DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS AND SMALL CITIES THROUGH CREATIVE TOURISM: THE CREATOUR PROJECT

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Abstract

This research focuses on the CREATOUR project which investigates how organizations, tourists and communities in small cities and rural areas in Portugal interact and forge new alliances. CREATOUR is a three-year research and application project, involving five research centres, that started in 2016 and is creating a network of creative tourism offers in Portugal. Participants are 40 pilot projects, which are entrepreneurs or organizations who are incentivized to offer innovative creative tourism products within rural areas and small cities. Data that supports this article is based on articles written about the project by CREATOUR researchers and researchers' participant observation accounts. This paper aims to: 1) provide an overview of this innovative research and application project, 2) present examples of creative tourism offers developed within the project and 3) to examine two development frameworks in wich creative tourism offers are placed in, in a non-urban context. The insights that this article presents, can be useful in practical and theoretical terms when other countries attempt to create similar creative tourism networks.

Keywords: Creative tourism; Rural tourism; Research and application project; Entrepreneurs; Portugal.

DESENVOLVIMENTO DE ÁREAS RURAIS E PEQUENAS CIDADES ATRAVÉS DO TURISMO CRIATIVO: O PROJETO CREATOUR

Resumo

Esta pesquisa centra-se no projeto CREATOUR, que investiga como é que organizações, turistas e comunidades, em cidades pequenas e zonas rurais, em Portugal, interagem e forjam novas alianças. O CREATOUR é um projeto de investigação e aplicação de três anos, envolvendo cinco centros de investigação, que começou em 2016 e está a criar uma rede de ofertas de turismo criativo em Portugal. Tem 40 projetos piloto participantes, empreendedores ou organizações, que são incentivados a oferecer produtos turísticos inovadores e criativos dentro de áreas rurais e cidades pequenas. Os dados que suportam este artigo são baseados em artigos escritos sobre o projeto, por investigadores do CREATOUR, com base em entrevistas realizadas e considerações da observação participante. Este artigo tem como objetivos: 1) dar uma visão geral deste projeto inovador de investigação e aplicação, 2) apresentar exemplos de ofertas de turismo criativo desenvolvidas no âmbito do projeto e 3) examinar dois enquadramentos de desenvolvimento em que as ofertas de turismo criativo são colocadas, num contexto não urbano. As perspetivas selecionadas que este artigo apresenta, podem ser úteis em termos práticos e teóricos quando outros países tentarem criar as suas próprias redes de turismo criativo.

Palavras chave: Turismo criativo; Turismo rural; Projecto de investigação e aplicação; Empreendorismo; Portugal.

DESARROLLO DE ZONAS RURALES Y PEQUEÑAS CIUDADES A TRAVÉS DEL TURISMO CREATIVO: EL PROYECTO CREATOUR

Resumen

Este proyecto de investigación se centra en CREATOUR, que investiga cómo las organizaciones, los turistas y las comunidades en las ciudades pequeñas y zonas rurales en Portugal, interactuar y forjar nuevas alianzas. El CREATOUR es una investigación y aplicación del proyecto de tres años, con la participación de cinco centros de investigación, que se inició en 2016 y está creando una red de ofertas de turismo creativo en Portugal. Tiene 40 proyectos piloto participantes, emprendedores u organizaciones, que son incentivados a ofrecer productos turísticos innovadores y creativos dentro de áreas rurales y ciudades pequeñas. Los datos que apoyan este artículo se basan en artículos escritos sobre el proyecto, por investigadores del CREATOUR, con base en entrevistas realizadas y consideraciones de la observación participante. Este artículo tiene como objetivos: 1) dar una visión general de este proyecto innovador de investigación y aplicación, 2) presentar ejemplos de ofertas de turismo creativo desarrolladas en el marco del proyecto y 3) examinar dos marcos de desarrollo en que las ofertas de turismo creativo son en un contexto no urbano. Las perspectivas seleccionadas que este artículo presenta, pueden ser útiles en términos prácticos y teóricos cuando otros países intentan crear sus propias redes de turismo creativo.

Palabras Clave: Turismo creativo; Turismo rural; Proyecto de investigación y aplicación; Empreendurismo; Portugal.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Addressing the theme of how futures of rural areas and small cities can be realized by considering 21st century realities, this paper presents a unique project that aims to improve the future of rural economic development and social cohesion through the initiation of creative tourism offers in these non-urban contexts. In the last 10 years, the promotion of crafts to fuel rural socio-economic development has been gaining momentum, since craft movements in the urban space can act as vehicles for social cohesion within cities where isolation is common, and present an alternative to the over-consuming, throw-away culture that increasingly characterizes modern urban society.

Simultaneously, in terms of tourism trends, there is a change towards what is known as 'transformative tourism' (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011), as tourists demand more immersive and experiential tourism activities. However, there has been less research done into how these modern tendencies are being interpreted into cultural, social and economic development tools for rural areas and small cities. Creative tourism, which differs from cultural tourism in terms of being an active transfer of the past into the present via local-visitor interaction, rather than a passive observation of the past (Richards & Marques, 2012), offers a novel rural development tool, this paper investigates.

Tourism is currently one of the main drivers of the Portuguese economy and, in the past few years, tourism activity has been growing exponentially, with a 2.7% increase in revenue from tourism and travel receipts in 2017 (Statistics Portugal (INE), 2018). In 2017, Portugal was one of the 20 most popular travel destinations in the world, attracting around 13 million tourists (UNTWO, 2016). In this growing context of tourism activity in Portugal, especially city tourism, concerns have arisen regarding the negative impacts of tourism activity associated with overtourism such as local residents' unrest and the massification and standardization of supply and destinations, particularly in the big cities of Lisbon and Porto and in the most touristic regions of Algarve and Madeira. Consequently, and in line with trends of diversification of the sector worldwide, creative tourism initiatives are emerging in small cities and rural areas in Portugal.

What is considered to be the first definition of creative tourism was presented by Richards and Raymond (2000:18) as: "Tourism that offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in learning courses and experiences that are characteristics of the holiday destination where they are passed". While other definitions do exist (see, for example, Blapp & Mitas, 2018; Jelinčić & Žuvela,

2012; Raymond, 2007; UNESCO, 2006) this initial definition continues to serve as a touchstone in the field.

According to the CREATOUR perspective, creative tourism includes four dimensions: (1) *active participation,* (2) *creative self-expression,* (3) *learning, and* (4) *community engagement* (CREATOUR, 2017). Hence, creative tourism implies not only that tourists need to be creatively involved, but that the destination itself also needs to become more creative in designing 'characteristic' experiences, connected to place.

The evolving relationship between creativity and tourism forces us to rethink important aspects of contemporary tourism. Tourists not only visit places, they also make them, and the goal of creative tourism should be to ensure that co-production occurs through an exchange of skills and knowledge with those who are visited (Richards, 2011).

Linking creative activity to place in a context of tourists seeking local cultural tourism experiences, foregrounds the development of workshops and related participatory creative activities that are based on and informed by local history, traditions, and cultural expressions—and that are designed, and embedded locally (Duxbury, Silva, & Vinagre de Castro, 2019).

Relatively little is known about the profile, motivations and experiences of those who provide or co-create the supply of creative experiences. Limited literature addresses what business models are adopted by creative tourism entrepreneurs and the development frameworks that creative tourism products are placed within. Especially within a rural and small cities context, where distance from urban centers poses an extra complication in terms of marketing, transport and pricing of creative tourism activities, it is important to advance research that addresses these non-urban realities as being distinct from urban realities (Bell & Jayne, 2010). For example, within non-urban areas an individual's relations within the community are very important in configuring economic processes, and so the concept of social embeddedness, which can be summarised as the nature, depth, and extent of an individuals' ties to a community, can be more significant in a non-urban context than an urban context (McKeever, Anderson, & Jack, 2014).

Relatively little research is being done on creative tourism's 'supply side', that is, the creative producers, such as artists, artisans, specialists, tutors, suppliers, service providers, and so forth. The role of the creative supplier seems to be increasingly important, as they can provide a bridge between cultural heritage and creativity in the context of tourism.

This article first provides some background to creative tourism as a concept and then presents an overview of the CREATOUR project presenting the methods used to collect empirical data. Some

preliminary findings regarding the state-of-the-art of creative tourism offers in Portugal are then discussed, with examples of CREATOUR pilots in order to illustrate the types of creative activities designed. Next, lessons learned in the start-up stages about the types of development frameworks that creative tourism offers are placed within is expanded upon, with a focus on why artisan-mediators and small-scale local festivals are important creative tourism development frameworks. Finally, practical recommendations relating to creating sustainable creative tourism offers within a small town and rural area context, are presented.

2 BACKGROUND TO CREATIVE TOURISM

Tourism used to be seen primarily as a destructive force for local crafts and traditions because of the perceived alterations in local traditions due to the commercialisation of traditions (touristification process) (Cohen, 2001). However, this view is changing as sustainable types of tourism are increasingly focusing on showcasing local heritage, particularly intangible heritage (UNTWO, 2016), and becoming a driver for the revitalization of cultural traditions and forms.

Creative tourism is particularly aligned with contemporary trends to revive local crafts and traditions as it focuses on co-creating and co-preserving local traditions, building on the embeddedness of creative knowledge that resides in the artisan entrepreneur (Richards, 2011), while developing and sharing creative skills and engaging with the local community (Landry, 2010).

Creative tourism thus provides an avenue for artisan entrepreneurs to become more profitable without compromising their values, and may help to reduce the traditional conflict between the production of art and commercial demands, a particularity that defines the creative economy (Collins & Cunningham, 2017).

Typically lacking the mobile, economic resources of labour and money associated with large cities, the economies of rural areas tend to be more vital and resilient when based on the unique histories, culture, and social context of a place. In these economies, tourism can often play an important role, underwritten by service-based, consumer-oriented industries based on each community's unique characteristics (Patterson, 2008).

In rural communities, the arts and creative industries are strategic sectors in regional revitalization because they can stimulate and build community cohesion and also provide tourism-based and other opportunities (Duxbury, Campbell, & Keurvorst, 2011). The 'rural idyll' attracts tourists to rural areas, where they feel a 'value of remoteness' in which distance from urban obligations creates freedom to experiment (Matarasso, 2004, p. 25).

Also, rural areas are increasingly associated with both 'escape' and 'renewal', fuelling the development, for example, of 'digital detox' camps (e.g., http://digitaldetox.org/) and 'mindful travel' strategies (Chen, Scott, & Benckendorff, 2017; Currie, 2005) popular among travellers from (at least) Europe and North America.

This comes from the increasing realization that acquiring experiences instead of things may still be a form of empty consumerism and happiness is better pursued though meaningful, mindful experiences. Creative tourism is fuelled by the new paradigm of the 21st century according to which tourists strive to find 'transformative' experiences, focus on self-development, are more conscious of their actions, and want to be active participants in tourism experiences rather than passive observers (UNTWO, 2016). These people, who are called "cultural creatives" now comprise about 35% of each European country's population, plus or minus 2% (Anderson & Ray, 2015).

Through creative tourism, visitors can "get under the skin" (Landry, 2010, p. 37) of a place as they engage in everyday activities of locals, which for them are the new 'exotic'.

Modern interpretations of creative tourism understand that tourists have the opportunity to co-create and co-preserve local traditions, whilst developing creative skills and engaging with the local community (Duxbury, Silva, & Vinagre de Castro, 2019). The contemporary vision of creative tourism has an expanded focus on connections between travellers and residents and also rooting creative intangibles to place (Blapp, 2015; OECD, 2014).

Creative tourism tends to differ from cultural tourism in terms of focus: while cultural tourism focuses on built heritage, museums, and monuments, creative tourism focuses on image, identity, lifestyles, atmosphere, narratives and media (Richards, 2011; Triarchi and Karamanis, 2017).
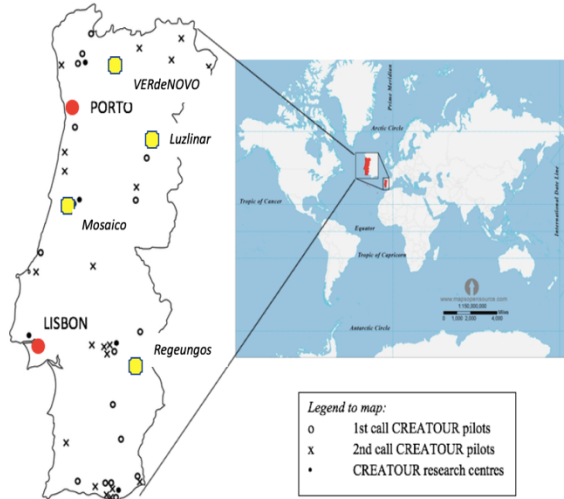
3 CREATOUR

The CREATOUR project involves five research centres working with a range of cultural/creative organizations and other stakeholders located in small cities and rural areas across Portugal in the Norte, Centro, Alentejo, and Algarve regions. CREATOUR's pilot projects were selected through two national open calls (with deadlines in January and November of 2017), with five pilot organizations selected during each call in each region: Norte, Centro, Alentejo, and Algarve.

Organisations that are developing creative tourism projects in this project are referred to

throughout this article as 'pilots'. Pilots were chosen on the basis of: the cultural value and creativity of the activities proposed; capacity of tourism attractiveness; community development potential; human resource capacity; and commitment to work with research team during the project.

For most pilots, creative tourism was a new addition to a portfolio of other tourism/craft/cultural activities. The CREATOUR[1] project's design builds on a twofold approach – theory and experimentation – to explicitly nurture applied experimentation and the implementation of 40 pilots (see Figure 1) that will diversify tourism offers and deepen connections between cultural/creative and tourism organizations in these regions. As a network, CREATOUR functions as more than simply a marketing network, but as a knowledge-creating network, to help pilots by providing opportunities to build and share knowledge, network with others, improve their tourism offers, and create strategies to enhance community benefit.

Figure 1 - Map showing CREATOUR pilot organisations and research centres in Portugal. Names of main cities and the pilots listed as examples in this paper are listed on the map.

Source: www.mapsopensource.com

The creative tourism projects within CREATOUR are varied and include workshops on traditional arts and crafts. For example, the linen cycle (from seeding to weaving) and wool processing (from preparing to natural dying to weaving) have inspired a series of activities.

Contemporary artistic expression is also the basis of some pilot activities, for example, photography workshops in the unique landscapes of the Serra Estrela or the dark sky areas of the Alentejo, or in

traditional fishing-related activities in the Algarve. There are marble workshops where you create your own sculpture in the "Rota do Mármore do Anticlinal de Estremoz" region and in Évora. The Roman mosaic heritage of Conímbriga (Penela) and the Monumental Complex of Santiago da Guarda (in Ansião) have inspired a series of events, including mosaic-making workshops, to learn about the Roman Mosaic Heritage and to reinterpret it now and for the future. Gastronomy workshops inspired by innovative interpretations of food-related activities, such as photographing food and cooking using locally picked ingredients, are common in the Algarve.

The small-scale local festivals of *Estival, Camp 180 Abrantes, EncontrArte* and *L Burro i L Gueiteiro*, offer creative workshops such as wood-sculpture, animation, graphic design, theatre, stand-up comedy, dance, felting and story-telling as part of their festival programmes. For most of the pilots, creative tourism activities were a new type of activity, so the first year primarily focused on the design and development of workshops and related activities, with initial offers serving as both tourism product and a 'prototype test' of these ideas.

Monitoring and assessments of the pilot initiatives provides ongoing analysis of the processes, outcomes, issues, and impacts of the pilot initiatives. The CREATOUR project is gathering empirical data through data-forms filled-in by the pilots, visitor questionnaires, site visits (and participant-observer field notes), 'E-portfolios' ('journey log' contents written by the pilots in the style of a blog private to the network), interviews, and discussions at IdeaLabs and conferences.

Table 1 Frequency of CREATOUR methods used.

Method used to create knowledge	Frequency
IdeaLab pilot presentations	3 times annually
IdeaLab interviews	2 times annually
IdeaLab mentoring /activity sessions	3 times annually
On-site interviews	Annually
On-site pilot observations	Annually
Questionnaires filled in by tourists taking part in creative tourism activities	Every time a creative tourism activity takes place
E-Portfolios	At least twice during project

shows the types of empirical data being collected and an indication of the frequency at which this data is collected/co-created.

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[1] See the CREATOUR website (www.creatour.pt) for a full list of the project's scientific and application objectives.

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Source: data from the empirical research (CREATOUR project).

In order to provide further insight into the actual methods used in this project, some of the methods are expanded upon in the next section, such as the IdeaLabs and the on-site visits. IdeaLabs focus on providing support for content development and linking creativity to place.

They provide regular points of contact to guide development of pilot initiatives, support other project actions (such as cultural mapping, post-activity reflections and evaluations, and post-project sustainability discussions), and foster intra- and interregional organizational connections among pilots and with the tourism sector.

Each year, two regional IdeaLabs take place in each project region, with an annual national IdeaLabs taking place with the annual conferences. The first series of regional IdeaLabs took place in April-May 2017, followed by a National IdeaLab at the end of May 2017. Another 4 regional IdeaLabs took place between November and December, 2017. Since then, the Spring IdeaLabs took place between March and April, 2018, with the National IdeaLab being in July of the same year. Upcoming regional IdeaLabs are to be held in December 2018 and January 2019 and in late spring 2019, with a National IdeaLab scheduled for October 2019.

As part of the IdeaLabs, pilots present their projects and actively discuss their project within pre-defined focus groups, through mentor-style interviews and activity-based exercises (e.g., creating a map of their strengths and weakness and their project's adherence to creative tourism principles, wich is then commented on by other participants). IdeaLabs also have network-building exercises that allow for dissemination of research from researchers to pilots and encourage an open dialogue amongst pilot organisations themselves, as well as between researchers and pilots.

On-site visits during selected creative tourism offers involve CREATOUR researchers undertaking participant observation, documentation, and in situ interviews with the pilots annually. On-site visits provide an opportunity for the researcher to 'live' the creative tourism project by engaging in participants observation and taking fieldnotes. By doing this, research have an immersive experience which allows for a better understanding both of the pilots and their creative tourism projects. Simultaneously, on-site visits provide the opportunity for pilots and visitors to the pilot creative tourism project to ask any questions they may have about the CREATOUR project.

Analysis of the empirical data is ongoing, and researchers are using a variety of qualitative (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) and quantitative techniques such as statistical analysis of questionnaires using SPSS, thematic analysis of interviews, stakeholder analysis, ethnographic analysis and content analysis.

4 FINDINGS OF CREATIVE TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS AND SMALL CITIES IN PORTUGAL

While the project proposal envisioned an initial development of simple workshops that would grow and be augmented over time, instead many CREATOUR pilot proposals entail the development of much more comprehensive creative tourism offers. This discrepancy may stem, in part, from the fact that many of the prominent promoters of creative tourism in its 'earlier' years have been large cities. While creative tourism initiatives can increasingly be found in smaller places and rural areas, an implicit 'urban context' may have influenced research and practice in the field in ways it may not yet fully recognize. For example, in a large urban context like Barcelona or Lisbon a photographer can offer a simple workshop on a weekend without the need for a broader strategic business plan relating to creative tourism.

However, in a more remote, smaller place much more attention must be directed to, for instance, niche marketing and attraction, the scale of activities to warrant the travel distance, the specificities of a 'place' that nurture and inform the activities and provide distinctiveness to the creative tourism offers and issues related to developing an enterprise to sustain the activities. Even pragmatic issues of public transport availability, especially on weekends in rural areas, become heightened (Duxbury, 2019).

4.1 Types of Creative Tourism Activities Being Developed in Small Cities and Rural Areas in Portugal

From June 2017, creative tourism activities began appearing in all Portuguese regions, operating in multiple locations, based on local traditions and artistic

expression, and in relation with nature and place. From a cultural/content perspective, some examples are:

- craft workshops—textile, pottery, ceramics, leather, metal, wood, etc.;
- fine arts workshops—painting, sculpture, drawing, and illustration;
- photography, video, and digital arts workshops;
- performing arts workshops and community-engaged, participatory artistic residencies;
- storytelling sessions and workshops;
- gastronomy-focused workshops;
- creative and interpretative 'Walks & Visits' involving creation activities;
- ancestral traditions workshops and active participation activities; and
- raw materials production and work cycles—of salt, linen, wool, clay, marble, wicker, etc.

Whilst initially, cultural organizations were thought to be the main type of organization to apply for the CREATOUR project, a quite different type of organizations applied.

The 40 pilots selected within the course of the project, develop and implement an array of pilot initiatives (i.e., creative tourism offers) in each year of the project. Among these pilots, leading roles were taken up by the municipalities, regional development associations, and a few private entrepreneurs to launch and coordinate local networks of creative tourism offers in collaboration with a range of independent operators. Included not-for-profit art and cultural associations, small entrepreneurial businesses, municipalities, regional development associations, festivals, craft associations and a few inter-organizational partnerships developed for the call. One of the reasons municipalities take a leading role is because they have the resources to manage the logistics, especially in terms of human resources, related to organizing creative tourism activities and have already existing ties with the local artistic communities.

A breakdown of the type of CREATOUR pilots is presented here:

- 9 municipalities;
- 11 companies/entrepreneurs;
- 16 cultural or local development associations;
- 4 partnerships: 1 national museum + 2 municipalities; 1 company+ 3 municipalities; 1 company + 1; museum +1 informal network.

4.2 Examples of CREATOUR Creative Tourism Offers

Overall, pilots placed a strong emphasis on place, which operationalizes on a number of levels: local residents lead the design and development of the pilot activities, local community involvement in the activities is strongly encouraged, and significant and 'special'

natural and historic places provide some contextualizing sites for the activities.

All pilot projects developed and offered creative tourism activities that embody local traditions or expertise, local history, and ways of life blended with other specifics of the cultural and local landscape of the locations where activities were organized, whether in a small city or a rural area. For example:

• *Luzlinar,* a cultural organization based in the village of Feital, uses the Beira Alta rocky and mountainous landscape as inspiration and setting for contemporary art workshops (based on, for example, photography, video, sketching/painting, and music-creation) and develops creative tourism workshops to lead the preservation and revitalization of shepherds' shelters and routes in the region (in which visitors participate). In this sense, Luzlinar promotes culture-based, creative activities that will bring visitors to the local villages and also preserve and disseminate local heritage.

• *Mosaico.Lab.pt* – Conímbriga and Sicó is a Roman heritage project developed in archaeological sites that feature Roman ruins with mosaic floors still intact. By participating in MosaicoLab's workshops, people get to know the sites' Roman legacies, learn about the mosaic artwork and its motifs, and create their own mosaic, relating this ancient art form to contemporary ones through 'reinvention' approaches.

• *In the municipality of Reguengos de Monsaraz*, the traditional Casa do Barro (Clay House) provides visitors an opportunity to encounter the traditional pottery craft specific to this locale. Visitors meet local craftsmen, learn from them about the clay processing cycle and the importance and role of this activity in the local and regional ways of life, and are provided an opportunity to design their own 'Alentejo-inspired' plates to take home. While they are there, visitors also make contact with local food preparation traditions relating to this craft and participate in tastings.

• *In the North of Portugal,* the small enterprise VERde NOVO focuses on the cycle of linen, as one of the ancient traditional activities in two small villages, Cerva and Limões, which are set in a very unique rural landscape that also serves as inspiration. Visitors are guided to participate actively in several steps related to the linen cycle, from sowing, harvesting, and dying, to weaving. The workshops and other activities involve local weavers who work in the communities using traditional techniques.

4.3 Creative Tourism Development Frameworks

Since creative tourism is a relatively new field, limited research has been done into what makes a creative tourism activity successful and sustainable.

Recent research into creative tourism development frameworks in Portugal (Duxbury, Carvalho, Vinagre de Castro, Bakas, & Silva, 2018), has found that creative tourism in rural areas is being brought to the public through the following main frameworks:

- Artisan-mediators;
- Small-scale local festivals;
- Accommodations [2] + (including artistic residencies);
- Series of related events and workshops;
- Stand-alone activities.

Until now the two development frameworks that have been more closely investigated are those of 'artisan-mediators' (Bakas, Duxbury, & Vinagre de Castro, 2018) and small-scale local festivals. This research finds that artisan-mediators take on leading roles in connecting artisans to creative tourism, whereas small-scale local festivals provide the critical mass, in terms of marketing and activity offers, required to attract creative tourists to rural areas or small towns for the duration of a few days.

4.3.1 Artisan-mediators

An introduction to the concept of creative tourism through joining the CREATOUR network seems to have acted as a catalyst for the connection between artisans and tourism, according to research conducted via interviews in March 2018 with five artisan-mediators participating in the CREATOUR project – VERde NOVO, Cedreira Village/ADXTUR, Quico Turismo, Proactivetur and LOOM New.Tradition (Bakas, Duxbury, & Vinagre de Castro, 2018).

This research finds that, previously, the main contact artisans in these rural areas had with tourism was through fairs, where they exhibited their products and tried to sell them. Artisan-mediators observe that many of the artisans within these creative tourism micro-networks perceive their occupation as that of a 'producer of artisan artefacts' and can be resistant to novel ideas of involvement in creative tourism as workshop instructors.

Artisan-mediators within CREATOUR, help artisans reach tourists in various ways. The artisan-mediators present their vision to the artisans and are responsible for advertising the events, registering participants and collecting registration fees, booking the physical space where the workshops take place, and acting as guides and translators as needed.

Creative tourism marketing, promotion, and development also rests with the artisan-mediators

since the artisans involved have little experience with giving workshops and limited knowledge about contacting tourists, the channels through which to reach tourists, and the various funding programmes that are available to develop tourism products.

Hence, the artisan-mediators lead the planning and implementation of the creative tourism workshops, with artisans taking on service-provider roles. A reoccurring theme among artisan-mediators is that since the creative tourism workshops often feature ancient techniques and the know-how lies mainly in the hands and minds of the elderly, many of the artisans are at an advanced age. On one hand, this means their transport to and from the event has to be organized by the mediators; on the other hand, they may be unable to teach on a set schedule.

Another finding relating to the development framework of artisan-mediators, is that within rural communities, which are often characterized by low population densities and where 'everyone knows everyone', social embeddedness is very important for doing business. The concept of social embeddedness can be summarised as the nature, depth, and extent of an individual's ties into a community and configures economic process. Social embeddedness can be used as an analytical tool to illuminate the dynamism and complexity of entrepreneurial situations and research the influence of social networks on entrepreneurial action (McKeever, Anderson, & Jack, 2014).

Within CREATOUR, it has been observed that the majority of artisan-mediators had a strong connection to their place of operation in terms of them or their partner feeling 'local to the place' where they operated their creative tourism project or having chosen that place to live. Artisan-mediators express engagement to 'their' community(ies) when conceptualizing their entrepreneurial roles. Some artisan-mediators view their community engagement purely in business terms, such as co-operating with local restaurants and accommodation providers.

However, for other artisan-mediators in this study, perceptions of community engagement are more socially embedded. For example, VERde NOVO has a deep sense of responsibility towards the artisans in terms of helping them sell their items and improving their economic situation, which is something that is embedded within their conceptualization of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, it is observed that some of the artisan-mediators are increasing their social embeddedness by offering services to the rural

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[2] The development frameworks for creative tourism offers, referred to here as: accommodations+, related events and workshops and stand-alone activities, have not been yet researched in detail and hence do not form part of this article. In-depth investigation into these development frameworks is on-going.

communities that are otherwise missing. Two artisan entrepreneur-mediators that have strong connections to the non-metropolitan areas in which they operate are expanding their entrepreneurial actions to benefit the children within these communities. The proprietor of Quico Turismo created a book for children on the local history of Nazaré and the proprietor of Cerdeira Village is planning artisan workshops and an art exhibit for children in the fourth grade of a local school to coincide with International Children's Day.

4.3.2 Small-scale local festivals

This study finds that small-scale local festivals can provide a critical mass of activity and marketing, which are required to attract creative tourists to rural areas for the duration of a few days. Research was conducted on the four small-scale festivals participating in the project: Estival, L Burro i L Gueiteiro festival, EnconrArte and Camp 180 Abrantes through the analysis of on-site interviews held in 2017 and 2018[3].

Established small-scale festivals that have been running for a number of years and have built up an identifiable audience and clientele are a good context within which to present creative tourism activities because this foundation can help reduce the producers' risk inherent in developing and offering new activities.

Festival contexts have also long been associated with opportunities for experimentation and 'trying something new', which provides a fertile setting for developing and evolving creative tourism activities. Some of the reasons why small-scale festivals are good development frameworks for creative tourism activities can be explored, through the lens of their potential to generate feelings of communitas in participants.

When talking about festivals that have a number of creative workshops, we find that the act of engaging in such a creative practice, creates liminal spaces in many ways, such as neutralizing the working environments, encouraging people to experiment with new ideas and helping them express themselves more freely. Past research has shown that festivals enable meaningful social interaction among people without imposing social boundaries, which can enhance social networks and strengthen the social fabric of a community (Lam et al., 2018).

It is often this kind of liminality-creating activities that also increase the feeling of communitas by creating a sense of closeness and camaraderie among participants during an activity. Small-scale art festivals create liminality by giving a special significance to geographical spaces within small cities and rural areas.

Viewing liminal spaces as a "physical and emotional sanctuary" (Pielichaty, 2015, p. 236), this study finds that the small-scale festivals examined, created safe spaces for the participants to experiment with activities that they perhaps would not experiment with outside this environment.

This is because small-scale festivals are perceived as 'socially safe' by the four festival organizers who were interviewed. Indeed, it is the smallness of scale that contributes to feelings of safeness, as participants who are joined by the common interest of participating in the festival, are able to get to know each other. Within the L Burro i L Gueiteiro festival, it is the voluntary help that participants offer, that is significant in creating the liminal spaces where people feel comfortable in experimenting with creative tourism, activities that they may not have engaged with whilst at home, which is expressed in terms of making the festival more 'friendly and familiar'.

Indeed, this type of voluntary interaction also occurs within Estival, where creative workshops 'evolve' from the interaction of artists and participants. In both instances, liminality is related to the creation of communitas as a 'familiar' and 'beautiful' ambiance is achieved and it is this communitas created in the festivals liminal space that allows for participants to engage in creative tourism activities. At the same time, within the small-scale local festivals investigated, it was observed that communitas is increased by creative tourism activities, which facilitate the interaction between various groups of people, which do not usually mix: artists, local residents, children and elderly people.

The mix of volunteers, artists, participants and local residents wich have a wide spectrum of backgrounds and interests, that occurs during these small-scale festivals, can facilitate interaction across social strata, ethnic background and gender and age divides.

Small-scale local festivals offer a good development framework to place creative tourism offers within, in small towns and rural areas, because these characteristics (i.e., creating communitas) mean they can draw people into rural territories which they might not otherwise have visited. As well as being economically enriching for the area, this also increases the number of people who are sensitive to rural realities and the distinctiveness of particular places and cultures within the rural landscapes.

6 LESSONS LEARNED AND PRACTITIONER RECOMMENDATIONS

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[3] This research is presented and analysed in more detail in an upcoming publication that is currently under review.

Some of the lessons learned during the creation of the CREATOUR network was that that it is essential to plan for the time necessary for start-up activities to be carefully designed, planned, and implemented (Duxbury, Silva and De Vinagre, 2018). This process is lengthened with the involvement of local community organizations and multiple actors.

As researchers involved in this project, this paper's authors observed through participation, that building a network requires time for meeting, interacting, learning together, trust-building, and collectively deciding on and taking action. Furthermore, CREATOUR researchers have come to realize that the small-scale and flexibility of the creative tourism offers encourages learning-by-doing and processes of incremental improvement, and that the IdeaLabs offer initial guidance and processes through which suggestions can be shared and ideas developed further.

However, the establishment of a Research and Development (R&D) phase for both product development and audience research, before pilots are formally offering tourism products to the public, is advisable within similar projects. Also, some practical recommendations collated based on the participant observations of CREATOUR researchers, wich may help practitioners of creative tourism to better focus their efforts, are presented in Figure 2. Creative tourism can provide an additional revenue stream for local artists, artisans and designers/creators, and a platform for local entrepreneurial energies, skills, and the building of collaborative local networks. It can serve to highlight local traditions and cultural assets and revitalize them in contemporary settings.

Figure 2 Practical recommendations for developing a creative tourism network.

Practical recommendations

For other creative tourism development projects based in smaller cities and rural areas, we recommend:

- *Know who you are.* Define your own uniqueness, enrooted in a particular place. From this base, define with precision what you have to offer. Remember the importance of the social experiences and milieu on site within the creative tourism activity.

- *Envision your participants.* Identify your niche interest groups, with precision, and carefully develop a communication strategy for each group.

- *Know your territory.* Scan/map the resources and benchmark the activities offered in your surrounding area. What is offered for local residents? And for visitors? How are they provided? Look at both cultural and creative tourism offers as well as nature, well-being, and gastronomic resources that could align with your offers.

- *Create your own collaboration network.* Unite with others and combine diverse skills and competences. Create spaces for informal communications and networking. Share information—foster idea generation, discussion, knowledge-building, and joint activities.

- *Learn from others' experiences.* You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Look at interesting initiatives internationally and adapt great ideas that may be appropriate to your place. Look also at unsuccessful projects and the lessons learned from these experiences.

Source: Duxbury, Silva and De Vinagre (2018: 9).

This research shows that creative tourism projects can be supported within various development frameworks, two of which are analysed within this article. By organizing artisans into micro-networks, artisan-mediators fulfil the often-difficult role of network-organizer.

Pilots who are artisan-mediators can be seen to enhance the healthy functioning of a local 'creative tourism ecosystem' by freeing the artisans from this role. In this way, the artisans can focus on doing what they love, for example, creating artisanal items, rather than spending their time facilitating the network's operations.

However, as new initiatives, this process of mediation and trust-building takes time, ongoing communication, and mutual understanding and respect. Another development framework for creative tourism products is that of small-scale local festivals, which this this research finds, provide fertile ground for the integration of creative tourism activities into the festivals' programme, by creating a socially safe environment for people to experiment within.

Concluding, since creative tourism is a relatively young field of research internationally, there is little sustained research about the development processes of creative tourism initiatives, nor about 'sustainable creative tourism models' in operation, nor systematic research about the multidimensional impacts of these activities (cultural, social, economic, and other) in smaller communities (Duxbury and Richards, 2019).

There is little systematic knowledge about 'who is the creative tourist' and what visitor-profiles are

attracted to different creative tourism activities. We hope to inform these gaps in knowledge in the future and encourage similar studies which will help to provide a global perspective. But CREATOUR is more than a tourism research project and aims also to extend knowledge of good practices and critical issues involved in enabling culture-based development initiatives in small cities and rural areas, an emerging field internationally, and to link culture and tourism organizations in these settings for holistic local sustainable development.

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