Social and Behavioural Sciences IMPACTOUR Advisory Board Member. Re-printed from Tourism Today - 2020 Issue.

ABSTRACT

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, resilience is often seen as a key strategy. We argue that resilience, with its emphasis on a return to normality, needs to be re-considered. We outline a development strategy based on creativity, which seeks to link local resources and communities with global flows of resources, knowledge, and people. Creativity has been identified as an important element of previous crisis recovery strategies, and arguably it can go further, offering new avenues for future development that go beyond the new normal. Building new relationalities becomes an important aspect of this strategy

INTRODUCTION

As numerous studies have shown, the pandemic has decimated the tourism sector and created increasing uncertainty about the future of tourism businesses worldwide. This has stimulated thinking about how tourism can find the road to recovery (Burini, 2020). What many are seeking is a return to 'normality', or what now seems like a relatively simple existence before we had to deal with facemasks and social distancing. The hope is that everything will be back to normal once a vaccine is found. But the reality is likely to be much harsher: it will take time for the vaccine to curb the virus, in which time more will lose their lives, more businesses will disappear, and attitudes to travel and leisure will change. The new tourism landscape will not look like the old, and new tourists will not behave as they did in the past. This arguably requires not just resilience, but also creativity to find new ways of developing and managing tourism.

This paper considers the challenges of the pandemic for tourism in terms of potential development trajectories. Drawing on recent research in Asia in particular, it outlines the role of creative development strategies in providing alternative pathways for the post-pandemic future.

APPROACHES TO RESILIENCE

Resilience means the ability to return to the original form after being compressed or strained. In terms of cities dealing with mass cultural tourism, for example, this means the ability to absorb relatively large numbers of tourists without losing the form and function of basic systems, such as the cultural system. After the current Covid-19 pandemic, however, it is questionable whether we would want resilience to mean "a return to the original form" for tourism. The "original form" desired by different groups in the city might vary widely. Residents may want the atmosphere to

return to the streets, but not as many tourists. The businesses in the city will want the crowds to return as soon as possible because that means more spending and support for jobs. Some tourists may want the current normal to continue because it means they can visit popular tourist attractions without the crowds.

Perhaps instead of thinking about resilience as a return to normal, it might be more constructive to view tourism as a resilient system, which is capable of responding to change: "a resilient region is like a healthy immune system: rather than preparing for every possible scenario, the region fortifies its underlying resources and capabilities to quickly mobilize and respond to any disruptive event." (Eisenhauer, 2014).

As Lew (2014) notes, in tourism, the concept of resilience has largely focused on economic resilience, ignoring issues of cultural or social resilience. And yet, if we consider tourism in major cities, tourism is highly dependent on social and cultural systems, and economic resilience ultimately depends on the resilience of these systems as well. People travel to cities not to spend money or create jobs for local people, but to experience the culture of the city for themselves, and to become part of the cultural life of the city for a short while (Russo and Richards, 2016).

In looking at the resilience of the tourism system, therefore, it is important to assess the level of collaboration and synergy between sectors such as tourism and culture, which provides some of the most important resources for developing tourism. As Lew (2014) argues, destinations must be ready to cope with the modification, deterioration or complete loss of not just tourism facilities, but also environmental and cultural tourism resources; tourist markets; and skilled employees. In the current pandemic, all these areas are suddenly relevant at once, and they are all interconnected. The resources that attract tourists depend on them for their economic sustainability, but they are also the facilities that cater for locals and which attract skilled workers. It is therefore important to understand not just the impact on the tourist system, but also all the interconnected parts of the economic, social, and cultural systems of places.

THE NEED FOR CREATIVITY

The idea of returning to "business as usual" is unlikely to work. Many tourism administrations have adopted the response-recovery-resilience paradigm in approaching the pandemic. Although a response is essential in the short term, the idea of resilience is unlikely to prove adequate in the longer term. We should see the pandemic not just as a major challenge, but also as a major opportunity to change previous models of tourism. We need to develop new ideas about how to travel and how to develop the tourism industry in the post-pandemic world. This requires creativity and innovation, but our thinking about creativity also needs to change. Tourism businesses have long viewed creativity as a simple application of design or branding to travel products. But as Hildreth (2008) has emphasised, changing our brand is no longer enough – we need to make our reality better.

In making a better reality we should think more holistically about the challenge of the pandemic. It is not simply a question of people being able to travel again, but a fundamental question about how people will travel in the future. Before the pandemic, we had intense discussions about the

challenges of "overtourism". This was instantly solved by the arrival of Covid-19, but if old-style travel returns, we will soon have old-style overtourism back as well.

A return to the "old normal" of tourism is even more likely if current policies are not changed. For example, the idea of developing Indonesia's tourism industry through the development of "10 new Bali's" is a process of serial reproduction of what is seen as a successful tourism model. But this begs the question of whether copies of Balinese tourism development in other parts of Indonesia are desirable. Even before the pandemic, Indonesia's original target of attracting 20 million international tourists was not met. The actual number of international arrivals reached 16.1 million in 2019, and in 2020 the impact of Covid-19 caused a steep fall in arrivals, in common with other destinations. Total arrivals for 2020 are now likely to be less than 4.5 million. The question might be – is it sensible to return to a high growth strategy based on significant infrastructure development, or should a new form of tourism industry be developed that is tailored to achieving higher value from the smaller numbers now likely to arrive? When we think about the value to be generated from tourism, we should also think about all potential forms of value – cultural, educational, symbolic, social, intrinsic, institutional – rather than just economic value (Richards, 2020a).

We need to develop creative solutions for the future of tourism to rethink, reinvent, and reimagine tourism, rather than just making it resilient. Creativity can be applied in a variety of ways: through creative people, creative processes, creative products, and creative places. Richards (2011) argues that all four of these meanings are found in tourism, for example through visits to creative clusters and districts, the use of creative products as attractions (e.g. travel related to literary figures, artists, etc.), using the creative process in designing creative activities for tourists (e.g. design, workshops) and creative cities and regions strategies (such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Network).

Increasingly, the convergence of tourism and the creative economy means that all of these different applications of creativity in tourism can provide opportunities for destinations, as Indonesia and some other countries have recognised in the creation of joint ministries for tourism and creative economy. As the OECD (2014) report on *Tourism and the Creative Economy* points out, there are many synergies to be generated through the combination of tourism and creativity. One possibility, as Ollivaud and Haxton (2019) suggest, is to tap into the vast creative potential that countries like Indonesia have. As they point out:

"The creative economy can help offer new products and services for new target groups away from conventional models of environmental or heritage-based cultural tourism: that can be through unconventional media advertisements, arts creation in a specific building, and sound-and-light shows. Increasingly visitors are looking for experience-based, instead of destination-based, tourism."

In the Indonesian context, this is most likely to be successful in areas such as Bali, which has access to a more highly educated workforce. The use of knowledge and creativity to develop more high-value forms of tourism seems a more fruitful path for future development than a return to previous models based on large numbers of low-cost tourists. Do we need 10 more Bali's in Indonesia, or do we need a different type of Bali?

An important starting point in developing creative alternatives is to consider the resources available for creative development. In the case of Indonesia, for example, there is potential to tap into the creative resources of local wisdom. Local wisdom is "a form of culture that can be defined as the whole system of ideas, action, and results of human's work in social life that is possessed through learning" (Pesurnay, 2018). These local knowledge resources can be used to develop links between communities, their environment, traditions, and tourism, to create new creative experiences (Singsomboon, 2014). Similar programmes have already been developed with some success by DASTA in Thailand, which has applied contemporary design principles to traditional knowledge and creativity to develop creative experiences for tourists (Richards, 2020b). These new creative experiences emphasise community control of the creative process and the development of experiences, which helps to increase the sustainability of the programme. This is also an interesting example of how contemporary techniques of experience design can be applied to traditional knowledge and creativity to provide economic, social, and cultural benefits for the community (Richards, Wisansing, and Paschinger, 2019).

CREATIVE TOURISM AS A RELATIONAL DEVICE

One important outcome of the recent research in Thailand is the growing recognition that creative tourism is not just about developing creative experiences for tourists, but it is also about developing the relationality of tourism (Richards, 2014). Creative tourism, as a system that involves the physical co-presence of the local creative community and the visitors, generates not just an increase in creative skills and knowledge, but also relationships, which can provide creative potential far beyond the physical encounter itself. The nature of these creative tourism encounters goes beyond the traditional economic exchange of tourism, to include the exchange of knowledge, skills, and ideas attached to the creative process. There is also a reversal of the traditional power relations of tourism, as the tourist comes to learn from the knowledgeable and skilled local (Duxbury and Richards, 2019).

One of the basic reasons for the success of creative tourism has been the collective, relational nature of the experiences it provides. In creative tourism, creativity is not viewed just as a quality of the individual, but also as a relational phenomenon that links visitors to the places they visit, and which links together people in those places around the creative assets they have. This distinguishes the approach of creative tourism from concepts such as Florida's (2002) "creative class", which attaches creativity primarily to individuals, and their consumption. Focusing on creativity also gives more attention to the role of the producer or maker, moving from a purely consumption-based approach to tourism and creativity, to include a production focus (O'Connor, 2009).

If we see creativity as a collective endeavour, then it becomes a means to bind local communities and to help to make the places they live in better. The point about creative tourism is that not only are the tourists creatively engaged, but the local community has to become more creative in the identification, valorisation, and use of creative resources. By highlighting the value of these resources for visitors, you also begin to underline the importance of these resources for local

people as well. This should lead to a re-evaluation of place, and a greater appreciation of the links between communities, creative skills and resources, and the places these are embedded in.

The importance of creativity has been highlighted by the effects of the pandemic. The limitations imposed on travel and events mean that cultural and creative tourism is one of the most hard-hit areas of economic and social activity. At the moment people can't travel in search of new experiences, and they also have to practice social distancing, which makes it extremely challenging to organise events, workshops, guided tours, and other common forms of cultural and creative tourism.

At the same time, isolation has highlighted our need for social contact and the collective practices of culture and creativity. People have found creative ways to deal with the lockdown, from balcony concerts to music performed via Zoom meetings. Museums, theatres, and cinemas have put their content online. This is the resilient and creative spirit that also needs to be harnessed in recovering from the pandemic.

We should also learn from the creative processes that have been kick-started by other disasters, such as the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 (Richards and Duif, 2018). There we saw the emergence of grass-roots creative placemaking, where artistic and community events were staged as a means of bringing people together and enabling them to think about the future development of the city and the community. The crisis led to the valorization of new resources: "In Christchurch the community created spaces for sharing food and, through this, socializing." (Aleffi and Cavicchi, 2020). This experience has been reflected in the aftermath of other disasters, such as the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, of which Bernan and Roel (1993) observed that "crises bring about marked regressions as well as opportunities for creativity and new options" (p. 82). In Italy, the earthquakes in 2016 and 2017 stimulated many creative responses, which included the pooling of knowledge, capacity building, moving the sale of gastronomic products online, etc. These are examples of creative resilience that also build new possibilities for the future.

We have already seen a number of such initiatives in the current pandemic. For example, the Swedish 'Table for One' gastronomic experience, in which a single diner was able to enjoy a meal in the middle of a field (Åkerström, 2020). Dishes using local ingredients were delivered to the table by a pulley system from the farm. The design of the menu was supposed to inspire the feeling of gastronomic travel: "The food is a way of sending people to a warm and slow night in Barcelona since we're unable to travel during these times." Stalker (2020), reviewing initiatives in Canada, argues "There may be nothing like a worldwide pandemic to heighten travel industry creativity." He cites many examples of creative tourism initiatives, which include people in a hotel sharing their cooking and hospitality skills with people via YouTube to help them through confinement, and a winery that used their dog to deliver wine to customers parked in their cars, and virtual road trips provided by the regional tourist board.

In all of these examples, we see the importance of community engagement as a means of sustaining creative activities, which in turn sustain tourism activities and therefore the economy. These examples underline two important aspects of creative development that will be important in recovering from the crisis:

1) Anchoring creativity in the local "space of places"

Creativity is difficult to sustain in the abstract – it has to mean something to people. Creative tourism, therefore, needs to follow the principles of creative placemaking, and ensure that local creative resources are given meaning for all stakeholders- residents, visitors, policymakers, businesses, etc. This is the only way to ensure long term sustainability.

2) Linking with the global "space of flows"

The meaning attached to local creativity should not just be local, but also global. The global space of flows provides the link with external resources, new ideas, and visitors. Seeing our resources through the eyes of the tourist also helps us to value them in new ways.

Ultimately creative tourism is a system of co-creation between the global space of flows and the local space of places (Richards, 2015) – between communities embedded in places and the people who visit. Local creative resources can provide new, engaging experiences for visitors, but they also support new creative possibilities for local people – and the real transformation lies in the relational encounters that are produced by creative tourism.

In the short term, these encounters may have to be more limited, relying on the phenomenon of 'tourist in your own city', or 'tourist in your own region' (Richards, 2017). But we shouldn't forget that many of the participants in creative tourism programmes are local people, driven by a curiosity to see the familiar with new eyes.

These kinds of encounters can arguably provide linkages to wider knowledge networks and creative resources, which can help local communities develop their future potential. This is not the return to old models offered by resilience strategies, but the development of new potentials and futures offered by the sustainable resource of creativity.

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IMPACTOUR Partner profiles

In this Newsletter we profile two of our project partners, providing an insight into their activities and their connection to IMPACTOUR: *TRANSROMANICA* and *TECNALIA*.

TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage, Germany

TRANSROMANICA Map

TRANSROMANICA stands for the Romanesque Routes of European Heritage. It unites European regions across nine countries in their desire to present their Romanesque monuments and sites, build bridges to neighbors and friends and celebrate European heritage. Each of the TRANSROMANICA regions offers exceptional experiences related to European history and heritage without missing out on cultural highlights, culinary treats, outdoor activities and numerous events in scenic landscapes.

This unique association of regional styles allows visitors to experience the variety of Romanesque heritage within TRANSROMANICA ranging from Byzantine to Western style, including influences of the French and Mudéjar architecture and those of the subsequent Gothic style. Travelling along TRANSROMANICA means following a trail of highly impressive Romanesque monuments, with many among them belonging to the UNESCO World Heritage. In addition, mostly sacred sites await visitors to the regions, with art that is plain in style yet abundant. A journey along the Romanesque Routes of European Heritage also means walking in the footsteps of important historical figures such as Otto the Great, Martin Luther, Matilda of Canossa, St. James of Compostela and many more emperors and spiritual leaders.

TRANSROMANICA looks at this first Europe, emerging during medieval times, as the birth of our contemporary European community united in diversity. It invites people to join in on a fascinating journey to an enchanted world full of allegory and regulation, power and imagination, deformation and order representing the medieval period.

"World of Light" in front of Magdeburg Cathedral
© TRANSROMANICA e.V.

Visit of the Monastery of Ancede in Baião
© Rota do Românico

Since 2007, TRANSROMANICA has been certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe continuously providing a concrete demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries.

Together with 40 European Cultural Routes, TRANSROMANICA demonstrates in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living European cultural heritage. TRANSROMANICA is led as an international association committed to the promotion and valorization of the legacy of the Romanesque era. It aims at studying the Romanesque heritage in its member regions, making the sites accessible to the public, gently developing and using them for cultural and tourism purposes. Through sustainable cultural tourism development, it contributes to the conservation of the sites and supports regional development.

As a partner in the IMPACTOUR project TRANSROMANICA continues its successful engagement in European projects, which have continuously led to an improvement, better understanding and joint definition of solutions in the field of cultural heritage and tourism management. Cooperation, exchange and learning from each other during various INTERREG, ERASMUS+ and other European and regional projects have taken the network where it is today. Participating in the H2020 IMPACTOUR project TRANSROMANICA shares its experience and expertise as well as important testing and validation data in order to contribute to the development of an effective way to measure and monitor the impact of heritage and cultural tourism with a view to demonstrating its importance for the economic and social development of European regions. In these ambitions, it is particularly supported by its two "Route of the Romanesque" regional network members in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany ("Straße der Romanik") and the north of Portugal ("Rota do Românico"). Facing the current global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has even reinforced these intensions. The situation revealed once again the meaningfulness of cultural heritage for the European citizens in the social and ecological dimensions but also the significance of a resilient cultural tourism from an economic point of view.

TECNALIA Research & Innovation, Spain

TECNALIA Research & Innovation (www.tecnalia.com) is a leading Research and Technological Development Centre in Europe whose mission is to transform technology into GDP, helping companies to be more competitive and generate wealth and employment. Its key scopes of action are: Digital Transformation, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy Transition, Sustainable Mobility, Urban Ecosystem and Health.

Legally a Foundation, TECNALIA is based in the Basque Country and is one of the largest non-profit, private and independent research and technology organisations in Europe. **It has consolidated its position in project contracting, participation and leadership under the European Commission's HORIZON 2020 programme**, in partnership with 89 Basque companies and 145 others from the rest of Spain.

TECNALIA is committed to generate major impacts in economic terms, by means of innovation and technological development, addressed by 7 business divisions: **Building Technologies, Energy and Environment, ICT, Industry and Transport, Lab_services and Health.**

The IMPACTOUR project is carried out by the **Building Technologies Division**. This division covers the whole value chain of the construction sector, from materials and products to the buildings themselves, the city and the civil infrastructures.

The **Rehabilitation and Integrated Urban Regeneration Area**, within the Building Technologies Division, has extensive experience in cultural heritage management, safeguarding and promotion, focused on integrated conservation - we incorporate material conservation with social, economic and environmental aspects -.

TECNALIA holds a consistent record of projects executed in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East related to the field of Cultural Heritage in all its variants, from conservation works to research activities on policies for heritage sites protection and promotion, **tourism management**, as well as technologies and tools for heritage sites and materials preservation. It has also a long experience in applying ICT in different areas such as modelling and simulation, control and monitoring, web and mobile applications. Also, it has a demonstrated experience in addressing new development policies and strategies, economic viability evaluations and exploring innovative ways to create business models coping with the society needs, environmental sustainability and, primarily, **fostering Cultural Heritage conservation**.

Historic Centre of Plentzia @Mikel Zubiaga

Visitor-flow management & 3D visualization tool @Tecnalia SHCITY Interreg-SUDOE project

IMPACTOUR Brochures

Download the brochures in PDF from these links:

IMPACTOUR Brochure no.1 (A4 size, 2 pages)

IMPACTOUR Brochure no. 2 (A5 size, 6 pages)

IMPACTOUR – Partners

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