

Creative tourism, regenerative development and destination resilience

Insights and reflections

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CREATOUR Observatory
Culture and Tourism for Local Development
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This book of reflections and selected papers builds upon the international conference, Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience, which was held 8 to 10 November 2022 at the Arquipélago Contemporary Art Centre in Ribeira Grande, São Miguel Island, Azores, Portugal. The event was organized through partnerships. It brought together the international conference of the project “CREATOUR Azores – Turning the Azores into a Creative Tourism Destination,” which was coordinated by the Azores Tourism Observatory and the University of the Azores/Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation in collaboration with the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, and the GISU Smart Cities and Tourism Symposium of the Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities (GISU Alliance), which includes the University of Coimbra among its founding members. We acknowledge and thank these organisations for their collaboration and support of the event, and the GISU Alliance for its support of this publication. See Annex A for further information about the CREATOUR Azores project and Annex B for details about each of these partners.

We also wish to thank other partners and supporters for their contributions to the event. The School of Management of the University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, provided management support of five online concurrent sessions. The conference was financially supported by the European Regional Development Fund through the Azores 2020 Operational Program administered by the Regional Directorate for Science and Technology, Government of the Azores; the Municipality of Ribeira Grande; and the Guangzhou International Sister Cities University Alliance.

Finally, we take this opportunity to thank all of the presenters and participants in this international conference—both in-presence and online—for their insightful contributions during the enriching days in the Azores. Their participation was essential for advancing our collective thinking about the potentials and challenges of creative and regenerative tourism development in a variety of contexts and conditions. Numerous presentations, exchanges, conversations, and reflections enriched and inspired our collective thinking, and informed the design of this publication. In particular, they reinforced our desire to produce a publication that was appealing, accessible, and actionable to help propel these discussions into additional contexts and inform evolving situations in various locations internationally.

INTRODUCTION

People, place, and creativity: Rethink, reimagine, and shift tourism for local regeneration

Nancy Duxbury, Sílvia Silva, Tiago Vinagre de Castro, and Shamila Rahim

The COVID-19 pandemic was the epicenter of a global upheaval which exacerbated the already impending threats of the environmental and climate crisis. In its wake, the tourism industry and the communities that host travellers have been confronting many dilemmas and rethinking the foundations of tourism and its development going forward. The post-pandemic capacities of the companies within the tourism sector had been weakened, and the various travel 'systems' frequently seemed to be hitting their operational constraints and faltering. As never before, this has been the time for serious reevaluation of the tourism sector, for the redesign of previous models and practices that have proven to be detrimental to destination communities and local ecosystems, and to imagine new pathways for revival in a post-pandemic world.

However, travel industry observers and trade researchers tend to speak more of 'recovery' of tourism than its transformation since the pandemic era. For example, the Skift Research State of Travel 2023 report enthusiastically notes:

Travel is back! While 2022 was all about bumper performances in some countries and sectors, and lagging performances in others, we can truly say that 2023 is the year that travel fully recovered. Sure, there continue to be weaknesses in demand, issues with supply, and a nagging worry about the broader economy, but everything points to travel getting back to the status quo. (Skift Research, 2023, p. 5)

In 2023 and 2024, we have been witnessing what seems to be an ever-growing wave of consumer travel. We are sometimes doubtful that the rethinking that occurred during and immediately following the COVID-19 lockdowns has had any effect, and seems to have dissipated. It seems particularly important to keep alive discussions about alternate pathways that actively question individual and collective decisions, behaviours, and impacts—and provide ideas for rethinking, reimaging, and revising plans and actions in ways that could help bring about more regenerative development approaches that can help make communities stronger and more resilient.

We recognise that COVID-19 variants continue to circulate, and the impact of the pandemic period continues to affect many places and people. The longer-term implications of the disruptions, fractures, and re-orientations propelled by this period are incrementally surfacing and gradually being realised. In this context, the resiliency of communities is

not only about returning to pre-pandemic conditions but, more importantly, about adjusting and adapting for the future. We are experiencing the intensifying and unprecedented effects of climate change, urgent social fractures and conflicts, political uncertainty, and war. Alongside these, in the area of tourism the demand for connection (countering loneliness) and pursuing experiences is strong, with wellness and a holistic approach to sustainability that considers "broader sustainability objectives and community values" emerging as notable drivers for the industry (Skift Research, 2023, p. 98). More broadly, we are also observing an emerging but wide-spread attention to the wellbeing and care of ourselves, of our communities, and the way we interact with the natural environment. There is an observable attention to the specificities of place and the knowledges that are embedded in local traditions and know-how.

Among the most-promising niches in the tourism sector, culture-based creative tourism has been garnering increasing support and enthusiasm as a pathway to regenerative development and destination resilience, two essential components of sustainable tourism and development. Inherently personalised and participative in practice, creative tourism is based on the personal contact of one-on-one and small-group experiences based on the culture of a place and its people. Focused in its dimension and emphasis, creative tourism offers visitors the opportunity to hone their creative instincts and tendencies, as they learn about the local culture through direct contact with artists, artisans, and cultural agents of the destination community. The result is a dynamic, interactive exchange that both incorporates and promotes regenerative, sustainable local development and destination resilience. Creative tourism also aligns well with millennial travellers' growing interest in culturally immersive trips and educational travel (Skift Research, 2023, p. 258).

Aiming to bridge these macro and micro contexts, the international conference, "Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience," was held 8 to 10 November 2022 at the Arquipélago Contemporary Art Centre in Ribeira Grande, São Miguel Island, Azores, Portugal. The event was organised within the CREATOUR Azores project (see Annex A) as a collaboration between the Azores Tourism Observatory; the University of the Azores; the CREATOUR Observatory on Culture and Tourism for Local Development, of the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra; and the Guangzhou International Sister Cities University (GISU) Alliance (see Annex B). Bringing together 180 participants from 28 countries' through 20 sessions both online and in-person, the event aimed to be a focal point for emerging new approaches and ideas to face this moment in time and to consider how to move forward in more place-sensitive, collaborative, and caring ways that can repair, reorient, regenerate, and rebuild for a future in which travel and tourism is re-framed and re-imagined².

The conference was developed with an intent not only to address but also to progressively contribute to these contexts and dynamics. We invited researchers/academics, artists, tourism practitioners, and students to present their research, projects, and reflections in an array of related topic areas (see the list of session topics, presented in Box 1). The rich variety of papers presented in the plenary and concurrent sessions attests to the importance of bringing interdisciplinary, diverse perspectives together to think about and address the issues of this particular point in time. Furthermore, they reinforced the importance of recognising the specificities of individual places and the wellbeing of communities.

1. Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Macau, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

2. The programme for the "Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience" conference can be accessed here: <https://www.ces.uc.pt/creative-azores/#programme>.

- ▶ Culture, tourism, and regeneration
- ▶ CREATOUR Azores pilots round table: Insights from practice
- ▶ Re-inventing place: Creative tourism for (in)tangible heritage(s)
- ▶ Creative tourism: Research reflections and contributions
- ▶ Tourism in the regeneration and sustainability of rural-peripheral areas
- ▶ Identities, traditions, and heritage in community-based tourism
- ▶ Culture and tourism: Strategies, tools, and methods
- ▶ Innovative approaches towards a regenerative tourism
- ▶ Considering island dynamics
- ▶ Tourism and sustainability: Insights from the Azores
- ▶ Tea and tourism
- ▶ New approaches to creative tourism
- ▶ Re-defining places through arts, culture, and heritage
- ▶ Looking forward: Culture, tourism, and local development
- ▶ Looking forward: Culture, tourism, and technology
- ▶ Special Session: China's exploration and practice of tourism revitalization after the epidemic
- ▶ Tourism and post-pandemic resilience
- ▶ The importance of creative and cultural-based experiences within tourism
- ▶ Entangling the margins: Communities, collaboration, and co-creation
- ▶ Reflections and next steps

This book presents a selection of voices and perspectives that contributed to these discussions at the event, and we hope it serves as a platform for inspiring an emerging new wave of conceiving and addressing the responsibilities of tourism-related activities, one that holds community wellbeing and holistic sustainability central. In this introduction chapter, we present some insights and patterns that we noticed at the event, about the ways in which thinking about tourism is shifting and complementary elements of creative tourism are moving forward. Then, we provide an overview of the contributions to this book.

Shifting perspectives on tourism (in process)

During the conference, multiple speakers—from diverse positions and perspectives—observed that we appear to be at a point of transition from an industrial model of tourism to one that focuses on or, at least, provides more room for community-centred tourism. There was a general consensus that such a change is one that is needed, as ‘business as usual’ is no longer an option; however, the investments and inertia of existing investments and systems also means that this shift is one that is very much still in process, perhaps most visible ‘in the margins’, and still in need of encouragement, development, and leadership. This shift is embodied in the desires and aspirations of both older and emerging generations of travellers and what they are looking for in their journeys and their personal experiences. It is also grounded in the thinking and actions of change agents in travel-related businesses and agencies that are realising a need for more responsible practices and heightened attention to local wellbeing, vulnerabilities, collective care for place and others, and the impacts of visitors in their communities.

At the heart of the necessity for change are the environmental costs of mass tourism and its associated systems and impacts on cities and smaller communities, the sustainability of natural and cultural heritage resources, and the quality of life and experience of both travellers and those living in the places visited. Moving beyond this, in the envisioned emerging landscape, we observe that there is heightened attention to what can generally be viewed as a renewal of thinking and practice concerning three dimensions: people, place-experiences, and enacting these changes in practice.

BOX 1

List of session topics

People. A focus on people aligns with renewed recognition of tourism as a people-to-people enterprise that establishes connections. As part of this, truly recognising and incorporating what people bring into an experience—building experiences meaningful to each person and fostering co-creation processes—becomes the foundation of designing experiences and encounters. From a broader perspective, the possibilities for community-based or community-centred tourism can intentionally accent inclusiveness and community wellbeing. Discussions about how people may engage in offering tourism services are morphing into considerations about ‘What kind of tourism do we want?’ and to decision-making and governance matters (‘Who decides? How?’).

Place-experiences. ‘To be local’, we are told, is the future. This term, place-experiences, attempts to signify an inter-mingling between a growing hunger for encountering ‘authentic’ place specificities as well as for experiences that enroot the visitor in a place and what it means and feels like to live there. Contemporary travellers do not wish to travel to places designed just for tourists, but to dwell in ‘real’ places, to be a part of them, to experience the ‘everyday’, see the ‘behind-the-stage’ places (Richards and Marques, 2018; Richards and Duxbury, 2021), and experience the “infra-ordinary” phenomena of a place (Knudsen and Ifversen, 2021, p. 132). In these experiential moments of aspiring for immersion and embeddedness, we observe a need to slow down to feel grounded in a place, which takes time to transpire.

Today, this all plays out in a highly mediatised environment. In our image-dominated societies, our encounters with these places are increasingly mediated and emotionally informed by narratives and images we encounter before we arrive physically. In turn, recognising the growing power of place, local entrepreneurs are incorporating local place names, intangible elements, and other place specificities in their products and marketing efforts. These practices highlight the value inherent in attending to and finding appropriate avenues for the evocation and delivery of intangible experiences, narratives, and local knowledge. At the same time, anchoring these elements through meaningful experiences, such as those generated within creative tourism initiatives, can bring such elements of place and experience together.

Enacting. In the post-pandemic, uncertain world, there is growing emphasis on ‘entrepreneurship with meaning’ and social enterprise models that build in giving back and building better futures as an integral dimension of their initiatives. As well, attention is shifting from management to transformation, with entrepreneurship and change increasingly embedded within knowledge exchanges and networks. Within operating contexts of diverse actors—involving companies within the tourism ‘industry’ and other, more community-based organisations—conference participants called for sensitivity to precarity and vulnerability, as well as power imbalances that must be carefully considered and managed in the context of transforming an industrial model tourism to one that is more community-engaged and responsive.

Thinking forward about creative tourism

Aligned with the ideas sketched out above, we observe complementary elements and processes within the realm of creative tourism. These small-scale and humanistic activities can be intentionally designed and implemented to recognise and build upon the knowledges that participants bring into an experience, foster learning and self-development, benefit local residents, and generate broader generative dynamics in the communities in which they are embedded. Creative tourism can inspire new ideas for revitalising local cultures and heritage resources, extend and reimagine community self-representation, and help envision human-centred development trajectories, steeped in local specificities (Duxbury and Silva, 2020).

At a micro-level, creative tourism can serve as a platform for collective learning and exchange, creative self-expression, and new ideas and practices. The cornerstones of such

meaningful experiences and creation are based on individual interests and self-development and on fostering social connections. This means thinking of creative tourism participants less in terms of tourism segments and more as members of niche interest groups and, perhaps, co-practitioners. This aligns with a view of activities and experiences as occurring within trajectories of life-long learning, the pursuit of interests, and self-development.

In terms of creativity and making, further attention could be directed to enabling and supporting creative processes. As a means to refine and extend creative tourism offers, which oftentimes focus on ‘trying out’ or ‘tasting’ rather than fully engaging in a creative process, attention to creative processes and the allowance of time for this to unfold are needed (Duxbury and Vinagre de Castro, 2022). This brings the growing instances of artistic and creative camps, retreats, and residencies into view as part of a wider spectrum of activities and platforms that interconnect creation, travel, and experiences in time and place.

Intentional attention to connecting is also important. Internal to the creative tourism experience, individuals have multiple motivations for participating in these experiences, many socially oriented (Remoaldo et al., 2020; Duxbury and Vinagre de Castro, 2022). Similarly, ‘small tourism’ offers are also proliferating internationally to enable meaningful human connections and experiences (Scherf, 2023). In the broader context of atomised disconnection and loneliness in contemporary society, social connectivity is a necessary action for both individual and collective wellbeing.

At the meso-level of the community, the development and implementation of creative tourism initiatives in small cities and rural areas frequently involves processes of local collaboration involving multiple partners—in envisioning, planning, and implementation. The small-scale nature of creative tourism enables flexibility, iterative learning and development processes, and the fostering of social ties around generative processes and outcomes as new ideas are envisioned, discussed, worked out, and put into practice. Furthermore, these initiatives can enable people not usually engaged in tourism activities to be involved, to contribute ideas, and to gain from travellers’ visits. Intentional inclusion in the design and implementation of creative tourism activities and experiences creates a strategic foundation that aligns with social enterprise thinking and the centralising of community wellbeing from a ‘whole of community’ perspective.

At a macro-level of the broader territory or region, creative tourism initiatives can contribute to cultural vitality and (re)generation dynamics through reinforcing distinctive elements of local and regional identity, instigating flows and connections between the locale and the external, and serving as platforms for collaboration, exchange, and development (Duxbury et al., 2020). In practice, this translates into locally focused projects that leverage local heritage, activate public spaces, encourage inclusive public participation, and empower cultural actors to develop new activities towards local revitalisation. Creative tourism activities can also be designed to reinforce the local and regional economy. This might involve new approaches to revitalise local and regional traditions, encouraging visitors to stay longer and fostering social experiences that deepen their knowledge of the place. In essence, place-based creative tourism initiatives can embody principles of regenerative development by harnessing “the unique potential of place and its communities” to intentionally “contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of places and communities” (Bellato and Pollock, 2023, pp. 4-5; see the chapter by Ward and Millar in this volume for a detailed review of the literature on regenerative practices).

The contributions to this book provide insights on how creative tourism and regenerative tourism are envisioned, developed, and take place in ways that are embedded in particular contexts and worldviews. They point to issues and considerations in conception and design, as well as the processes of implementation, iterative refinements and evolution, and governance. Regenerative tourism represents a transformational shift in how we work in and on tourism (see Dredge et al., in this volume), one that requires dedication to change and evolve. In this context, creative tourism may provide a possible source of inspiration and transformative potential moving forward, one that foregrounds the cultural dimensions of living and creating in a particular place.

Book overview

The book is organised in two parts. In part one, key points from three panel sessions are presented in synthesised formats:

- **Insights from practice: CREATOUR Azores pilots roundtable.** While creative tourism entrepreneurs are passionate and committed, the lack of necessary resources (funding, partnerships, human resources) and time to fully develop their projects is a transversal challenge. In this roundtable, creative tourism developers and practitioners presented their perspectives on challenges, concerns, and opportunities as foundational considerations for discussions to follow. Here, we aim to capture key insights from their comments and the lively discussion that ensued.
- **Special session synthesis: China’s exploration and practice of tourism revitalisation after the epidemic.** This special, live session held in Guangzhou, China, was organised by our conference organising partner the Alliance of Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities (GISU), which was linked live into the event in the Azores, enabling insightful contributions, exchanges, and discussion across the globe. The session ensured that conference participants (both in-presence and online) were provided an opportunity to learn and exchange ideas, recognising and appreciating the variety of contexts in which a post-pandemic recovery was being envisioned, discussed, and worked out.
- **Conference reflections and next steps: Closing session.** This final panel session was organised to present initial reflections on the presentations and discussions at the conference, which were distilled through five participants. The panel captured key dimensions for additional attention in relation to collaborations, creative and regenerative tourism, shifting to a community-based model, research, and policies.

In part two, we present eight selected papers presented at the conference that provide information, analysis, and reflections on regenerative and creative tourism initiatives in Australia, Iceland, Ireland, Scotland, Japan, Spain, Brazil, and Canada. They offer insights and guidance not only on the ideas embedded in new approaches but also show how they have been implemented in practice in ways that are sensitive to and reflect the different contexts in which they have been developed.

The first article, “Regenerative Tourism on Flinders Island: Insights from Practice,” is by Dianne Dredge, Sarah Lebski, Sammi Gowthorp, and Jana Monnone. Recognising that regenerative tourism represents a transformational shift in how we work in and on tourism, the article addresses the question ‘How might tourism regenerate people, communities and nature and contribute to future flourishing?’. For the authors, implementing a Regenerative Tourism Living Lab on Flinders Island, Tasmania, Australia, provided an extraordinary opportunity to work both in and on the tourism system simultaneously. Working *in* the system, they could build the collective capacity of businesses, operators, the community, and visitors to implement nature-positive and community-positive actions. Working *on* the system, they could identify the organisational and policy challenges of shifting the goals of the system towards regeneration. Contrary to traditional approaches that adopt linear outcome-driven projects, the Living Lab works in complex, emergent ways. It is a journey to simultaneously shift mindsets, to reimagine governance structures and processes, to innovate tourism offerings, to engage disaffected individuals and fractured communities, to secure social licence, and to build trust and confidence—all while providing a real-time learning experience for stakeholders. Working with the ‘we’ instead of the ‘me’, the chapter reflects on this ground-breaking project on a little island at the bottom of mainland Australia.

Moving to Iceland, “Nordic Regenerative Tourism: Regional Approaches within a Common Vision,” by Ólöf Ýrr Atladóttir, Jessica Aquino, and Hólar University, describes the approach used in creating a network for understanding what regenerative tourism means in the Nordic area that was developed by the Nordic Regenerative Tourism (NorReg) project. The authors describe over two years of work (between 2022 and 2023) and summarise the local voices of Nordic communities, small and micro-sized enterprises (SM_iEs), destination

management organisations (DMOs), and academic researchers on what a Nordic regenerative tourism would look like. Funding for NorReg came from the Nordic Council of Ministers and is led by the Iceland Tourism Cluster on behalf of The Icelandic Ministry for Culture and Business Affairs. The article provides a look into the responsibilities and principles that advocate for the wellbeing of people, environmental conservation, and local business prosperity.

“Destination Networks as a Method for Achieving a Regenerative Approach to Tourism: A Case Study of the Burren Ecotourism Network,” by Aisling Ward and Shirley Millar, focuses on how the Burren Eco-tourism Network (BEN) located in the remote and rural region of County Clare in the West of Ireland provides a practical example of an ecotourism network that is exhibiting characteristics of a regenerative systems approach to tourism development and progress within its destination. The authors note the growing demand for responsible practices amongst visitors and the increasing activities of tourism providers and destinations to curb the carbon footprint of activities. Moreover, there has also been a growing call for going beyond sustainability and instead fostering an approach that incorporates regenerative approaches to production and consumption within tourism activities and destinations (Alonso-Munoz et al., 2023). Underpinning this case study work, the chapter also explores the emerging constructs of regenerative tourism in the literature.

“Untying the Representation of Creative Tourism: Scotland’s Islands, Remoteness, and Regeneration,” by Kathryn A. Burnett, is based on both personal and professional reflections of how creative tourism sits within wider narratives of regeneration and resilience in Scotland’s islands and related ‘remote rural’ contexts. The expansion of creative tourism (and cultural economies) is a key objective for Scotland, not least for countering assumptions of ‘remote rural’ and island places as marginal and peripheral. Economic drivers, environmental concerns, and the sustaining of what might be understood as rural and island place integrity and community assets are of ongoing research interest in Scotland. Lessons have been learned, and questions asked, as to what can be considered as better or good approaches to such tourism expansion. The chapter focuses on the way creative tourism is represented and, more broadly, how we represent the places we align to the rural and island creative tourism experience.

The next chapter also focuses on islands, and the impacts of regenerative, art-related creative tourism on their development and resiliency. “Regenerative Art Tourism for Creative Revitalisation in Peripheral Communities,” by Meng Qu, argues that regenerative-type art (creative) tourism in rural Japan demonstrates the transformative impact of community-embedded art projects, lasting over five years, as resilient responses to depopulation, aging, and challenges faced by peripheral communities. Examining the shift from socially engaged art to community-embedded art destinations, Qu finds that these transformative initiatives emphasise the crucial role of local engagement, creative tourism co-creation, and the integration of arts in fostering community resilience, sustainability, and revitalisation. In these contexts, regenerative art tourism emerges as a catalyst for community revitalisation, empowering locals to actively shape their environment.

Rocío Nogales Muriel’s chapter “Outlining Common Horizons for Culture and Life: Lessons from the First Diagnostic of the Network of Spaces and Agents of Community Culture in Spain,” focuses on the local creatives who are largely responsible for envisioning, designing, and developing community-engaged and -responsive artistic initiatives. The Network of Spaces and Agents of Community Culture in Spain (‘Red de Espacios y Agentes de Cultura Comunitaria’ or ‘REACC’) was created a few weeks into the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It defines community culture as any artistic practice that involves agents and communities in creative processes of a collaborative and transformative nature. As Nogales explains, self-help and mutual care were the immediate drivers for coming together but there were more structural issues to be tackled. Despite its presence across Spanish territories, community culture has been absent from the main arts and culture discourse, policies, and public funding in the country, and only recently has it begun to gain visibility. Since the spring of 2020, more than 345 agents have rallied around this network to articulate an encompassing voice that can act as interlocutor with public authorities and other actors. In February 2022, REACC completed the first study (‘diagnostic’) of the status of community culture in Spain through a mapping and analysis that described

a fascinating landscape. This chapter presents the results of this diagnostic, drawing some initial conclusions about the presence of community culture across Spain (including rural areas), its potential for sustainable tourism, and some of the strategies implemented to ensure its sustainability.

Creating structures that can contribute to more sustainable efforts and strategically guide and support creative tourism development is the focus of the next chapter, “Creative Tourism as a Catalyst of Regenerative Culture: Contributions from the Creative Tourism Plan of Recife – PE,” by Larissa Fernanda de Lima Almeida. The chapter provides an insightful account of a process in which practitioners and partnerships with public agencies successfully catalysed a municipal plan and governance structure for guiding creative tourism development in Recife, Brazil. The chapter presents an analysis of the process of elaborating the creative tourism plan of Recife 2019-2021, carried out through a content analysis of the reports of the process of elaborating the creative tourism plan and the researcher’s own experience in this process. Almeida’s analyses suggest that creative tourism as an activity contains dynamics that drive the establishment of regenerative cultures since it can contribute to the transformation of the worldviews of the people involved. The study shows that creative tourism has the potential to impact the tourism model that is practiced in Recife; however, to confirm this it is necessary to establish indicators and monitor the impact over time.

Closing part two of this book, “Nature and Culture in a Tourism Development Strategy: A French-Canadian Rural Regeneration Perspective,” by Benoît Duguay, François Bédard, Danièle Boulard, and Affouet Estelle Kanté, provides an account of the process of strategic tourism development for Rivière-au-Tonnerre, a very small municipality on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River in the province of Quebec (Canada). The analysis is based on data collected to develop strategic orientations for sustainable tourism development based on the natural and cultural features of the region, including a rich aquatic heritage. The authors aim to understand how a small municipality can build upon its natural and cultural features to attract more travellers through a sustainable tourism offering that is sensitive to its size and characteristics. In doing this, they consider how regenerative tourism principles can align with and extend these strategies and proposed actions.

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3. The Introduction chapter was published in English as “Activating Creative Tourism in Small Cities and Rural Areas in Portugal: The CREATOUR Research-and-application Approach,” and is available here: https://creatour.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/livro-creatour_Introducao-EN-21x27-Digital.pdf

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Sílvia Silva, sociologist, is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She has held several research activities, developing projects in collaboration with different public and private organisations. She was the Research Manager of CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas, and a researcher in the H2020 project UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture. Currently she is a researcher in the Horizon Europe project IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas and executive coordinator of the CREATOUR Observatory on Culture and Tourism for Local Development.

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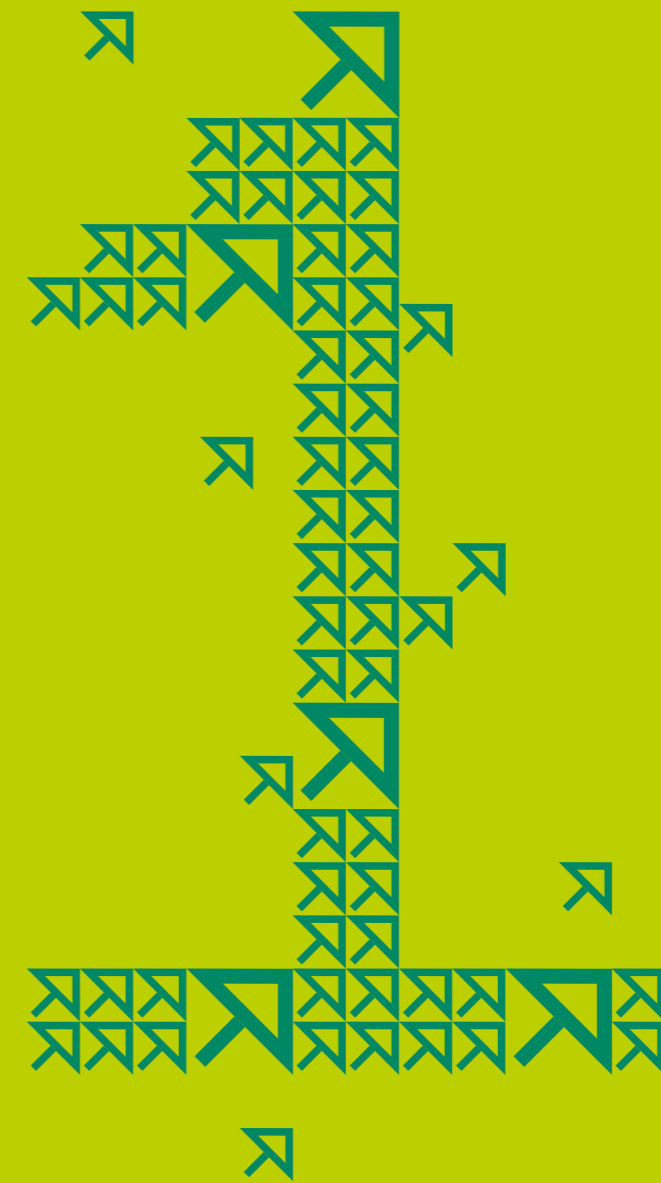
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Shamila Rahim is a practitioner and researcher with over 30 years’ experience across the cultural industries in South Africa. Her interest in the nexus of intangible heritage, art, urban development, and sustainability in an African city context led her to develop a framework for cultural mapping and planning for the City of Cape Town. She has produced and project managed local and international visual and performing arts festivals, productions, exhibitions, and projects. She is passionate about development and sharing knowledge, and has trained and mentored many young creatives. Since 2003, initially as an employee of the District Six Museum and now as a member of the Prestwich Place Project Committee, she’s been involved in the commemoration and development of the Prestwich Memorial to establish a dignified place for the re-interment of remains unearthed in Green Point.

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PART 1

Insights and perspectives



Insights from practice: CREATOUR Azores pilots roundtable

Creative tourism entrepreneurs are passionate and committed, but the lack of necessary resources (funding, partnerships, human resources) and time to fully develop their projects is a transversal challenge. Below are some ideas highlighted in the discussion “CREATOUR Azores pilots roundtable: Insights from practice.”

Challenges

- ▶ **Partnerships:** In remote locations, it is difficult to find specialised partners, and people with the time and resources to dedicate to partnerships, and with the same place-based approach. Getting interest from tourism operators for these small-scale initiatives can also be a struggle.
- ▶ **Fast-paced tourism:** Creative tourism experiences require time for exploration, which clashes with the current fast-paced tourism model.
- ▶ **Competing with big tourism companies:** Creative tourism entrepreneurs are competing with big tourism companies with growing interest in the Azores islands. Even though these companies are more economically competitive, they search for high season and big projects to attract big numbers of visitors (and revenues) that are neither sustainable nor contributing to local development.
- ▶ **Balancing uniqueness and economic sustainability:** Creating niche experiences requires investment, while maintaining authenticity and managing the impact on local communities. Even though creative tourism is not money-driven, it needs to be economically viable. How to continue to keep the offer genuine and from the heart and also be economically sustainable?
- ▶ **Marketing and reaching tourists:** Communicating the unique value of creative tourism experiences to the right audiences—how to find the niche market?
- ▶ **Policy and funding:** Outdated legislation hinders creative tourism development—a better strategy is needed. Public funding prioritises promotion over local development, and finding alternative funding sources is challenging.
- ▶ **Private funding:** Involving corporate actors that don't have just a money-driven focus would give viability and strength to the creative tourism projects/activities, but greenwashing can be a threat.

Opportunities

- ▶ **Unique experiences:** Creative tourism caters to a niche market seeking unique value. It brings people closer to local realities, and gives them the opportunity to touch, breath, and experience very intimately what the challenges are, what the realities are, all in an educational and entertaining manner.
- ▶ **Celebrate the local:** Active and proactive local partnerships can leverage local resources and know-how. It allows creative tourism initiatives to tap into the unique resources and expertise of the area—such as the beauty of the landscape, the natural wonders, or

the cultural heritage—to create immersive and meaningful experiences for visitors and empower local communities.

- ▶ **Attracting visitors:** Creative tourism creates immersive experiences that resonate with visitors and encourage return visits. Creative tourism plays a vital role in attracting tourists to a destination. Investing in the arts, culture, and creative sectors is investing in the tourism sector and local development in general.
- ▶ **Authenticity and change:** Authenticity can evolve, focusing on preserving local traditions while adapting to changing circumstances. Creative tourism enables locations to offer unique and engaging experiences that set them apart from others.
- ▶ **Policy advocacy:** Practitioners and local communities need to have a voice in how public funding is allocated to the cultural, creative, and tourism sectors, and work with policymakers for policies and funding that support creative tourism initiatives. Creative tourism needs to be in the political agenda and in the local and regional strategies.
- ▶ **Balanced marketing:** Promoting creative tourism across all Azorean islands, and encouraging winter promotion, i.e., to promote creative tourism experiences all year-round and not just in the summer time, encourages a balanced development and a more sustainable tourism model.

CREATOUR AZORES PILOT PROJECT ORGANIZERS PARTICIPATING IN THE ROUNDTABLE

Gena Pinheiro

The Farm

Isabel Areosa

Mahilawake

Miguel Brás

Norte Crescente – ADL

Paulo Ávila Sousa

re.function – the eco sustainable art residence

Pedro Brum

Pedro Brum Photography Expeditions

Pilar Mota and Tânia Botelho

Centro de Desenvolvimento Infante Juvenil dos Açores

Terry Costa

MiratecArts

Synthesis of this session developed by Sílvia Silva

Special session synthesis

China's exploration and practice of tourism revitalisation after the epidemic

At the time of the conference in early November 2022, many countries in Asia, including China, continued to be in a lockdown situation. In this context, international channels of connection and exchange were precious and valuable. Reflecting the intent for the international conference to be a platform for coming together to consider and reflect on the changing dynamics of tourism, communities, resilience, and regeneration, the conference featured a special online session organised by the GISU Alliance, presented at Guangzhou University and transmitted to conference delegates as well as on online channels with English translation.

Featuring both academic researchers and tourism industry leaders, the session focused on the multiple dimensions to consider in the context of China's tourism revitalisation after the epidemic. Topics discussed included the longitudinal interconnections between tourism's rise social and cultural change in China; the importance of stakeholder participation in efforts to maintain the resilience of tourism destinations, from advance planning to post-emergency recovery and the reconstruction of confidence; approaches to creative transformation and innovative development of cultural heritage; interconnections between training, education, and international cooperation; and industry perspectives on tourism development in the post-pandemic era. A synthesis of key points from the session has been prepared for this publication. A list of all session presenters is at the end.

The rise of tourism in China

Providing an important macro contextualisation for the session, it is important to see how the rise of tourism in China is closely interlinked with China's social and cultural change. Based on observations and reflections on the rise of tourism in China over the past three decades (1992–2022), Li Yiping discussed ways in which tourism as a discourse of difference delineates how contemporary discourses can fuse with individual histories to formulate the ways in which people understand China.

Tourism destination resilience

In the process of tourism destination development, most people pay attention to means of ensuring sustainable development, but ignore the major premise, which is to build an effective mechanism to maintain the resilience of the destination in the face of crisis. This requires the participation of many stakeholders in advance planning, risk assessment and management, emergency response and coordination, and post recovery and confidence reconstruction (Fanny Vong).

Approaches to creative transformation and innovative development of cultural heritage

ANCIENT POST ROADS

The activation and utilisation of the cultural heritage of ancient post roads is a dynamic and long-term process that can be a key aspect of regenerative approaches and creative transformation. The ancient post road resources in South Guangdong, China, have been studied extensively by Zhang Heqing, who has elaborated ten main models of development relevant to this territorial resource, including innovation driven, scenic area driven, integrated development, and event driven. Taking the Xiaohe Ancient Road (Fengkai Section) as an example, he explained in detail how the scenic area driven model is based on Lefebvre's three-dimensional dialectical framework of space production (the perceived, the conceived, and the lived) embedded in the theory of local construction. It is applied to activate, utilise, and rejuvenate this space of ancient roads in order to promote economic development, contribute to industrial upgrading, and strengthen cultural identity. With the integration of culture and tourism as background, this research addresses and deeply considers both theoretical and practical issues, including how to make the ancient post roads play the role of corridors, build a general model for spatial simulation, combine the cultural characteristics of ancient post roads in different regions, and combine government governance with the construction of ancient post road communities.

WORLD HERITAGE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The coronavirus pandemic caused significant obstacles to on-site tourism internationally. Among the UNWTO's 23 recommendations for global tourism recovery, it advocated for accelerating the digitalisation of tourism. Digital technology that enables immersive experiences that transcend time and space constraints has led to a surge in demand for digital products (e.g., virtual tours, live streaming) in the travel industry. But digitalization is only the first step—how to deeply explore and interpret the multiple values of heritage, and give new vitality to heritage, is to answer the proposition of these times of creative transformation and innovative development (Zheng Chunhui). Focusing on different types of heritage cases such as natural heritage, cultural heritage, and memory heritage, Zheng Chunhui discussed how to carry out the value dissemination and management of World Heritage in the digital era.

Training, education, and international cooperation

Based on the theory of high-quality development, Xiao Youxing elaborates the notion of high-quality development of tourism. This perspective centralises people when seeking development, with people on top of the agenda, and aims for high quality development, seeking quality over quantity. It entails innovation, coordination (to solve issues of imbalance), opening up, and sharing benefits and resources. Contextualising this in an analysis of the status and level of high-quality development of China's tourism industry, and in view of the needs of high-quality development of tourism according to the professional practice of tourism management of Guangzhou University, Xiao Youxing proposes ideas and measures for the cultivation of innovative talents.

Building on institutional and national initiatives, long-term international cooperation projects among educational institutions create an important bridge connecting education and talent training between countries. In order to propel the quality and relevancy of such connections to address emerging and future needs, it is imperative to pay attention to how to innovate and to maintain sustainable development (Jean-René Morice).

With these as background, a roundtable discussion about talent training in the convention and exhibition industry addressed a variety of concerns and considerations.

Industry perspectives on tourism development in the post-pandemic era

Hospitality

The pandemic has had a deep impact on China's hospitality industry, which also faces new challenges and concepts from the perspective of travellers' consumption attitudes. Eric Ding Kerong shed light on the development of China's hospitality industry in the post-pandemic era.

Immersive formats of cultural tourism

Li Wen discussed the practice and innovation of immersive formats of cultural tourism, focusing on how to make use of technological innovation, scene innovation, and business model innovation to create innovative immersive experience formats in scenic spots, blocks, business districts, and parks to help and empower the cultural and tourism industry at the moment of the epidemic.

Big data

To enable better understanding of particular tourism scenes, special applications of big data in cultural tourism statistics (i.e., big data tourism statistics application programs and application platforms) can be constructed through combining a tourism statistics survey system with key cultural and tourism projects, such as on the topics of the "night economy" and "coastal tourism" (Zhou Guozhi).

SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Opening remarks

Fu Jiyang

Professor and Vice President of Guangzhou University

Dong Tian

Director of Industrial Development Division of Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province

Carlos Santos

Azores Tourism Observatory, Portugal

François Bédard

Director-General of the World Centre of Excellence for Destinations, Université de Montréal de Québec, Canada

Moderator

Tang Xuan

International Exchange and Cooperation Division of Guangzhou University

Keynote speeches

Dr. Fanny Vong

President of Macao Institute for Tourism Studies – Tourism Destination Resilience

Professor Jean-René Morice

Dean of the School of Tourism, Culture and Hospitality, Université d'Angers – Development of Sino-French Cooperation Projects and the French Tourism Industry

Professor Zhang Heqing

School of Management (School of Tourism/Sino-French School of Tourism) and Dean of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cultural Tourism Development Research Institute of Guangzhou University – Guangdong Practice of Creative Transformation and Innovative Development of Cultural Heritage: The Case of Nanyue Ancient Road

Professor Li Yiping

School of Management (School of Tourism/Sino-French School of Tourism), Guangzhou University – The Rise of Tourism in China: Social & Cultural Change

Associate Professor Xiao Youxing

Associate Dean of the School of Management (School of Tourism/Sino-French School of Tourism), Guangzhou University – High Quality Development of Tourism and Innovative Cultivation of Talent

Associate Professor Zheng Chunhui

School of Management (School of Tourism/Sino-French School of Tourism), Guangzhou University – Imagination Through Time and Space: Communicating and Managing the Value of World Heritage

Xue Xiaolong

Dean of the School of Management (School of Tourism/Sino-French School of Tourism), Guangzhou University

THEMATIC SHARING

Ding Kerong

General Manager of the Westin Guangzhou, Chairman of South China Business Council, Guangzhou Sub-Council of Marriott International

Zhou Guozhi

General Manager of Guangdong Mobile Big Data Application Innovation Center

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CONCLUSION

Tang Xuan

Director of International Affairs Office of Guangzhou University

Synthesis of this session developed by Nancy Duxbury and Shamila Rahim

Link to the session invitation/brochure

https://www.ces.uc.pt/creative-azores/documents/Invitation_Guangzhou_session_10_11_2022.pdf

Conference reflections and next steps

Closing session

This section explores the key takeaways and challenges identified during the discussions in the conference's closing session. It emphasises the need for a paradigm shift in tourism, moving from a complex and fragmented industry towards a community-based, regenerative approach. It underscores the importance of collective action, multi-scale collaboration, and a commitment to building a more regenerative and equitable tourism future. Which type of tourism do we want? Who and how is it decided? How can the local community have a central role in this process?

... collaborations

- ▶ **Cognitive diversity and new mindsets:** Recognising the value of diverse perspectives, felt experiences, and local knowledges is crucial. A shift in mindset is necessary to connect with these different forms of wisdom and foster collaboration.
- ▶ **Sustainability and network building:** Building sustainable community-based tourism projects involving diverse stakeholders takes time and effort, as ideas need to be created, developed, and evolved. Creating networks of collaboration between communities, artists/artisans, and organisations can provide essential support and foster knowledge exchange
- ▶ **Challenges for small islands:** Small island communities face unique challenges in developing sustainable tourism models, while competing with big international tourism companies, based on economy of scale, and standardisation of their product. Networking and collaboration are crucial for their success.

... creative and regenerative tourism

- ▶ **Regenerative tourism:** Tourism should bring positive community benefit, positive nature-based benefits, and positive place-based benefits. This requires a holistic approach that considers positive impacts on all three dimensions.
- ▶ **Innovation and creativity:** New tourism models are needed to address the challenges of the post-COVID-19 era. Creativity is essential to enhance the value of destinations and foster meaningful connections.
- ▶ **Human connection:** Creative tourism fosters meaningful connections between visitors and residents, fostering cultural exchange and mutual respect by being creative together, being immersive in a community, and learning from each other in a way that respects both residents and visitors.

... shift to a community-based model

- ▶ **Transitioning to a community-based model:** Transitioning from a large-scale tourism model to a community-based approach requires embracing social and sharing economies. This shift presents both challenges and opportunities. While established tourism industries may seek a return to pre-pandemic operations, community-based entrepreneurs are finding a foothold. Collaboration is crucial, but it's important to acknowledge the potential vulnerability of these new community-based activities.
- ▶ **Focus on the locale:** The future of tourism lies in a local community-driven approach. People, communities, and connections take centre stage. This isn't just tourism; it's a community-led phenomenon for a new era.

- ▶ **Social enterprises:** Social enterprises offer a promising model for balancing economic growth with social and environmental responsibility—it is a business but it is also to work with the communities and give back to the communities.

... research

- ▶ **In-practice research:** Research should be accessible and directly benefit communities. Design thinking methodologies can empower communities to identify and implement solutions. While it takes time to foster open discussions within communities and for people to feel comfortable and creative, these conversations can be extremely powerful.
- ▶ **The role of researchers:** Researchers should act as facilitators and listeners, not solely as solution providers. Their role is to support communities in voicing their needs and aspirations.
- ▶ **Knowledge exchange and co-learning:** Collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are essential to inform best practices.
- ▶ **Momentum after research projects:** Plan for post-project sustainability. How can we keep the momentum going after a research project is complete?

... policies

- ▶ **Community-centred tourism:** The conference highlighted the importance of community-based tourism, where local residents are central to decision-making and benefit directly from tourism activities.
- ▶ **Multi-scale collaboration:** Effective decision-making requires ongoing collaboration between communities, tourism operators, and policymakers at all levels. To ensure informed choices, politicians and policymakers should be invited and updated on a regular and constant basis.
- ▶ **Empowering communities:** Communities need to believe in their power to shape the future of tourism as active participants in the decision and policymaking sphere. Building trust and encouraging participation in decision-making processes is essential.
- ▶ **Preparing for the future:** The tourism industry cannot afford to remain stagnant. Embracing complexity and a systems-based approach will enable informed decision-making as the world evolves.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PANEL

Isabel Soares de Albergaria

University of the Azores, Portugal (chair)

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University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy

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Carlos Santos

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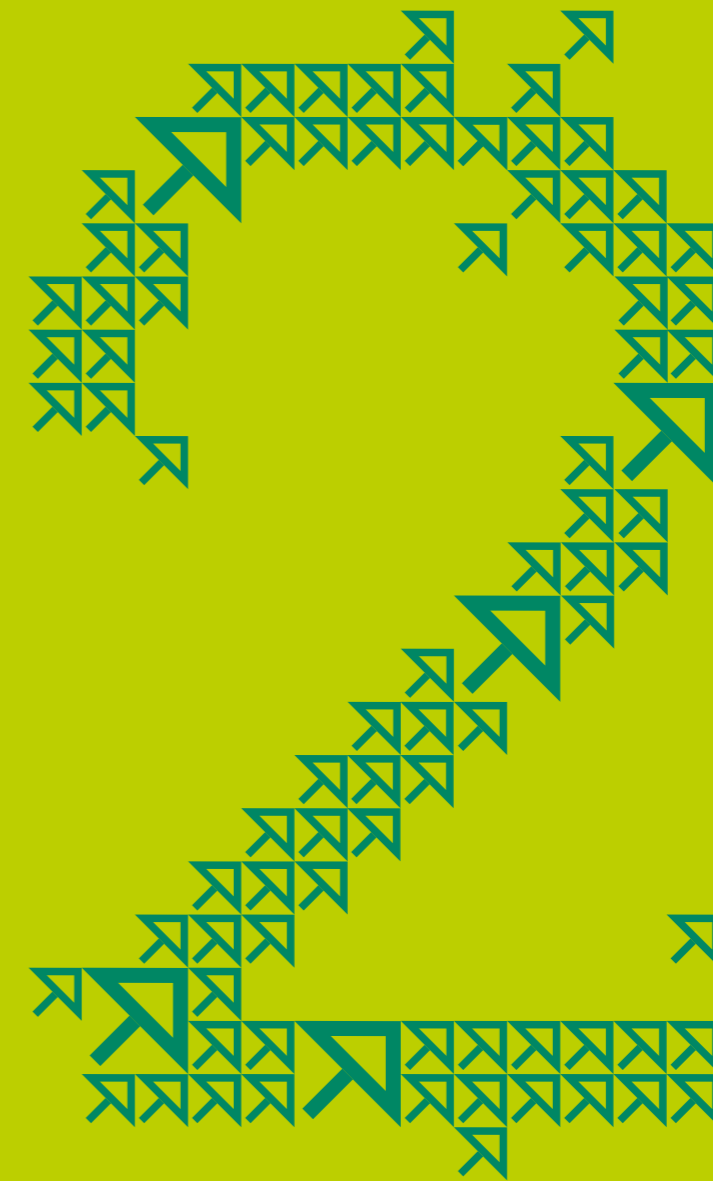
Professor Tang Xuan

Director of the International Affairs Office of Guangzhou University

Synthesis of this session developed by Silvia Silva

PART 2

Selected papers



Regenerative tourism on Flinders Island: Insights from practice

Dianne Dredge, Sarah Lebski, Sammi Gowthorp, and Jana Monnone

The chapter presents a case study of regenerative tourism on Flinders Island, a small remote island in between the Australian mainland and Tasmania. More than a simple case study, the learnings and insights from the Regenerative Tourism Living Lab on Flinders Island could potentially have far reaching consequences for both academia and practice should you take a deeply reflective and fearless approach to its reading. We explain why in the section 'How to read this chapter'.

Flinders Island (1368 km²) is the largest land mass in the Furneaux Group of Islands in Bass Strait. It once formed part of a rocky footbridge that connected the Australian mainland to Tasmania but as waters receded, the rugged and isolated land mass offered a home to a range of extraordinary Australian wildlife and a destination for migrating seabirds from the northern hemisphere's winter. It was here a small settlement of sealers, known as the Straitsmen, was established in the early 1800s (Cameron, 2011). This isolated and wind-swept outpost was where the Tasmanian government decided to place the last remaining Tasmanian Aboriginal people after the Frontier Wars ended in the 1830s. The ambition was to enculturate Tasmania's First Nations, but the vast majority died. This colonial history is a dark and tragic one, and truth telling remains a difficult journey for the Tasmanian First Nations people.

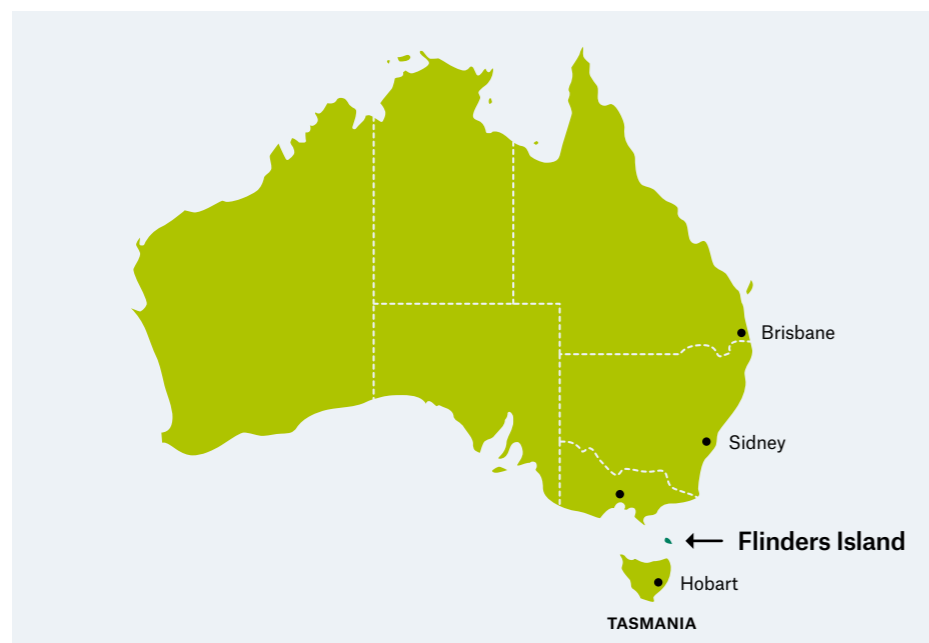


FIGURE 1
Location of Flinders Island

Since that time, the Island has received successive waves of settlement from the Soldier Settlers in the post WWII period (Mainwaring, 2006) to today's lifestyle tree/sea changers. The current population is around 1000 people with the medium age being 57 years of age. There are barely enough people of working age to ensure essential services are maintained. The Island's economy is dominated by agriculture with beef production being its key activity. Adding to the social and economic complexities of island living, due to its isolation the local economy bears the burden of high freight and fuel costs making the business context challenging. Put simply, there is a shortage of workers, a skills shortage, significant issues regarding housing affordability and availability, and a challenging business environment that limits the Island's social and economic capacity to flourish.

Not surprisingly, tourism has been mooted as a potential solution to the Island's economic challenges. Since its early settlement, the Island has hosted visitors. However, its relationship with modern industrial tourism has been tested on multiple occasions in recent history. The flashpoint that brought regenerative tourism to the attention of the then Mayor was immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and continued into the lockdowns. A number of State government policy decisions and actions by the local chamber of commerce had been made that many local residents did not agree with, and which had brought a new and more demanding type of visitor to the Island. The Council agreed that the Island needed to re-examine its relationship to tourism and secured a partnership with the Tasmanian State government to explore a regenerative approach.

How to read this chapter

This chapter explores the design and implementation of a Regenerative Tourism Living Lab on Flinders Island, Tasmania. However, this chapter offers so much more. It offers an insider's view of what a regenerative approach requires. It explores how a living systems approach can transform how we manage the visitor economy. It sheds light on how we can redesign the tourism system, and it highlights taken-for-granted assumptions that no longer work for a community not wanting tourism 'done to' them.

In essence, this chapter is all about breaking—breaking up, breaking out, and breaking through. You are invited to take the time to read and reflect on the chapter's content, and to monitor your thoughts and feelings. Take the time to read slowly, and ask yourself 'What is coming up for me?' Move your awareness from your head to your heart and you will experience a different kind of wisdom. Our tendency as humans is to stay in the head space. It is judgemental and ego-driven. In the head, we critique and look for weaknesses in new ideas and ways of working. This is true for regenerative tourism which has been called too hard, too theoretical, too expensive and not scalable by its critics—most of whom have not bothered to explore what regenerative tourism means.

This push back is our survival instinct and it is triggered because we are calibrating regenerative tourism with what we know about how the current system works. Such criticisms assume that regenerative tourism is yet another niche or tool to be implemented within our existing system and practices. It is not. Moreover, framing regenerative tourism as just another term for sustainable tourism (which it is not), is a response that seeks to tame and co-opt a big, bold, and paradigm-shifting concept so that business-as-usual can continue unchallenged. Regenerative approaches to tourism require a redesign of the tourism system, a completely different way of organising and working, and a new value system. Put simply, it requires a journey that connects our head with our heart's wisdom.

Back when our primitive brains were our first defence in the fight for survival, going into the unknown, or not having the answers, was dangerous (Blake, 2018). Now, the same reaction is triggered when we are pushed beyond the edge of our knowledge. In the fight for survival (or relevance), we push back and critique in order to preserve the certainty we find within our comfort zones. It is what keeps us resisting change and in a low innovation space. It's also a place that we cannot afford to stay as the polycrisis unfolds.

Having brought awareness to these subconscious reactions, you are invited to read this chapter and make an effort to transcend your head-based knowledge and combine it with

your heart-space wisdom. Put aside fear of change or the tendency to compare it with your current practice, and ask yourself two questions:

- ▶ What do I know to be true?
- ▶ What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?

We return to these two questions in the conclusions. However, we anticipate that if you have read this chapter with an open head and heart, the changes to be made in both thinking and practice will become clear.

Approach

LIVING SYSTEMS

The approach adopted to the design and implementation of the regenerative living lab was emergent. A regenerative approach is one that seeks to restore and regenerate the social, environment, and economic conditions so that all life can thrive.

Living systems theory and an ecological worldview informs the regenerative approach. Living systems are made up of dynamic, self-organising parts which can learn, adapt, and evolve as a result of the flows of information, energy, and matter that connect the system (Lovelock, 1979/2000). In other words, change happens through flows, networks, and connections, and not as our current worldview dictates, from outputs, infrastructure, and tangible things.

Living systems demonstrate resilience over time because they are able to learn, communicate with each other, and adapt to change. Forest systems demonstrate this resilience, with edge species able to respond to human impacts and communicate their adaptation strategies to other parts of the forest, while protecting more vulnerable species at the centre (Wohlleben, 2015). Resilience is built through flows of energy, information, and matter, through which learning and adaptation are made possible.

The reason why regeneration and a living systems approach is attracting increasing attention is that we are at a critical juncture in the history of our planet. While scientists decide whether 2024 will be the year the Anthropocene is declared (Wilkins, 2023), decades ago, Lovelock (1979/2000) argued for a new framing of human-nature relations in the notion of Gaia, a living Earth. “Our destiny,” he wrote, “is not dependent merely on what we do for ourselves but also what we do for Gaia as a whole” (p. x).

Around the same time, cultural historian Thomas Berry (1978) argued that we are in trouble because we don’t have a good story. The Old Story of how the world works, and how we fit it is not functioning anymore because we have lost contact with the living systems, the values and relationships through which life thrives. The future takes place in and through Earth, and this requires a paradigm shift which Berry called the Earth Community (Berry, 2000).

Seeing ourselves as part of a larger living system, with no separation between and no dominance over nature, challenges the human-centric view of the last three hundred years that science and technology will find solutions for the problems we face. Accepting that we are part of the living system, bound into and not separate from nature’s processes, calls for us to reframe ourselves, our values and our relationships. In particular, it calls for us to work with and through natural living systems.

Just as nature learns, adapts, and builds its resilience, a regenerative living systems approach gives us permission to learn and experiment so that we might flourish in the face of change. So what does this mean for tourism? The following case study unpacks what this means in practice.

LIVING SYSTEMS APPLIED TO TOURISM

The regenerative approach adopted in this project derived its guiding principles from living systems theory (see Miller, 1978). For the benefit of readers, these principles are interpreted in the context of tourism in TABLE 1.

Living systems approach	Existing tourism system approach
Natural cycles. Living systems are characterised by a natural cycle that include phases such as birth, growth, decay, death and renewal. In balance, this cycle operates over multiple scales and time to produce a relatively stable but dynamic process of adaptation, renewal and resilience-building known as a panarchy loop.	Industrial system. Tourism is made up of parts and may be linked to cogs in a machine, e.g., accommodation, transport, marketing, experiences.
Flows and relationships. The system is not fixed but change and adaptation occurs through flows of energy, matter and information that inform the system how to adapt.	Fixed and certain. The tourism system consists of fixed relationships between its parts. It is predicated on growth, profit, investment and other prescribed outcomes which are embedded in policies and legislation.
Complex. Living systems are complex, evolutionary and dynamic. Different parts of the system are able to shift and adapt to changing conditions. The interdependence of the parts promotes flexibility so that change is slow and steady.	Simple. Existing within a silo, and with limited capacity to adapt, tourism is a brittle and fragile sector, subject to crisis when conditions change. With a low capacity to absorb change, when crisis hits tourism is dependent on government support and handouts.
Care. All parts of the system work together, caring for all other parts, as a collective whole. The wellbeing and flourishing of individuals depend on the health and wellbeing of the whole.	Responsibility. Responsibility is externalised/distributed/fragmented across different entities that work to their own ends. Responsibilities are externalised to others, determined through policies and legislation. Ethical action falls through the cracks, i.e., it is possible to be responsible in law but morally lacking.
Grounded in local to global systems. Actions and change are based on lived experience and contextual knowledge of global to local systems.	Top-down solutions. Certainty and control are pursued through top-down fixed solutions delivered through template plans, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and other fixed and hierarchical mechanisms.
Evolutionary and adaptive. Comfortable with uncertainty and change, living systems adapt as required.	Prescribed goals and outputs. Predetermined goals and fixed outputs are not necessarily fit for purpose at a local level or able to account for disruptive events and changing conditions.

TABLE 1

Living systems versus industrial tourism systems

Comparing the living systems approach to the fixed mechanistic nature of the existing tourism system, attention is drawn to the fact that tourism is an artefact of twentieth century industrial policy. Its organisation and values are based on the social and economic values of the nineteenth and early twentieth century industrialisation when growth and modernisation were societal ideals. However, the polycrisis is challenging these ideals and calling for us to articulate new human-nature relationships (Dredge, 2019).

Industrial policy is predicated on cheap access to natural and human resources (e.g., labour and natural resources) as raw inputs for production and consumption of goods and services. The goals are to push down unit costs by minimising costs of raw materials and maximising profit through mass production and consumption. An unwritten assumption is that nature, communities, labour and places consent to being used/exploited in this production-consumption process. These assumptions are being increasingly questioned as the impacts of tourism on nature, people, and places become more visible, as in the case of Flinders Island.

Flinders Island regenerative tourism

CONTEXT

The Island has a complicated history with tourism. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the visitor economy had become an important part of the Island’s economy. There was also increasing concern over a perceived mismatch between what a growing cohort of sophisticated urban visitors were demanding and what the Island and its community could realistically or was prepared to offer. In essence, there was a growing lack of alignment between what the Island could offer, the visitors that were being marketed to and attracted, and the values of the local community.

Against this background, Flinders Island experienced a shift in the type of visitor. The Island received growing attention from visitors precisely because it was isolated and was perceived as a safe destination. The State government introduced a voucher system encouraging intra-state tourism and a new source market, Hobart, was opened up by subsidising new direct flights from Hobart to Flinders Island. These actions opened up a more demanding type of visitor market, and the increase in visitation only exacerbated concerns about the mismatch between visitors’ demands and the Island’s overall capacity to deliver services. The key question was ‘To what extent can the demands of visitors be met while the Island’s economic and social sustainability hangs in the balance?’

WHAT IS A REGENERATIVE LIVING LAB?

The Regenerative Living Lab was delivered over a two-year timeline in five broad stages. It was designed as an experimental and emergent journey that provided an opportunity for communities and their associated allies and networks to work collaboratively to explore challenges and possibilities, and to co-design and implement potential actions. In contrast to more traditional approaches to destination management which are industry-led, are based on a template process, and are delivered by ‘experts from away’, the regenerative lab was place-based, community-led and context dependent.

A regenerative economy and community

A regenerative economy for the Island requires a new narrative, a new language, and new ways of creating and distributing the value generated by a visitor economy. This approach addressed the questions, ‘What needs to be done now so that we can flourish?’, ‘What change do we want to see?’, and ‘What steps do we need to take to get there?’ So, instead of being focused on the output (e.g., a plan and set of actions based on a predetermined top-down set of objectives, such as growth and investment attraction), the regenerative living lab focused on building the confidence and capacity of the local community to activate its own future and leverage the visitor economy for positive impact.

A coherent network of change

The ambition was to make the regenerative project an ongoing journey. However, given political election cycles, a two-year time frame was how we needed to position it to start the process. It was thought that two years was enough time to generate awareness, build momentum, and establish good future-focused relationships. In essence, the idea was to build a coherent network of change, connected into the wider policy space, so that it could continue after the initial two-year funding period.

Collaborative, emergent, and co-designed

The design of the living lab (see TABLE 2) illustrates its emergent, collaborative, and co-designed properties. It differs significantly from the industry-focused process of analysing opportunities, supply and demand factors, identifying strategies for production and consumption, industry engagement, and allocating actions to various government agencies.

Stage/ambition	Guiding question	Practical actions
1. Community engagement/activating ownership activation	What is our story of place?	Launch; Island storytelling; Community-facing website; Postcard engagement
2. Issue identification, exploring complexity, sense-making priorities	What does regeneration mean?	In-depth community engagement with multiple tools; Issues identification and mapping
3. Imagining and co-designing future-fit actions	What is the change we want to see?	Community podcast; Events and ongoing engagement; Targeted business and community-led project incubator
4. Project identification, articulation, and learning to collaborate	How might we address the challenges and activate the change we want to see?	Co-design of projects; Project activation; Mentoring and support; Advocacy and engagement in policy systems
5. Collective activation and advocacy	How do we catalyse collective action?	Communicating progress through community-facing website; Guest blog posts; Communicating good visitor behaviour/expectations

TABLE 2
Regenerative Tourism Living Lab stages and actions

Holistic, community-empowered approach

While tourism was the initial trigger, the community engagement process revealed a range of other intersecting challenges and possibilities that could not be ignored. Hence, while it was called a ‘regenerative tourism living lab’ the reality was that it explored various interlinking issues including tourism, environmental management, local community wealth-building, regenerative economics, cultural empowerment, food security, and health and wellbeing. So, while tourism was threaded through the conversations and the ambitions of the project, the themes and subsequent projects that emerged, addressed fundamental questions of the Island’s sustainability and resilience. It was clear from the community consultation that there could be no hosting of visitors if the Island was in social, economic, and environmental decline.

INSIGHTS FROM ISSUES MAPPING

Our starting premise was that the new relationship with tourism that the community was demanding, needed to align with their desire for a hopeful, resilient, and sustainable future. A visitor economy that is genuinely aligned with the values and aspirations of the community, that regenerates positive impact, was more likely to be accepted than the exploitative industrial model. Surprisingly, these two competing goals are rarely aligned in concrete ways because community development, place-based planning, and economic development/tourism occur within different institutional processes led by organisations with different values sets.

The initial round of community and policy engagement activities highlighted a wide range of concerns including:

- ▶ Existing food supply arrangements, transport, and storage logistics could not keep up with demand at peak times. Demand fluctuated, creating increased stress on a small and finite food supply chain. There were additional costs for transport and storage which flowed on to customers. The unreliability of delivery due to weather and tides also generated staffing and scheduling challenges.

- ▶ Small business food proprietors experienced increased consumer and production pressures. Running out of food was not uncommon, and front-line staff received abuse from visitors demanding higher levels of services and longer opening hours.
- ▶ The barge company, which provides a weekly service to the Island, appeared to bring an increasing number of camper vans and other recreational vehicles to the Island. These self-catering groups tended to be more visible and thus drew more criticism than the small nature-based tour groups that give back by using local hospitality and catering services.
- ▶ There are limited camping sites on the Island and environmental impacts of free camping were difficult to manage.
- ▶ Some business owners and staff felt under pressure to remain open for longer than they wanted to, or anxious that they were unable to deliver what was being demanded. At times this translated into Island residents feeling undervalued, ‘not good enough’ or ‘not smart enough’.
- ▶ Islanders expressed concern over what they saw as their vanishing lifestyle and the lack of control over their future. Decisions being made by people ‘from away’ employing consultants ‘from away’, were doing tourism ‘to’ the Island and its community.
- ▶ Tourism began to be seen as negative by many (but not all) residents and community conversations about tourism became divisive.
- ▶ Confidence in the local chamber of commerce was at a low ebb after decisions which had benefited a few over the many, and perceived issues of transparency and accountability had emerged. (In 2023, a new board has acknowledged and is addressing these issues.)
- ▶ The Island has a waste problem. What comes to the Island stays on the Island and visitors exacerbate the waste challenge.

AN EMPOWERED COMMUNITY CAN MONITOR AND ADAPT

The confluence of all these and more factors led to increasing calls that tourism should not be done to the community, but with them. Community members argued that solutions developed by ‘people from away’ don’t work because consultants don’t think like Islanders. Islanders are familiar with what is possible, they know the capacity limits and challenges of Island life. In essence, they were tired of having top-down solutions imposed upon them with little or no opportunity for community consultation. Moreover, they were sceptical of any consultation by fly-in fly-out consultants “who spend a day and come with their solutions already crafted” (community member, personal communication).

It is acknowledged that the issues mapping process was undertaken in the first quarter of 2022 (immediately post COVID-19 pandemic) and would likely be different if conducted today. This is the dynamic nature of emergent issues and opportunities. Where capacity is left in the community, then monitoring these issues and opportunities, and activating small adaptive change is part of the community’s role. It does not depend on waiting until another consultant arrives in three or five years’ time to do another plan.

A regenerative approach to tourism

IDENTIFYING THE ‘REAL’ PROBLEMS

A fundamental challenge is that tourism destination plans do not address the root cause of challenges that regional communities face in their quest for resilience and regeneration. They are not designed for this. Traditionally, destination management plans have never sought to prioritise resilience and regeneration, but instead are predicated on the opposite—the extraction of value from a place, its environments, and communities.

The way destination management plans do this is through the orchestration of what seems like a rational objective strategic process. Destination management plans, as policy tools, are designed to address a top-down predetermined set of objectives usually designed

to grow tourism and attract investment. These objectives are an assumed and unquestioned starting point and provide the central objectives for the plan’s development. Destination management plans are therefore a prescription to a given ‘problem’ that directs attention, resources, and effort towards desired outcomes (i.e., growing tourism, attracting investment, etc.).

By providing stakeholders with both the problem and the pathway to its solution, destination management plans have managed to become little more than staging tools safeguarding linear, low innovation business-as-usual. As a result, destination management plans have become uninspiring template plans that lack connection into the essence of place and community. Sources of innovation include open generative questioning, creative thinking, co-learning, and co-design of actions. However, these have no place in traditional destination planning. As a result, destination management plans are an expression of those with financial and political power who seek to define the problems and implement solutions in their own image and interests.

A REGENERATIVE TOURISM FRAMEWORK FOR FLINDERS ISLAND

The approach adopted on Flinders Island, was to reframe the Island’s relationship with tourism (Designing Tourism, 2023). This meant that we could not start by assuming we knew what the problems and challenges were. In an emergent process, we were required to keep an open mind and employ generative questioning, listening to stories and building an understanding of the complex interdependence of issues. We started by asking a wide audience of stakeholders (not just selected industry players) what the ‘real’ problems were and how tourism might be used to address these challenges. It turns out that by asking a broader set of stakeholders an open question without suggesting the solutions, it was clear that tourism is woven into a wider set of island problems, issues and challenges. Very few people identified the need to grow tourism or attract investment as core challenges, but instead identified issues such as food security, overtourism, environmental management, and visitor behaviour as key challenges.

The community engagement exercise associated with the project spanned the entire two-year period, passing through phases such as initial storytelling, identification of problems and issues mapping, empowering local island-led actions, and solution activation. Building trust, confidence, and ownership were achieved through consistently showing up and problem-solving together. Onboarding was happening until the very end of the official funding cut-off because the speed at which people learn and appreciate the relevance of such a project differs. This approach allowed a flow of energy, ideas, information, and resources that was acknowledged by the community as a valuable contribution.

Island tipping points

In 2019, FTI Consulting completed a report entitled Study of Economics, Business and Social Structure on Tasmania’s Flinders Island. In many respects, it was a keystone report that drew attention to Flinders Island’s social and economic sustainability. The report identified a tipping point:

Flinders Island will likely reach a ‘tipping point’ in 7 years, in which its own population will not be able to maintain essential public and private services, because its resident working population will reduce to fewer than 472 people. (p. 4)

The consequences of this workforce tipping point would likely contribute to a number of other triggers, including:

- ▶ Essential services (e.g., infrastructure, social and environmental services) will become increasingly dependent on government and outside resourcing.
- ▶ A sustainable future for the Island requires investment in infrastructure, solutions to housing, and innovative approaches to regulation that address the Island’s remote conditions.

- ▶ Future generations will continue to be burdened with the cost of structural fiscal disadvantage due to remoteness, size, and the difficulty of generating economies of scale for commercial and human services. This will likely influence decisions about whether to migrate to, stay, or leave the Island.

In the case of Flinders Island, the root cause of the Island's resilience challenge is not tourism, but an intertwining of geographical, social, and economic disadvantage. Tourism was an exacerbating factor that ignited anger and anxiety in 2020-21. However, the root cause is a complicated mix of workforce and skills shortages, housing affordability and availability, an aged population with increased servicing needs, and the difficult and costly operational environment for businesses. Tourism needs to make an identifiably positive impact to these island issues if it is to secure its social licence.

Based on this understanding, four core values were identified that guide the Islander Way Regenerative Tourism Framework in FIGURE 2. These were expressed by the community in their voice to emphasise ownership.

1. TRUE TO WHO WE ARE

Our stories of place are deeply woven into who we are and what we care about. The stories of this place, through millennia, are what binds us. More recently, the story of the Islander Way has been co-created by the Islanders and Brand Tasmania, and is a window into who we are, why we belong, and the values that guide us.

2. REGENERATION

The health and wellbeing of our living systems determines the extent to which we are able to flourish in the future. Providing stewardship and regenerating our natural, social, and cultural systems are our priority. Ours is a community nourished by the love of place, a deep sense of belonging, and a strong desire to care for land and waters.

3. COMMUNITY LEADING

Our community can design and activate its own future. Empowering our community by unlocking local knowledge, lived experience, and island ingenuity will not only enable our place to flourish, but will also make it a great place to visit.

4. HOSTING

We will implement a regenerative approach to the hosting and management of visitors. We seek to host visitors who care, connect, respect, and want to give back. Hosting—the practice of welcoming—means there is a mutual obligation between hosts and visitors to care for each other and behave well. The hosting of visitors should contribute a net positive impact so that our place, nature, and communities may flourish, and our businesses can regenerate.

At this point, a closer relationship started to form with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community. The Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania provided support for the Islander Way project, articulating the link between regeneration and First nations wisdom:

The initiatives of The Islander Way acknowledge the opportunity to engage in something that our community has always known. For Country to regenerate, it must renew, undiminished, across generations. Whatever is taken must be returned in equal measure and more, for the future.

BOX 1

Values guiding the Islander Way Regenerative Tourism Framework

Self organising

Six (6) projects co-designed and driven by community members formed the core actions. However, these projects were connected into a broader set of interdependent actions (Designing Tourism, 2023). The six projects included:

- ▶ A community collective – a self-funded not for profit established to support the development, advocacy and implementation of the community's projects and actions;
- ▶ Local waste hubs – positioned across the Island to reduce household and rental accommodation waste and implement education programs;
- ▶ Flinders Island Local Food – community-led network which has attracted over 150 members organised around the collection and distribution of produce and value-added food products;
- ▶ Flinders Trails – community-led project to support trail maintenance of the 10 Walks of Flinders Island (a Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service initiative);
- ▶ Furneaux Maritime History Museum – design and delivery of a community-led Maritime History Centre to preserve nationally significant maritime history; and
- ▶ 'Trove' Circular Economy – community-led project designed to address the Island's waste in a holistic way, incorporating waste reduction, sorting, recycling, a makers' space, education and training opportunities, and visitor experiences.

CONFIDENCE, TRUST, AND AGENCY

Responding to the aspirations of the community to design their own future rather than have it imposed by 'people from away', a community collective has been established. A living systems approach dictates that change happens through flows of energy, information, and matter. To this end, an important focus in the community-led approach was to activate local leadership by supporting and developing the capacity of networks of community members.

Some of the community members who participated in the projects reflected that they did not consider themselves or did not want to be leaders. Intergenerational social hierarchies and the small and closed nature of the community meant that no one would openly assume such roles. Indeed, many in the community appeared to intrinsically understand the distributed nature of leadership, explaining that everyone was happy to lead interdependent lives, do their own thing, and call for help when needed, but when difficulty strikes the community comes together 'like a warm hug'.

There is a high rate of volunteerism on the Island and a willingness to step in when help is needed. The project provided many community members an opportunity to explore an interest, connect with others, and contribute. In the process, confidence, trust, and a sense of hope in the future emerged.

Reflections

CONTRIBUTIONS

The case of the Regenerative Living Lab on Flinders Island exemplifies a new approach to tourism that is place-based, community-powered, and respects natural systems. The appetite for local solutions to address the Island's issues is growing, demonstrated by the following momentum:

1. Working with and through each other has allowed co-creation, collaboration, connection, and problem-solving in ways that could not be imagined in a traditional destination management planning process. It allows us all to access each others' talents, individually and collectively, on an equal footing. The RTO (Visit Northern Tasmania) has made new and meaningful connections and learned a great deal about how to do

tourism differently. They have advocated for the project in other policy spheres and levels of government, and have remained open hearted in the face of push back from those fearing change. The community has had access to a global network of changemakers doing regenerative tourism that could not be forged by adopting an old top-down template approach. We in *Designing Tourism and The Tourism CoLab*, have also learned, experimented, tested, and trialled different actions; we have built friendships; opened up a heart space; and done truly meaningful work that many in the community have acknowledged (Flinders Council, 2023).

2. The Islanders ‘bought into’ the process by organising their own community engagement. Entitled, ‘Postcards Plus’, this month-long gallery event was organised by locals in response to the Islander Way project and in an effort to provide community data that was not generated/collected by the project team. Over 100 people visited the exhibition and a large body of work was generated, which is now stored by the Council’s Arts Committee (see Dredge, 2022d).
3. A vibrant food security group now has over 150 members. It holds a highly successful monthly community exchange of fresh and value-added produce (the Karma Farmer stall). It holds fundraising events, has conducted a survey of on-Island growers, examined how much produce has to be brought on to the Island, and identified where/how more fresh food can be grown locally.
4. A positive relationship with Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) is developing after a number of difficult years, and a group interested in walking trails is emerging and collaborating with PWS to care for walking tracks. The project contributes to the health and wellbeing of local residents, builds social connections, reduces isolation, and seeks to identify, deliver, and measure positive impacts.
5. Two circular economy projects, one known as ‘Trove’, as well as a local waste hub project, propose a holistic waste management solution for the Island. These projects require significant investment; however, advocacy efforts have raised the attention of State government departments and other key organisations.
6. The ‘Furneaux Futures Forum’ (held in June 2022) is a local forum designed to engage policymakers with island issues. It had the theme of ‘regeneration’ for its 2023 event (i.e., regenerative agriculture, regenerative tourism, and regenerative business). This illustrates that organisers now have a growing curiosity about regeneration and what it might offer the Island and its communities.

CHALLENGES

The above contributions of the project need to be balanced with its challenges. A genuine approach to implementing regenerative tourism (as opposed to greenwashing) requires two foundational changes:

1. **Shifting mindsets** – moving away from the rational scientific strategic approach to tourism as an industry (which is exploitative and extractive), towards one that is restorative, regenerative, and connected; and
2. **Shifting the system** – adopting a living systems approach means that the current organisational structures, goals, practices, and systems must be redesigned.

A regenerative approach requires evidence of these two conditions. However, these are very challenging shifts to make given that the modern mass tourism system is predicated on a number of assumptions that are not valid in a living systems approach. The challenges we confronted in this project were significant, including pushback from those established interests fearful of change, to disinterested parts of the policy sphere where the focus was on the ‘busy work’ of policy and funding cycles. The project did not fit within established or acceptable parameters and thus failed to gain the interest of some policymakers, despite considerable advocacy efforts over the duration of the project. These obstacles paled in comparison to the growing momentum and goodwill emerging in the community and a local government willing to explore an alternative approach. This project would not have been possible without their courage, willingness, and creativity.

Our challenges crystallised into a number of truths which we share below. It is here that we ask you to return to the two questions raised at the beginning of this chapter: ‘What do I know to be true?’ and ‘What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?’ We ask you to move from your cognitive (head-dominated) journey through this chapter, to your heart’s wisdom, and consider each of these questions in relation to the points below:

- ▶ We cannot continue to grow unfettered and beyond planetary limits. ‘Regenerative growth’ is, therefore, an oxymoron.
 - What do I know to be true?
 - What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?
- ▶ Tourism cannot be siloed and managed independent of the wider social, economic, and environmental systems of which it is a part.
 - What do I know to be true?
 - What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?
- ▶ The predominant skill set available within the tourism sector is marketing, which is no longer enough. Mindset and systems change demands the development of diverse knowledge and skill sets that may not exist within the sector. Connecting into broader systems of change and transition journeys, such skills need to be sourced from outside the sector.
 - What do I know to be true?
 - What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?
- ▶ The dislodging of old knowledge and power can illuminate new pathways but will always attract controversy, pushback, gaslighting, and undermining behaviours.
 - What do I know to be true?
 - What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?
- ▶ The readiness for change and willingness to adapt varies. There must be a continuous onboarding of people and ideas as understanding of the new approach unfolds.
 - What do I know to be true?
 - What does this mean for my worldview and my practice?

Now take a moment to consider what you will take away from reading this chapter, and how it will influence the way in which you show up and hold space for a regenerative perspective.

The aim of this chapter has been to share learnings drawn from the implementation of a Regenerative Tourism Living Lab on Flinders Island, Tasmania, Australia. The project provided an extraordinary opportunity to work both in and on the tourism system simultaneously. Working in the system, we have started to build the collective capacity of businesses, operators, the community, and visitors to implement nature-positive and community-positive actions. Working on the system, we have been able to identify organisational and policy challenges that stand in the way of shifting the system towards regeneration.

This chapter is therefore much more than a case study but a roadmap for the change we need to make.

Acknowledgement

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an emergent approach and to trust the process was essential for the project's success. This chapter is dedicated with gratitude to Annie Revie.

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Nordic regenerative tourism: Regional approaches within a common vision

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This chapter describes the approach used in creating a network for understanding what regenerative tourism means in the Nordic area that was developed by the Nordic Regenerative Tourism (NorReg) project. We describe over two years of work (between the years 2022-2023) and summarise the local voices of Nordic communities, small and micro-sized enterprises (SM_iES), destination management organisations (DMOs), and academic researchers on what a Nordic regenerative tourism would look like. Funding from NorReg came from the Nordic Council of Ministers and is led by the Iceland Tourism Cluster on behalf of The Icelandic Ministry for Culture and Business Affairs.

The Nordic Countries have a long history of cooperation. The Nordic Council was founded in 1952 as the official body for the formal inter-parliamentary cooperation and the cooperation has since 1962 been framed by the Helsinki treaty and its later amendments (Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019a). The Nordic Council of Ministers, founded based on the Helsinki Treaty in 1971, is the official body for intergovernmental cooperation in the Nordic Region (Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers, n.d.).

From its inception, the cooperation has worked within politics, economics, and culture, focusing on areas where a Nordic approach can generate added values for these countries and peoples of the region (Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019a). Thus, the cooperation has, through the years, focused on issues such as open borders, education, work, social security, cultural cooperation, environmental cooperation, energy, and innovation. Most recently, tourism has become a focus within the cooperation, with the Nordic Working Group on Tourism established in 2019, tasked with strengthening the Nordic countries' co-operation on tourism and supervising the implementation of the Plan for Nordic Co-operation on Tourism for 2019 to 2023.

In 2019, the Nordic Prime Ministers announced their common vision: that the Nordic countries become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world in 2023. To this end, three priorities were defined for Nordic Cooperation until 2024: a green, competitive and a socially sustainable Nordic region. Within those three priorities, 12 goals were defined by the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers (2019b).

The NorReg project supports all three priorities with clear aims of developing a truly regenerative tourism sector; supporting SM_iES within the sector in their strive towards resilient and regenerative business operations. Furthermore, NorReg has an emphasis on systems of measurement that focus on the social framework that the tourism industry relies upon. In particular, NorReg feeds into most of the 12 goals for the Nordic Vision for 2023 (see Box 1).

1. CARBON NEUTRALITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

NorReg will cooperate with Subproject 2: Measuring regional tourism and tourism's environmental impact in the Nordics – a common approach on tourism statistics to include metrics for climate adaptation within the KPIs defined within the project.

2. BIODIVERSITY

This objective is clearly addressed through the emphasis by NorReg on developing and adapting ecological metrics to ensure environmental sustainability and regeneration.

3. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

NorReg contributes to the sustainable production of tourism products as well as supporting sustainable production throughout the tourism supply chain.

4. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Participants in the NoReg project will develop regenerative products that contribute to the consumption of sustainable tourism products in Nordic Countries.

5. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

The NorReg project will strengthen international cooperation in the field of measurable regenerative tourism and aims to provide a methodology that offers solutions in a wider, global context.

6. KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

The networks created within the NorReg project will provide platforms for knowledge exchange and the adoption of technological innovation.

7. COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The emphasis within NorReg on the participation of tourism SMEs ensures the involvement and ownership by civil society.

8. TRUST AND COHESION IN THE NORDIC REGION

The NorReg project aims at increasing trust and cohesion within the tourism sector in the Nordic countries by defining a common vision for regenerative tourism; adopting a bottom-up approach to the development and implementation of programs; supporting tools; and creating pan-Nordic sectoral networks of various stakeholders.

The main aim of NorReg is to create relevant tools for the development of sustainable and regenerative tourism practices in regional destinations, based on the adoption of responsible tourism operations by local SME tourism providers. The importance of place identity is underlined as sustainable tourism development should be focused on the people who live there and not for the tourists themselves. In the next section, we describe sustainability and responsibility to build an understanding of the development of a common vision for Nordic Regenerative Tourism with approaches aimed at supporting regional identity. We then describe the outcomes of the NorReg project from 2022-2023 and set the stage for the development of what the future of Nordic regenerative tourism will look like beyond 2024.

BOX 1

The NorReg alignment with the goals within the common vision for the Nordic Countries 2030

Sustainability and responsibility

The concept of sustainable tourism has its roots in the rise of the concept of sustainability in the 1990s and gained strength as people sought to find ways to counteract mass tourism and counteract exploitation and uncontrolled growth (Aquino et al., forthcoming). In 1999, the WTO (now UNWTO) defined sustainable tourism such:

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. (Cernat et al., 2011, p. 3, emphasis added).

This definition focused on visitors and host regions with an emphasis on management of public resources. It did not, however, allot responsibility for actions to achieve sustainability goals nor call for accountability. This became the main criticism of the concept, while the sustainability discourse within tourism was influenced by ruling trends within politics, generational expectations, and changing worldviews.

The current definition of sustainability by the UNWTO shows a definite change of focus from the original:

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. (emphasis added)

Here, wider definitions referring to biological processes, ecosystems, and culture have been taken out of the definition of sustainability and the needs of various stakeholders are defined—most notably the industry itself.

The focus on industry needs has been criticised within academia and environmentalists because it would seem to emphasise growth and consumption rather than balance; and quick fix greenwashing solutions rather than adaptive mindset changes (Aquino et al., forthcoming).

The change in definition by the UNWTO also reflected the rise of the concept of responsible tourism, within which various stakeholders were encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, reflecting neoliberal approaches that are meant to empower individuals to 'be' the change and act sustainably according to ethics and social norms (Aquino et al., forthcoming). This moral sustainability assumed that tourists, as well as tourism operators, are inherently likely to behave responsibly. However, the concept of what is responsible and what is not is subjective and can vary widely between individuals (Saarinen, 2021). During holiday travel, it has been shown that travellers tend to take a break from daily routines and ethical norms that rule their everyday worldviews, resulting in less responsible behaviour while visiting host communities.

Responsible tourism gained recognition around the time of the global recession of 2008. The approach has been criticised as having a market-focused, neoliberal perspective, drawing upon the 'de-politicisation' of actions and operations within the tourism sector, and thus towards deregulation and an appeal to individual stakeholders' own sense of responsibility (Atladóttir et al., 2023). What had been solely perceived as common responsibilities and actions, should now be defined as individual. While that does shift responsibility from a vague 'we' and calls for accountability from tourism stakeholders, the lack of communality leads to a fragmented approach to challenges that are in fact holistic in nature.

The term responsible tourism was developed by stakeholders within the local tourism industry who sought to push for actions and accountability by all within the tourism sector. However, as the term was affected by prevailing political trends of the time, the emphasis on deregulation led to its aim being set forth as encouragement rather than calls for regulatory frameworks or mandatory rules. Stakeholder responsibility thus did not necessarily translate into accountability (Atladóttir et al., 2023).

Neither the original sustainability perspective (with its focus on common values and resource management without accountability) nor the perspective of individual responsibility (with its trust in responsible stakeholders' actions and fragmented approach to common challenges) has proven very adept in ensuring that tourism develops in harmony with host communities and the environment. As the second decade of the twenty-first century came to an end, residents in many urban destinations around the world were protesting what they perceived as the onslaught of tourism into their communities. While popular natural destinations were suffering from congestion, trampling and environmental damage (Pollock, 2019). Tourism challenges were increasingly perceived as universal and common (e.g., climate change, overcrowding, lack of responsible management). There was a call for a holistic approach that considers the common effects of human actions and the interconnectedness of all systems, natural and man-made, while also realising the importance of meaningful individual responsibility (Aquino et al., forthcoming).

The NorReg project aims to prioritise activities that work in balance with communities and environment (both natural and social), to raise awareness that tourism can be a form of sustainable regional development for many places. The project aimed at giving tools that help to build regenerative tourism based on local needs. Although the Nordic areas share similar historical and cultural traditions, they have distinctive and unique characteristics. This is key when developing regenerative tourism as no two Nordic destinations are alike and with no panacea. It is also important to help combat out-migration of rural areas and focus on community development that draws on the people who live and work in these regions. Higgins-Desbiolles and Bigby (2022) argue that labelling communities as tourism destinations de-localizes undermine that these places are of great value to locals.

Regenerative tourism

During COVID-19 the global tourism industry suffered an unprecedented existential crisis. The demand for pushing beyond the unsustainable and irresponsible practices gained a strong voice during the height of the pandemic. There was a call to reconceptualize sustainable and responsible practices with tourism development and management. Further discussions gained ground on the concept of regenerative and how this would look within the tourism industry. Regenerative tourism is founded in the belief that it is not enough to do no harm with tourism activities, rather, it is necessary to also contribute to the regeneration of resources that tourism utilises.

The concept of regenerative tourism is an approach that extends the proactive management of responsible tourism and has become prominent within both academic and industry discourse, providing opportunities for meaningful tourism development and management within a responsible framework (Aquino et al., 2022). Regenerative tourism has its roots in and is adapted from trends in agriculture and architecture, with the foundations of renewal and restoration of land and ecosystems, fertility, and biodiversity as a goal. Dredge (2022) sees regenerative tourism as an approach that aims to promote positive change to the challenges caused by travel and tourism. In its core the goal of regenerative tourism is to positively affect and give back to local communities and places, but also to the tourists themselves (Aquino et al., forthcoming).

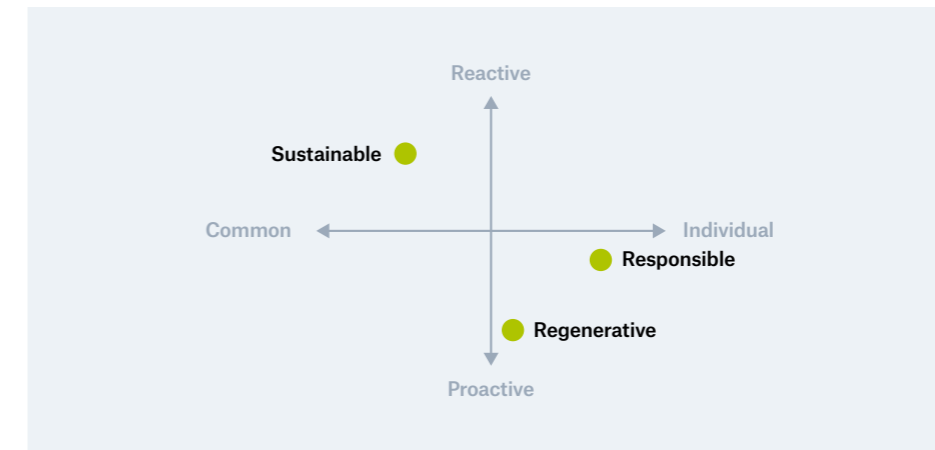


FIGURE 1
Regenerative tourism, graphic rights by the main author (Atladóttir et al., 2023)

The term regenerative tourism is very recent and is still being explored. However, various definitions of the concept of regenerative exist. They have in common a more proactive perspective and a focus on the need not only to preserve what is, but to regain environmental resources and renew community structures through tourism. Also embedded in the concept is the emphasis on holistic approaches, thus returning to the acknowledgement of our common responsibilities and the multitude of stakeholders important for the success of sustainability within the tourism sector. At the same time, regenerative tourism acknowledges that every destination has an individual identity, and that actions and initiatives need to be place-based rather than general.

Small and micro-sized tourism operators within destinations are the backbone of local tourism operations in the Nordic countries (Atladóttir et al., 2023, p. 16). We argue that they can be regarded as crucial catalysts of change and stewards of regenerative tourism systems. Regenerative practices need to be aligned with local cultural and natural characteristics and identities and integrated into local strategic policies and approaches. In this way, regenerative tourism can be a transformational approach that aims to fulfil the potential of tourism places to flourish and create net positive effects through increasing the regenerative capacity of communities and ecosystems (Bellato et al., 2022).

Regenerative tourism can be viewed as a step towards sustainability, as an extension of sustainability or even as separate or distinct from sustainability (McEnhill, 2020). However, the aims and ambitions focus on positive benefits for ecosystems and communities. It is therefore imperative for the future relevance of the concept of regenerative tourism that programs, actions, and operations can be evaluated—including developing relevant methods to be developed or adapted to monitor progress (Atladóttir et al., 2023).

Regenerative tourism may affect all aspects of tourism operations; therefore, it offers an opportunity for developing better (and more competitive) sustainable business models. There is an opportunity to support local endeavours by SM₁ES in incrementally recalibrating their operations towards regeneration. The regenerative approach to tourism development is an opportunity for place-based product development that focuses on the preservation of local cultural traditions, the local environment, and may include visitor involvement. For example, through citizen science programs (Meschini et al., 2021) aimed at enhancing visitor experiences through participation (Atladóttir et al., 2023).

Nordic regenerative tourism

NorReg has been co-creating relevant tools for the development of regenerative tourism practices in the Nordic countries in cooperation with SM₁ES, DMOS, local communities, and academics. The main beneficiaries of the projects are local SM₁ES in regions characterised by rural communities with cultural and outdoor attractions. Regional DMOS or tourism clusters participate as regional stewards within the Nordic areas, and academic partners have been recruited to evaluate possible measurements relevant to regenerative tourism.

NORREG VISION AND PRIORITIES

At the start of the project in 2022, it was deemed crucial to ensure a common understanding of and vision for the concept of a Nordic regenerative tourism model. Through partner meetings we explored our understanding of the concept to break down any ambiguities and to create a clear scope of the overall project together.

After intensive discussions, the NorReg Vision Statement was adopted as follows:

Nordic Regenerative Tourism invigorates **communities** and fosters **landscapes** by ensuring that locals and visitors gain satisfaction from its success.

We contribute to the **revitalisation, re-energising** and **wellbeing** of our environment, our neighbours and ourselves.

Through principles of regenerative tourism we are **empowered** to work with our communities and natural environment, in **balance** with the **unique** and **wonderful** characteristics of our home region. (Atladóttir et al., 2023, p. 31)



FIGURE 2
Word cloud 'What does regenerative mean tourism for you?' (Atladóttir et al., 2023)

Three main principles with subthemes were defined as follows:

- ▶ People
 - Local
 - Participation/Involvement
- ▶ Environment
 - Balance
 - Diversity
- ▶ Business
 - Holistic
 - Revitalising (quality, creative)

These priorities, including the sub-priorities, stem from the participants' input during the two definition workshops and mirror how our NorReg participants approached 'regenerative tourism' from their point of view. We emphasise that the priorities do not mutually exclude each other. For example, within the priority **people** the sub-priority local solely means that the local aspect was especially mentioned in relation to social aspects. Hence, local plays a key role in the **people** priority but does not exclude its importance in other priorities where it is not mentioned.

PEOPLE

Regenerative tourism has a strong focus on the wellbeing of the local communities involved in the tourism practice. Hence, NorReg prioritises 'people' with an emphasis on both 'local' to highlight the place-based aspects of tourism, and 'participation' of both residents and visitors.

Local

NorReg puts great emphasis on regenerating, sustaining, and supporting the autonomy and authenticity of communities for both visitors and locals. Fostering local value plays a key role in the development of thriving communities and is essential to the overall wellbeing and sense of belonging of its inhabitants. Communities that are enriched with local value are often more attractive to young individuals, acting as a magnet for new residents and encouraging young people to return after their studies or training at other places. Local value, in the content of NorReg, ranges from increasing recreational and cultural offerings to a higher level of local services. This adds significant value to both visitors and residents, with the goal of making a positive impact on communities. In line with our vision, regenerative tourism should actively preserve traditions and the authenticity of the local culture.

Participation/Involvement

Access to communities and activities should not be overwhelming and well thought out by the community. Regenerative tourism aims to overcome barriers and to foster local networks, participation, and involvement of all demographic groups. Local collaborations and networks should not only be easily accessible to all but also characterised by transparency in terms of effective information sharing and easy access to community members. Furthermore, a diverse demographic composition of the communities should further foster inclusion both at the individual and business levels.

ENVIRONMENT

The focus on environmental regeneration plays a key role in regenerative tourism. However, the impact of tourism on the environment is sometimes difficult to assess, and the definition of regeneration must be thoughtful and in line with nature and natural processes.

Balance

Balance is imperative for ecosystems. By changing our energy consumption patterns towards green energy sources, consulting guidance from experts and scientists to restore biodiversity, and applying tailored citizen science projects that are place-based, we can actively contribute to the regeneration of our natural environments. Furthermore, nature tourism contributes towards ecological balance through its observational focus—by preserving our natural resources we ensure that future visitors have the same access to their inspirational nature as do residents.

Diversity

The NorReg project considers the alignment between regenerative tourism and the increasing focus on biodiversity studies within the natural sciences. This emphasis must focus on the current status of biodiversity in the context of place and ecological factors; but no less on the processes that encourage and make way for biodiversity as a natural, ecological force. To support environmental regeneration, a focus on promoting awareness

and local efforts that foster a sense of responsibility is necessary. With our vision of regenerative tourism, we believe that local communities understand the interrelation between themselves, their actions, and nature while also taking responsibility for it. By creating a sense of pride in the local natural landscapes we try to counteract short-term, growth-driven development that often hampers a flourishing biodiversity.

BUSINESS

Business brings the regeneration aspect to company level and emphasises the wide range of business areas that tourism comprises.

Holistic

Regenerative tourism entails developing a holistic business ecosystem that fosters local economy, production, and services that are beneficial to both locals and visitors. The holistic emphasis thus refers to the sector's interconnectedness with its environment—both natural and social, encouraging responsible consumption and operations such as waste management, fuel consumption, and the use of sustainable products. Also, the holistic emphasis entails participation and engagement by visitors, for example, through citizen science projects.

Revitalising (quality, creative)

This sub-priority is about awareness and accessibility of local value and the way it is communicated. Taking part in regenerative tourism should be easily accessible to everybody ranging from small-scaled start-ups to enterprises with bigger impact. Our mission is to raise awareness about the value of the local community to both its residents and tourists. From these foundational definitions, initiatives and activities were defined, focusing on incremental operational change, participatory visitor activities, and evaluation methods.

FIRST MILE INITIATIVES

The First Mile is an activation program that is designed within NorReg to accelerate the regenerative journey of tourism across the Nordics through low-investment, easy to adopt and impactful tactics based on behavioural change. The approach is especially relevant for small businesses, business clusters and destinations that seek to embark on journeys that require long-term, complex efforts. Such endeavours are often overwhelming for stakeholders and this in many cases leads to a reluctance to embark on a journey of change. To facilitate, the First Mile approach therefore focuses on the immediate, easy, and low-investment changes that can move the needle by changing how travellers make choices and behave.

There are two important characteristics of the First Mile approach:

- 1. Focus on now vs. some time in the future.** The full regenerative journey of any destination will require long-term transformations and shifts in operational models. These feel daunting and extend into the distant future for small business owners who often believe in regenerative tourism on a value level but who find it difficult to make the first steps. And while long-term thinking is inevitable, immediate activation is possible by focusing on doable and small changes as an immediate start. The First Mile is designed to activate action in the short term so that companies, clusters, and destinations can start making progress right away and begin seeing results now rather than in the future.
- 2. Small, easy and realistic.** The First Mile is a program powered by knowledge about how people really think and choose when it comes to travel and sustainability. Based on this it involves scanning the supply chains of businesses to map the areas where disruption-free adjustments of decision journeys, choice sets and service design can produce immediate effects.

First Mile tactics include a variety of behaviour-smart adjustments that can be applied to accommodation, food service providers, transportation companies, attractions, and all

other segments within the travel sector. They can relate to simple things such as how information is presented, what options are set as default, how choices are structured, what incentives come with choices, etc.

Nine main tactic areas were defined in 2022, three for each of the following themes:

- ▶ Supporting local buying
- ▶ Offering low-footprint experiences
- ▶ Leaving no trace behind (Nikolova in Atladóttir et al., 2023).

CITIZEN SCIENCE IN TOURISM

A shift has been taking place within science in recent years. As questions about our environment and our interactions with it become more pressing, a new generation, raised with having the world's information and knowledge at their fingertips, sees science increasingly as of a participatory, contributory, and even reciprocal enterprise, in which scientists seek input from other fellow citizens, not only in the gathering of data, but also in the formulating of research questions and interpreting results.

Citizens are no longer passive consumers, subjects, or recipients of scientific endeavours. They can shape research agendas and objectives with real community priorities, in collaboration with professional scientists or alone (Wildschut, 2017).

As new technologies have opened possibilities for gathering information on a large scale from the public, many scientists seeking to work with large-scale data gathering are excited about connecting non-experts, who are curious about the world, with their research projects. Citizen science can be a powerful tool for many scientific disciplines.

One obvious way for visitors to contribute towards local knowledge and understanding is by participating in a scientific endeavour, a research project or monitoring initiative. There is a growing number of tasks that are designed into an offered tourism activity or experience, as well as clear participatory activities, where travellers contribute in a meaningful and relevant way to local science projects.

Visitors are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding and awareness about their environment and surroundings, about the communities they visit and the natural wonders they experience. These activities bring with them several benefits:

- ▶ First, citizen science helps drive practices of knowledge creation that are not locked away from the public.
- ▶ Second, citizen science increases society's support, attitudes and behaviours towards research and conservation.
- ▶ Third, citizen science helps improve the visibility and acceptability of conservation science research findings.
- ▶ Fourth, citizen science improves society's scientific literacy.
- ▶ Fifth, citizen science contributes to research and governmental policy changes, as well as community change. (Integotravel, 2023)

Citizen Science shares many qualities with the ideology of regenerative tourism and there is a natural affinity between the two, not least with regards to emphasis on biodiversity and ecosystem research, as well as the community focus leading to interesting questions regarding social studies. Participants in Nordic Regenerative Tourism participated in introductory workshops on Citizen Science with the aim to develop and initiate projects within the participating regions in the following year.

Measuring and evaluation

A shift in defining tourism success towards flourishing communities and thriving nature calls for a new approach to evaluation methods. While NorReg concedes that measuring and evaluation are necessary components of any strategic approach in human endeavours,

the focus on economic (and too often, solely macroeconomic) factors within tourism has undoubtedly led to the current challenges tourism faces, that is, aggravated communities and depleted natural resources.

Even the use of the concept resource use is debatable in the regenerative context—as it indicates the utilisation of people and nature rather than seeking balanced interactions. However, it is useful to look for ways of evaluating the effects of tourism within local systems (natural and cultural). This helps to provide a pathway to define where we are, where we want to go, how we want to get there; and outline how we will be managing our journey.

Within NorReg 2022, a community development approach was explored as a good fit within the regenerative context (Aquino et al., forthcoming). Next, community wellbeing indicators were explored as possible measurements for positive benefits of regenerative tourism. Community development is described as both a process (developing the ability to act collectively); and an outcome where the collective action leads to improvement in a community (IACD, 2016). It is through this process of mobilising and acting collectively that the outcomes lead to a better functioning and resilient community. Community indicators help to gauge the level of wellbeing and resilience a community has; and are focused on social inclusion and community participation. This helps develop cooperative governance and social capacity. Developing indicators for gathering wellbeing data within the context of regenerative tourism may aid in the successful achievement of both improving community wellbeing and community development and can serve as a tool for guiding analysis and subsequent action (Atladóttir et al., 2023). The work in 2022 was mainly analytical, laying the foundations for the next steps in outlining indicators that look at both community and environmental wellbeing.

NorReg 2023 – Place-based and operational approaches

In 2023, the NorReg project used what we learned in 2022 to go deeper into the exploration of the concept of a Nordic regenerative tourism model. The focus continues to be on the social and environmental impact of regenerative tourism and its inclusion into the social fabric of communities. However, an emphasis has been placed upon the strengthening of local support structures within international collaboration. The aim is to establish a functioning Nordic regenerative tourism network in each partner region.

Continued collaboration between academia, SM_iES and regional organisations has focused on exploring measurements and evaluation methods for regenerative practices. While the focus continues to be on exploring the definition and evaluation of community wellbeing and tourism's impact upon it; realistic and measurable environmental efforts of SM_iES are being explored. Especially with reference to the framework of existing local and regional policies, strategies and objectives. The final deliverable will be an accessible supportive tool within which evaluation methods are referenced and described, to be easily adapted by users within the Nordic regenerative tourism community. The First Mile supportive tools introduced in the pilot have been further developed and will be activated by participants through regional structures.

Citizen science was introduced in NorReg 2022, and has been further developed within participating regions in 2023. The objective is to provide opportunities for visitors and locals connecting through participatory activities that contribute to knowledge and facilitate future decision-making for the wellness, human, and natural ecosystems. To this end, two initial projects were defined and tested:

- ▶ A citizen science project aimed at studying seal populations and wildlife monitoring activities in west Iceland. A collaboration between Youth for Arctic Nature and the Snæfellsnes Regional Park in the Snæfellsnes peninsula area.
- ▶ A participatory project, aimed at exploring conceptions of local food, has been activated in four of the partner regions of NorReg.

Regional efforts for introducing regenerative tourism approaches will be defined and implemented, with the aim of providing input into policy discussion and strategy development. The first website of the project has been reviewed and edited (see www.norreg.is), to allow communication. Inner communication has continued through social media groups. Online events have been planned, as well as the second autumn NorReg seminar, centrally in the Nordic region.

Conclusion: The future of Nordic Regenerative Tourism

Key principles of regenerative tourism defined within the NorReg project focuses on the social, environmental, and business-related values (Atladóttir et al., 2023). The social values are strongly related to local empowerment and visitor participation. Environmental values reflect the necessity to regenerate biodiversity by collaborating with experts, such as contributing to reestablishing balance within the ecosystem where tourism takes place. On a business level, NorReg identified words such as 'holistic' and 'revitalising' as essential keywords in 2022 which led to the foundation of the NorReg vision statement and our work in 2023 along with future development in 2024.

The NorReg project will apply for continued funding for its final year in 2024 with a focus on three targets:

- ▶ **Network growth and recruitment.** Continuing to work with our current partners, we have created a steering group with frequent meetings. We aim to open the work that was co-created within the NorReg project and create an open access to other entrepreneurs and stakeholders through our website. We will ask each of our partners to offer one virtual workshop in 2024, where they reflect upon the NorReg participation and its utilisation within their region. Together, we will define the future of NorReg and define possible strategies for regenerative tourism development and management and outline key tasks to continue future work within regenerative tourism after funding has ended.
- ▶ **Utilising the NorReg tools.** We will provide informal and formal support to NorReg participants, through call-in virtual coffee breaks, one-on-one sessions, and virtual workshops, to encourage the utilisation of the NorReg tools. We will host brainstorming workshops to develop the current tools and widen their scope. This will call for continued cooperation of the regional partners, academia, and the SM_iES participating in NorReg.
- ▶ **Masterclass workshops.** We will offer four open virtual Masterclass workshops on:
 - First Mile steps for SM_iES
 - The use of citizen science for regenerative tourism
 - Regenerative tourism management and public policy

It is hoped that by the end of 2024 NorReg would have successfully developed a living network within the Nordic countries allowing for its sustainability and actions within the future after funding. The definition of the Nordic regenerative tourism model, co-developed by NorReg's partners through participatory decision making, will be published and accessible on our website and will be handed over to the Nordic Council of Ministers with further suggestions of management and policy development based on the Nordic regenerative concept.

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Destination networks as a method for achieving a regenerative approach to tourism: A case study of the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN)

Aisling Ward and Shirley Millar

As a result of over-tourism, new forms of tourism production and consumption are required to rethink the shape of the tourism experience (Sharpley, 2020). Tourism as an industry has been characterised as extractive due to its use and dependency on natural resources, thus giving a negative connotation to tourism and its activities. Consequently, there has been a desire to search for sustainable solutions to tourism development as a means of differentiation and in creating a competitive advantage (Tasci, 2017). In support of this approach research indicates a growing concern amongst visitors to destinations in terms of their environmental impact and seek ways in which they can reduce this impact (booking.com, 2023). However, this research has also noted that the visitor finds it difficult to decipher good environmental practices from greenwashing while many tourism businesses are fearful of promoting environmentally sound practices as they may be construed as greenwashing. Therein lies a dilemma.

Despite the growing demand for responsible practices amongst visitors and the increasing activities of tourism providers and destinations to curb the carbon footprint of activities. There has also been a growing call for going beyond sustainability and instead fostering an approach that incorporates regenerative approaches to production and consumption within tourism activities and destinations (Alonso-Munoz et al., 2023). This requires a complete paradigm shift in which all stakeholders have a part to play. A regenerative approach to tourism requires a whole system change incorporating the land, the people, the culture/heritage, the community, and the wildlife (McEnhill et al., 2020). This chapter will explore the emerging constructs of regenerative tourism in the literature and will provide a practical example of an ecotourism network that is exhibiting characteristics of a regenerative systems approach to tourism development and progress within its destination. This network is the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) located in the remote and rural region of Co. Clare in the West of Ireland.

A shift in tourism perspective

Our traditional model of tourism development built on limitless growth and overindulgence is no longer viable with global climate change, increased inequalities and a disenchantment amongst many host communities. This has resulted in a shift in focus away from the economic and societal frameworks of the previous century towards a more conscious and responsible culture of consumption and production (UNWTO, 2016). Not only this, but there is increasing evidence that host communities are no longer satisfied with an extractive tourism industry particularly in destinations suffering from the ill effects of over-tourism and a deterioration in their quality of life, local environment, traditional cultures, and heritage. They seek to have an input into tourism development through a consultative process. Consequently, the tourism industry is in the unique position to provide for this cohort and support the sustainability of destinations through transformative experiences and transformative tourism.

Transformative tourism (Ateljevic, 2008; Reisinger, 2013; Pollock, 2015) is a growing phenomenon and has resulted in the development of numerous types of tourism in response to this demand, including eco, volunteer, educational, survival, community-based, farm, adventure, cultural, wellness, yoga, and faith (Reisinger, 2013). However, this individualised business approach based on special interest tourism and market segmentation does not consider the wider ecosystem in which the tourism sector operates, failing to tackle the impact of tourism on the social and environmental health of host communities nor the demand from this growing cohort of transformative tourists. In fact, a whole systems wide shift in measurements of value and success within the tourism industry is required. Regenerative tourism encapsulates the constructs of a postmodern approach to tourism development and is built on the idea of tourism supporting a region's sustainability along all three pillars of people, place, and profitability. Regenerative tourism fundamentally is an approach to how tourism businesses operate rather than a category of tourism to be packaged and marketed.

Regenerative tourism seeks to go beyond sustainability in providing conditions for a destination to flourish and for tourism to have a net positive impact on the place whether environmentally, socially or economically. FIGURE 1 charts the journey towards regeneration in tourism from the traditional extractive models of mass tourism to green to sustainable and regenerative (tourismcollective.au, 2023). As is evident from this graph sustainable tourism seeks to do no harm, while the aim of regenerative tourism seeks to benefit the environment and communities in which it operates.

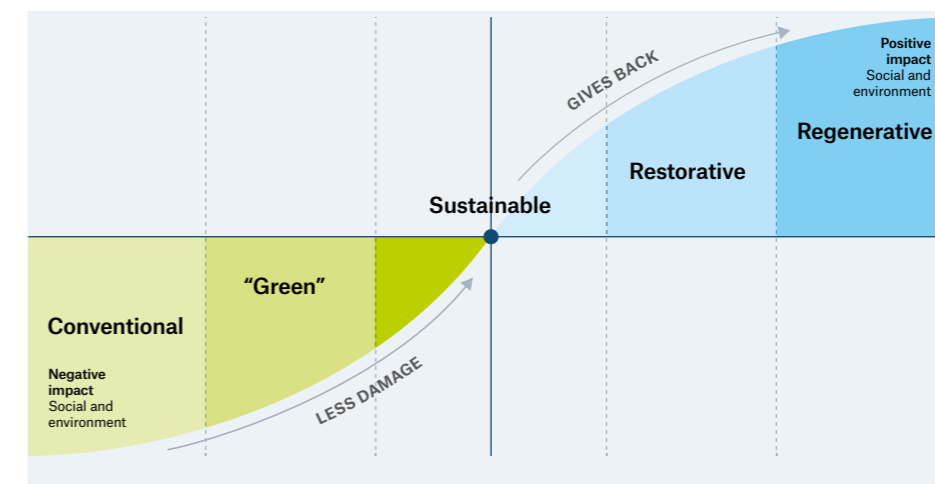


FIGURE 1
Conventional design to regenerative design. Source: SPHERA (2023)

Regenerative tourism acknowledges that the erosion of nature and the environment is not in isolation, erosion of culture, heritage, and traditional ways of doing things as well as indigenous communities is also evident (Duxbury et al., 2021). Remote and rural areas often offer little opportunity for employment with many rural areas experiencing the need to

diversify away from traditional industry such as agriculture, fishing, and fossil fuel extraction. As employment in these regions decline and people migrate in search of employment the population dwindles and as such so does the provision of facilities such as schools, public transportation, and health services. An opportunity exists within these communities to transition to tourism with the appropriate support and governance to empower communities in this endeavour.

Regenerative literature

As a rudimentary singular interpretation, regenerative refers to the capability of an entity to be created again (Rhodes, 2017), whereas a regenerative system is one in which 'life creates conditions conducive to life' integrating the role of humans as contributors to nature's evolution (Reed, 2007). Regeneration is often cited as the alternative to an extractive capitalist society but also going beyond sustainability in relation to the level of transformation required (Reed, 2007; Wahl, 2016; Shannon et al., 2022 East, 2020). Additionally, as an approach that is collaborative and mutually beneficial (Reed, 2007; Wahl, 2016), it provides a voice for all stakeholders including nature. In indigenous cultures (such as the Maori in New Zealand and the Quechua in South America) the concepts of regeneration are well embodied in their traditional practices (Huambachano, 2020), unlike many Western societies where the economic growth and capitalist approach has been entrenched. Thus, a shift towards regeneration can be challenging and requires a system change and altered mindset where success is measured beyond economics and instead focussed on the relationship between people and planet (Buckton et al., 2023). Thus, there is an imperative to support knowledge and understanding of a transition towards regenerative practices.

Regenerative tourism

The emphasis of regenerative tourism is on a whole systems approach that provides the host community and the tourist with the same prominence in terms of tourism development while purporting to the theme of ensuring the tourism destination is in a better place after the tourist visit. The whole systems approach to regeneration is about the land, the people, the culture/heritage, the community, and the wildlife (McEnhill et al., 2020). Regenerative tourism focusses on innovations within the tourism industry that go beyond traditional measurements of success but instead entrench tourism into the local community and the environment while also supporting social inclusion and the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem (Bellato and Cheer, 2021).

Doughnut economics focuses on the idea of a more distributive economy in which there is regard for social and planetary boundaries and where 'humanity can thrive' (Raworth, 2017). In tandem with this theory, what regenerative tourism seeks to do is to create a more distributive society to rebalance the flow and spread of tourism away from overcrowded places to destinations that would benefit from tourism support, lengthen the season, encourage longer stays to explore a region, promote the heritage and culture and support local livelihoods. Furthermore, actions engaged by tourists could in fact improve the ecological environment through initiatives such as beach clean-ups, rewilding activities, and tree planting amongst other carbon offsetting behaviours and supports. All of this with an emphasis on culture and heritage traditions. Regenerative tourism is, therefore, the future in which a mutually beneficial relationship is formed between nature, the community, and the visitor. Resultantly, the local place can be regenerated and the visitor gains knowledge on their role as well as increased satisfaction due to their positive contribution. Thus, a reciprocal relationship is created. A summary of the literature in relation to regenerative practices in general and tourism specifically is presented in TABLE 1.

Literature	Key points about a regenerative approach	TABLE 1 Regenerative literature summary
Bellato et al. (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Draw from an ecological worldview 2: Use living systems thinking 3: Discover the unique potential of a regenerative tourism place 4: Leverage the capability of tourism living systems to catalyse transformations 5: Adopt healing approaches that promote cultural revival, returning lands, and privileging of the perspectives, knowledges and practices of Indigenous and marginalised peoples 6: Create regenerative places and communities 7: Collaborate to evolve and enact regenerative tourism approaches 	
Dredge (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Holistic 2: Nature as our teacher 3: Care and respect 4: Agency 5: Dynamic and evolutionary 6: Collaborative 7: Continuous Learning 	
Ho (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Whole systems thinking 2: Honouring sense of place 3: Community inclusion and partnership 4: Aspirational in nature 5: Continual co-evolution 	
Tourism CoLab (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Inner work 2: Hosting good conversations 3: Include nature 4: Holistic systems approach 5: Integrated intelligence 6: Sense of community 7: Place identity, stewardship 8: Value creation and distribution 9: Participation and inclusion 10: Learning journeys 	
Future of Tourism (2022)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: See the whole picture 2: Use sustainability standards 3: Collaborate in destination management 4: Choose quality over quantity 5: Demand fair income distribution 6: Reduce tourism's burden 7: Redefine economic success 8: Mitigate climate impacts 9: Close the loop on resources 10: Contain tourism's land use 11: Diversify source markets 12: Protect sense of place 13: Operate business responsibly 	

Literature	Key points about a regenerative approach
Reed (2007)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Holistic view 2: Systems approach 3: The importance of place 4: Collaboration 5: Evolving continually through learning
Mang, Haggard, & Regenesis (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Systems approach 2: The importance of place 3: Grounded in nature 4: Collaboration 5: Evolving through learning 6: Transformational 7: Nestedness

Sources: Various works listed above, table compiled by author.

It is clear from this table that there are similarities across the spectrum of research perspectives. In particular the idea of a whole systems approach that is holistic in nature and emerges through the journey of regeneration. The ‘Place’ is front and centre but additionally an ever-evolving perspective that eschews experimentation, constant learning, and listening. Furthermore, is the notion of collaboration and community which is challenging for a tourism sector that operates in silos and comprises 99.8% small and medium-sized enterprises, often scattered in remote, coastal, and rural locations. Therefore, the opportunity exists to explore the role of tourism networks in achieving a regenerative approach to tourism success within a destination.

Destination networks

Tourism destinations comprise a diverse range of different participants including tourism businesses, communities, ancillary services, local government authorities, and Destination Management Organisations. Thus, representing a fragmented sector with differing roles, needs, and appeals to the potential visitor. The limited size and influence of many of these participants makes it difficult to have needs addressed and to promote businesses to an international audience. Furthermore, the success of a business within the destination will be dependent on the success of the destination itself (Pike, 2004). Given the diversity and complexity of the tourism product and the varied characteristics of destination visitors, the benefits to the individual businesses of forming destination networks and destination brands seem evident.

The main aim of a destination network is to help visitors respond to the beauty of the destination, the importance of its history, and its cultural significance. This can vary between people, as it is essentially the bond created between people and places. For example, this might evoke:

- ▶ Emotions (e.g., significance of its history),
- ▶ Imagination (e.g., what the place looked like in the past),
- ▶ Stories (e.g., tales and folklore), and
- ▶ Personal experiences (e.g., sense of excitement or adventure).

The challenge lies in developing a network of stakeholders to promote the local resources through a range of marketing initiatives, communicating a singular message. Therefore, the success from a management perspective is dependent on the capability of the broader

tourism network to enhance the natural resource, maintain the authentic culture and heritage, while sustaining the viability of the local community and nature. Central to this is the sustainability of local resources while ensuring a collaborative and inclusive approach to development, mindful of the impacts on host communities and the natural environment. There is a growing share of the market that will not endure over-developed tourism destinations, as many strive for more environmentally conscious locations (Ruhanen, 2007). The most recent booking.com (2023) survey found that 76% of travellers expressed a desire to travel more sustainably while almost 50% wanted tips on how to do this. Regenerative tourism goes beyond the customer as a sustainable traveller but instead as an integral part in having a positive net benefit. This requires multiple stakeholder groups working together to enhance the natural interpretation experience, whilst at the same time protecting it for future generations.

Numerous academic studies have used network theory to delineate destination development and management (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014; Paget et al., 2010; Baggio et al., 2010; Dredge, 2006). The main benefit of a network structure is that learning and exchange allow for mutual benefits for network actors, which can ultimately leverage increased business activity for all, which has positive community outcomes (Gibson et al., 2005). From a regenerative tourism perspective, the tourism network allows multiple stakeholder groups to work together to enhance the experience for visitors as well as protecting nature, heritage, and culture. Coordination amongst this diverse group is essential to build a more compelling destination experience, necessary to attract more visitors to the destination and inform them about the potential role they can play in nature preservation and restoration.

Although there exists a conflict between the conservation of environmentally sensitive places and the development of tourism attractions and facilities, a balancing act is required between the protection of a place and ensuring a prosperous rural and local economy through tourism development. By giving all stakeholders a voice and through appropriate methods of interpretation, knowledge, and education within the destination, this could effectively transform the role of the tourist from observer to conservationist and serve as an ambassador for the environmental ethos of the destination. This is particularly the case for environmentally sensitive heritage regions with a dispersed tourism offering with many of these sites adopting a responsible approach to tourism development to avoid issues of over-tourism and environmental degradation. However, the greatest challenge in this endeavour is the size, limited resources, and skills available to regionally based tourism SMEs. Thus, a network approach can have a positive role to play in the regenerative tourism change process and in creating the regenerative destination mindset.

Destination networks and sustainable tourism

Latouche (2007) determines that the definition of the local is not a closed location but instead a network of participants seeking to achieve a common goal without the constraints of bureaucracy. An inclusive approach to the development of tourism within a region can be achieved through the establishment of a tourism network where all members are granted the same level of involvement and benefits. Hall, (2005, p. 129) defines a tourism network as “an arrangement of inter-organisation cooperation and collaboration.” Tourism destinations are comprised of many stakeholders that are involved or impacted both directly and indirectly, and to varying degrees (van der Zee and Vanneste, 2015). These stakeholders include public organisations, private businesses, and the local community. All are crucial in providing supporting infrastructure, information, products, and services for the visitor. The visitor views the destination as a whole, rather than the component parts as these separate entities comprise the destination experience (Buhalis, 2000). The tourism network can provide that link between the various stakeholders for the greater success of the destination (Nguyen et al., 2019).

The extent of the success that a tourism network achieves, through its cooperative and collaborative activities, has a direct impact on the level of benefits that the local community receives from tourism. According to Stoddart et. al. (2020), rural and remote areas where

the physical location is viewed simply as a 'backdrop' to tourism activities and there is little or no community involvement is likely to fail to reach its full potential in relation to the social sustainability of the area and indeed the visitor experience (Stoddart et al., 2020).

The Burren Ecotourism Network—an example of a regenerative tourism network

The Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) was initially established in 2007 as a collaboration of tourism businesses with the objective of creating an 'internationally recognised sustainable tourism region' (Burren Ecotourism Network, 2023). It is located in the rural West of Ireland, an area of unique and natural beauty and heritage. In 2015, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark were designated with UNESCO status which elevated the BEN and the region to an international platform. Geoparks are managed with a focus on education, conservation, sustainable tourism, and community engagement (www.burrengropark.ie), thus in tandem with the Burren Ecotourism Network has strived to ensure the region is promoted and developed with a sustainable and regenerative ethos. The BEN was chosen as an example of best practice in this chapter as it is a well-established and internationally marketed destination network with a range of business types and sizes focussed on the objective of creating and maintaining a sustainable region to live and visit. The case study discussion draws on empirical evidence from 9 semi-structured in-depth interviews with 7 BEN tourism-related business members and two key stakeholders, one holding a leadership position within the BEN, and the other a founding member and tourism sustainability expert. Data collection was conducted during 2022/2023 and the purposive sample included both small/medium and large businesses as size and limits are important factors in ensuring equal status in network formation. To protect anonymity and confidentiality, stakeholder roles and positions are not specified.



FIGURE 2
The Burren, Co. Clare, Ireland
(Failte Ireland Content Pool, 2023)

Membership of the BEN is available to tourism businesses across the region and enables the members to avail of training, mentoring, networking opportunities, and independent sustainable accreditation. In 2023, there were approximately 70 members of the BEN across the region ranging from accommodation to attractions, activities, and food producers. Some members only have one employee while others are major employers in the region with over 150 employed on a part time or full-time basis. While the BEN was initially established to ensure the future sustainability of the region, through a bottom-up system

where all stakeholders are involved, what has been achieved has gone beyond sustainability. Through time, progress and continually striving to improve the visitor experience and the wellbeing of the host community and nature, there is evidence to suggest a regenerative approach to destination development has emerged.

How has the BEN achieved the regenerative approach?

The Burren Ecotourism Network regenerative approach features six dimensions: time, the code of practice for sustainable tourism, community engagement and impact, training, climate action and certification, and collaboration and cooperation.

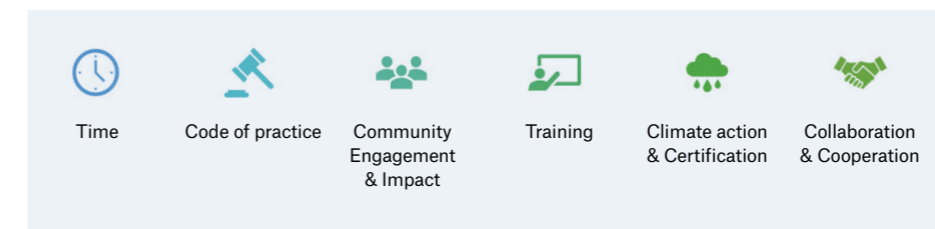


FIGURE 3
Dimensions of the Burren Ecotourism Network regenerative approach

TIME

The Burren Ecotourism Network was truly innovative at the time of its establishment in 2007 as there was little emphasis placed on the importance of sustainability in tourism and ecotourism was regarded as a niche tourism offering. In the beginning there were only 12 members who were pioneers in this domain and could see the potential value for the community, nature and the future sustainability of their own business. During this time the network has evolved holistically in response to an ever-changing global external environment and has adapted to the numerous shocks and crisis that have impacted on the industry from the global financial crisis to terrorist attacks and pandemics. However, the most critical is the impact of climate change and this has been at the heart of the network since its inception. Thus, a shift in destination mindset was achieved moving from an emphasis on volume and revenue as the key components of measuring success towards a collaborative focus on the wellbeing of the community and a sustainable development of tourism in the region. Resultantly, through the ensuing 16 years the network has grown and gained prominence on national and international platforms. Thus, time and a focus on what is good for the visitor must also be good for the host. According to Dredge (2023) there is no quick solution or fix to regenerative tourism, instead it is an ongoing process involving trial and error but always with the community and nature at its core.

THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Another key feature in the success of the Burren Ecotourism Network is as a partner of the UNESCO Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark which follows and abides by the Geopark's Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism. Thus, both the geopark and the network have common goals and values in ensuring the sustainability of the region. Additionally, through the training and mentoring offered by the Geopark the BEN members can gain support, education and knowledge in the natural heritage of the region and also in the development of an environmental action plan.

The Geopark Code of Practice is based on six principles that help a business move towards sustainable tourism practices:

1. Working together
2. A cared-for landscape
3. A well-understood heritage
4. Vibrant communities
5. Strengthened livelihoods
6. Sustainable environmental management



FIGURE 4
The Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare, Ireland (Failte Ireland Content Pool, 2023)

These principles support a regenerative model of tourism development and follow the constructs described from the literature on regenerative tourism in TABLE 1. The Network members provide a self-assessed review of how they are following the code of practice annually with an adjudicated independent review every two years. Members of the BEN report how this is an arduous task but well worth it once it has been completed.

...this year I had to resubmit all my documentation again to ratify my full membership... they have a very detailed code of practice. It is very detailed for me because I'm an activity provider but still have to provide an environmental policy and a commitment of sustainable code of practice, the idea that I have a plan of action going forward (what my plan is for the year) and I also have to incorporate something about biodiversity, which is so important ... This also makes you revisit your own business operations. (Walking tour)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

Community engagement has also been of great importance in the development and continuous success of the Network. The aim of community engagement is to re-appropriate the area's indigenous heritage, culture, and values and to actively participate in the region's cultural and economic revitalisation through the sustainable use of its geological heritage and cultural assets. In this regard the focus is in providing an experience that will entice the visitor to stay a bit longer in local accommodation, spend money in the community and participate in activities that have a positive impact on the region while also enjoying an authentic and sustainable encounter with the natural environment. Members of the BEN are required to engage in positive activities that support the communities in which they operate. This can be involvement in a social initiative such as product offerings that are inclusive, educational visits or nursing home visits, or environmental activities, for example, beach clean-ups, tree-planting or litter picks.

We go out at Christmas to local nursing homes with the schools. We will provide gifts and the children will sing, so that was our own community project that we created. We also

started with a small project harvesting some water. We only use it for power washing and stuff at the moment but that will hopefully lead to something bigger. (Visitor attraction)

We do school tours, so 20,000 kids have done their Leave No Trace training here ... and they are genuinely very naturally sustainably minded and ethically minded, the young children, then they go home and they influence their parents. (Nadine, Business Owner)

TRAINING

The availability of training provided through the BEN on skills and knowledge of pertinence to its members is instrumental, particularly in the absence of training facilitated at regional or national level. This is further evidence of a bottom-up approach reflective of the regenerative approach outlined in the literature. The training offered by the network has provided the businesses with key skills in sustainability, marketing, and digitalization. In particular, the training and lectures provided by the geologists in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark support the creation and delivery of the tourism experience and its interpretation. This emphasis on knowledge generation and sharing in relation to sustainable practice and implementation has also supported the creation of a destination mindset.

You can attend many free courses on business, geology, wildlife, how to fulfil obligations, horticulture, education, Leave No Trace... Many courses on sustainability (transport, interpretation, wastage, green purchasing.... (Peter, business owner)

Training to set up a minimum bar or expectations of behaviour for every business that is part of it. (Cathal, business owner)

CLIMATE ACTION AND CERTIFICATION

The BEN has established a sustainable certification system for their members. Importantly this is an independently adjudicated tiered system of certification that enables its members to continuously monitor and progress sustainability actions and their carbon footprint. The tiered system empowers the businesses to continuously improve and mitigate the environmental impact of the business. At the top of the tier is Emerald, whilst those in the red zone are making very little effort and resultantly may not be renewed as members of the BEN:

...there's Emerald, there's Green One and there's Green Two that there's an Amber and they (members) get a good amount of mentoring ... obviously below Amber is Red and people who don't make an effort to basically meet essential measures and there are 14 essential measures that they we have to pass before they get to Amber. (BEN Board Member)



FIGURE 5
The Burren, Co. Clare, Ireland
(Failte Ireland Content Pool,
2023)

COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

This linkage between environmental knowledge, the development of local communities, and tourists who ultimately come to learn about the local natural heritage and support rural localities is of paramount importance—as is the role of Network members in supporting and promoting each other’s business. This is, once again, representative of the establishment of a collective destination mindset:

Community development, helping each other (Walking tour)

So I suppose the whole thing with the network is that you know it’s working together is the main thing you know and working with the care of the Burren at the heart of what we do and I just love that whole....ethos, from the start, but I suppose what I really enjoyed was I’ve made lifelong friends, I think, in the network and I have people that I can just bounce ideas off all the time. (Foraging tour)

There is a communal sense of pride. If one business is doing well, it is drawing eyes from other parts of Ireland, so we are all doing well. They are not competing at each other. (Coastal Boat Tour)

The role of interpretation in regenerative tourism: Co-creation of tourism experiences

At its basic definition regenerative tourism is providing the tools for visitors to have a positive impact on the destination they are visiting. This is achieved partly through communication at all stages of the customer journey. Pre-visit, promotional and marketing material can inform the visitor on the positive role they can play through the choices they make in the destination. During the visit is the educational piece provided through valuable and authentic interpretation, whilst post-visit is the word of mouth generated through social media and other communication tools. Thus, providing the opportunity for visitors to become destination ambassadors and support the continued regeneration of the region and lessen the environmental footprint. Through small actions by the business provider and unobtrusive immersive experiences and communications the visitor can have a positive impact on the region. In the BEN there is evidence of many of these activities and incentives. Visitors are encouraged to purchase a Burren tote bag for their rubbish during days out, which will then be disposed of in a responsible manner by their accommodation providers.

Members of the BEN are also encouraged wherever possible to source all their raw materials and supplies locally. One activity business in particular rewards her visitors with a ‘Free cup of tea, if you cycle to me’. Additionally, as all members of the BEN have received compulsory Leave No Trace training they can encourage their visitors to also Leave No Trace through their interpretation.

If you show them (visitor) a particular plant, if you get them to smell it, possibly taste it, possibly show them some of the systems of growth. For example, there are some plants that can thrive on very little nutrients and they grow along the Burren paving and you can actually roll them up like a mat and you can show the people the root system and you are explaining to them about the sensitivity of the plants. People are curious about that and they are interested in that. There is a bit of hands-on there as well, they can either taste the thing, feel the thing, smell the thing. The message they are getting isn’t just talk. Getting people to use their senses, they begin to appreciate more the plants. (Walking tour)

...it’s literally put on the wellies, bring your raincoat, bring a bucket and scissors and come on because they can’t dress it up... (Foraging tour)

Additionally, given the partnership between the Burren Ecotourism Network and the UNESCO Burren and Cliffs of Moher geopark whose remit is to educate, there is a synergy between the objectives of both. The Geopark promotes learning through:

- ▶ Creating a network of outdoor classrooms and programmes that promote engaged learning;
- ▶ Sharing geological knowledge in a compelling way—knowledge about the forces that shape our world, knowledge that increases our understanding of our landscape and culture and helps us to adapt better changes in our environment; and
- ▶ Introducing new ideas and new thinking to help sustain and enrich the livelihoods of visitors and the community (Burrengeopark.ie).

The level and complexity of interpretation and knowledge available to the visitor is dependent on their motivations and characteristics. Interpretation is provided by the geopark as well as the members and tourism providers of the Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN). The geopark employs a geologist for the region whose role is to ensure an authentic and understandable interpretation of the region and its natural heritage.

EQUALITY OF MEMBERSHIP

One of the biggest challenges for all networks but in particular diverse tourism networks is the fact that it is difficult to achieve an equality of membership where all participants feel valued and have an input into the development, vision and ethos of the Network. Significantly when members are of different sizes, influence, and economic importance within the region. The BEN has managed to progress and grow ensuring all its members feel valued and have equal status within the Network. This was determined from the outset with the development of membership criteria which all businesses abide by the following:

- ▶ Pay a fee.
- ▶ Be a part of at least two subgroups so for example either the marketing group and the conservation group or the finance group so that you contribute to the overall strength of the network.
- ▶ Uphold the Sustainable Code of Practice.
- ▶ Support the working together policy and attend meetings.
- ▶ Attend training provided by the UNESCO Geopark about the landscape.
- ▶ Attend Leave No Trace training.
- ▶ Contribute to the Community activities be it Tidy Towns or local fundraising whatever’s going on in the local area.
- ▶ Employ local people and you work with local suppliers.

- Sustainable environmental management to improve your processes. (BEN board member)

Resultantly, this equality in status operates in such a way that the destination and environment wellbeing become the socially acceptable norm and all businesses support or unknowingly exerts pressure on other businesses to follow suit to ensure the region is thriving. Nevertheless, this is not without its challenges.

As it is growing, it will be hard to keep core values, especially when it comes to the eco thing. Once large businesses become more integral to the existence of the network, they need to be careful of the idea that these large businesses are selling themselves on the image of the smaller businesses that make the more genuine contribution [...] to strike a good balance between what we have in the Burren and that we don't have too many tourists and too many things going on that would in any way damage the Burren or that might make visitors' experience of the Burren less valuable because there are too many damned people there. (Coastal boat tour)

However, caution in progress and growth is required to maintain the values and ethos of the Network and protect nature and the community.

PEOPLE AND NATURE AS ONE

The overarching theme emerging from the Burren Ecotourism Network research is that nature, people, and tourism can co-exist. This is achieved through a shift in mindset where the conservation and restoration of nature, the sustainability of communities, heritage and culture, and the region as a flourishing living system is supported by the success of viable tourism businesses and a responsible visitor. Regardless of the size, all tourism businesses have a responsibility to operate in a manner that can ensure the future of the region.

DISCUSSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the emerging literature on regenerative tourism, its constructs and challenges. It has also discussed the role of destination networks in tourism development and the significance of these in a sector that comprises many small and fragmented tourism businesses. Furthermore, it has sought to determine how a tourism network can effectively support the implementation of a regenerative framework for development. The case study example in this chapter was of the Burren Ecotourism Network, in the West of Ireland. This is an established and internationally recognised ecotourism network that has the sustainability of the region at the core of its values. However, what has emerged is a destination network that goes beyond sustainability and instead reflects the constructs of a regenerative approach to tourism development. TABLE 1 summed up the literature findings on the factors that support a regenerative model and the Burren Ecotourism Network case study provided in this chapter showed the synergies that exist between the concepts explored in the literature and the evidence emerging from the BEN.

FIGURE 6 illustrates the common themes from the existing literature and the case study. It condenses the factors that each author identified albeit with use of varying language and allows for overlapping areas to be combined and areas of emphasis to emerge. As is evident from this chart, there is a correlation between the conceptual theory emerging in the literature and the actions of the Burren Ecotourism Network implemented on the ground. The BEN is represented in five of the eight themes addressed. Although there is still room for progress and improvement within the BEN, as noted by Dredge (2023), regenerative tourism is an iterative process involving conversations, connections, and experimentation.

The success of the network can be attributed to the holistic, inclusive, and experimental approach to its development but all with the sustainability of the region, its people and community at its core. This is evidenced also by the fact that the region is set to become Ireland's first GSTC certified sustainable destination (Clare County Council, 2023). The findings from this research could support other regions, networks, and destinations

in achieving a regenerative approach to development. Additionally, the findings can also support policy actions in terms of reducing the carbon footprint of visitors; improving employment opportunities in the region; providing host communities with a platform to be involved in the development of their region; conserving nature, heritage, and culture; and finally, ensuring that tourism has a net positive impact beyond volume and revenue.

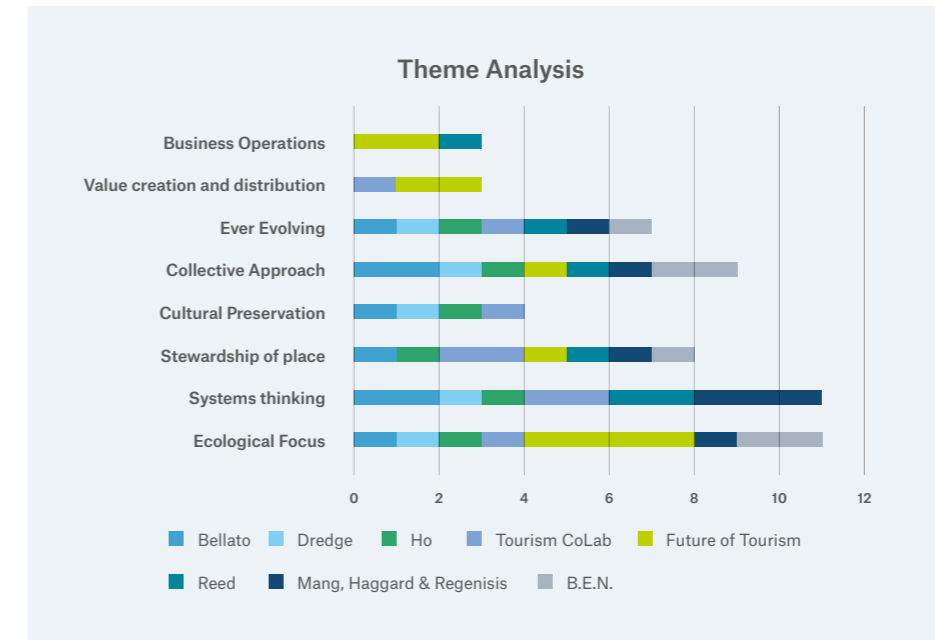


FIGURE 6
Aligning the practices and behaviours of the Burren Ecotourism Network with existing literature

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the emerging literature on regenerative tourism and identified the evolution from regenerative theory to its application in a tourism context. A summary of the role of networks in establishing a sustainable destination was also addressed. Finally the application of the regenerative theory in the context of an Ecotourism Destination Network (BEN) was examined and found that through collaboration and continuously striving towards improving the visitor experience, the wellbeing of the community and the conservation of nature, a regenerative approach to tourism has been adopted through a naturally evolving process rather than a contrived approach.

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Untying the representation of creative tourism: Scotland's islands, remoteness, and regeneration

Kathryn A. Burnett

This chapter is based on both personal and professional reflections of how creative tourism sits within the wider narratives of regeneration and community resilience in Scotland's islands, and related 'remote rural' contexts. Expansion of creative tourism (and cultural economies) is a key objective for Scotland (see, for example, Ord and Behr [2019] on music, and Garrison and Wallace [2021] on media); not least in countering assumptions of 'remote rural' and island places as marginal, 'fragile', and peripheral. Economic drivers, eco-social concerns, and the sustaining of community assets are of ongoing research interest in Scotland. Lessons have been learned as to what can be considered as better or good approaches to endogenous enterprise and development in Scotland's islands, and tourism plays a key role in this. In response to the call to reflect on Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience, this chapter offers comment on Scotland's 'remote rural' and islands' context. It is structured accordingly: first, the entangled narratives (with a view to untying aspects of representation) of Scotland's islands and 'remote rural' places as discourses of otherness and specialness are explored. Secondly, the chapter looks to Scotland's 'remote rural' and island places as creative tourism destinations and considers historical legacies that continue to inform current tourism promotion. Thirdly, examples of island-based enterprise are shared that exemplify creative tourism as focused on regeneration, resilience, and sustainable innovation. Finally, some brief conclusions are drawn.

Scotland's rural and island representation: Some untying to do?

The discourse and representation of what an island is as experienced from within must compete strongly with what is assumed or anticipated by that outwith, or beyond, its shores (Baldacchino, 2018; Burnett et al., 2021; McLeod et al., 2021). Competition between islands for place promotion and product experiences can be locally challenging, with competing pressures and repercussions for regional tourism development and small community resilience. What is, or who is, 'the island' (its community and who speaks for, and how they represent it) is also a shifting, complex, and contingent undertaking of identity, authority, and experience. Islands and their representation (islandness) are examples of a 'discursive

knot': the meaning of things is entangled in various discourses and narratives that complexly shape or constitute an idea or understanding of something, resulting in a knot of meaning that researchers might seek to untie or detangle. This short chapter seeks to explore the 'discursive knot' of Scotland's islands and their representation as creative tourism destinations. This includes long-established perceptions (but also structural realities) of Scotland's rural and island regions and their socio-economic limitations, regenerative capacity, and resilience. To explore these aspects more fully, it is useful to reflect first on cultural and creative representations of Scotland more broadly.

It has been argued that Scotland as a country has suffered from a considerable degree of cultural and creative misrepresentation (i.e., ideologically charged discursive knots and tangles), especially regarding mythical tropes and stereotypical representation reproducing certain outdated and unhelpful ideas of Scotland, as suggested below:

It is not difficult to misrepresent Scotland, and its representation has often been analysed selectively, too. When this is added to ethnocentric or otherwise ideological accounts of Scottish culture and history (in which anglocentric versions are often to the fore), the resulting discursive knots can be hard to disentangle. The available representations of Scotland form far too complex a range to be subject to careless generalisations. For such a very small country, Scotland has seemed both heavily and contradictorily productive of myth (Harvie 2002; Gifford and Riach 2004), at its most extreme being simultaneously the best and worst small country in the world. (Blain and Burnett, 2008, p. 16)

Creative tourism contributes to this discursive 'specialness', both through destination narratives and the interface with legacies of (mis)representation. Today the islands and 'remote rural' regions are considered rich in creative tourism assets, with excellent potential for affirming, immersive, and wellbeing experiences (Duxbury et al., 2020); these are good places to live and great places to visit. This specialness is not a process of simple attribution, however. Narratives of destinations as being special are informed by a range of agencies and policies. Each privilege or redefine selective elements as being good from, or special to place. This includes an expanding sense of voices from within island communities presenting their own destination accounts. In addition, Scotland's remote rural and small island places have crucially channelled available policy that encourages endogenous enterprise, and notably enhances local community empowerment. Results include a broader community resilience (i.e., rural population retention, enterprise growth), and evidence of an increasing confidence within hitherto 'remote' places to operate as attractive and sustaining "creative outposts" (Brouder, 2012). Such 'good' resilience narratives are nonetheless predicated on a countering of deep historical assumptions of Scotland's highlands and islands as problematically remote, economically, and socially underdeveloped, and historically portrayed as creative and cultural 'backwaters'. Today, despite such past assumptions being challenged in wider policy terms, how such images and ideas of difference continue to inform tourism narratives, anticipations, and promotions remains complex. To expand on this further consider Doreen Massey's insightful observation of a place being therefore a "constellation of processes" (2005, p. 141) whereby the "specialness" of place is one of a negotiation of a place's "throwntogetherness" (p. 140). One aspect of this negotiation is how Scotland's offshore islands and rural regions (such as the highlands) have sought to counter longer term legacies of otherness as problematic whilst retaining a degree of creative tourism allure that can still disproportionately align to this very otherness? The section below expands now on this legacy of destination otherness.

Scotland's island and rural remote destinations: A legacy of otherness

Cultural and creative tourism is dominated by representational regimes (e.g., artistic, tourist, media, and enterprise) of selective Scottishness. Scotland's tourist representation is

contingent still on a long legacy of romantic tourist gaze consisting of ‘remote’, wild and wilderness representations, and a mythical, Celtic ‘otherworldness’. Scotland as a gentrified (some might argue ossified) world of modern tartanry (Brown, 2010) still informs our national tourism representation. A legacy of Victorian and Edwardian private sporting estates (many now operating as private hotels and clubs), and the related hill and glen leisure and elite rural escape narratives, pervades much Scottish rural destination media images and discourses. In addition, a still unshakable Clan and Jacobite inspired romantic Highlandism, notably galvanised recently by the literary and screen success of the Outlander television series phenomenon, actively shapes Scottish creative tourism anticipation. Elsewhere, alternative screen depictions of islands offer a different sense of creative Gothic allure. Scottish Nordic noir (again exemplified by television’s Shetlander series based on Shetland’s archipelago) presents a different tourism narrative of an alternative islandness of ‘gritty’ intrigue, risk yet still imbued with aspects of mythical inspiration for visitors (Agger and Tange, 2019).

Scotland has a long relationship with its categorization as a site of British difference. Scotland’s highlands and islands were historically marginalised, configured by the British state as remote, culturally and economically problematic. Yet, the region also became notably an attractive and eventually thriving ‘off the beaten track’ destination for early modern tourism. Scotland offered a safe retreat from Europe’s Napoleonic conflict: a realm of escape to a geographical edge that offered a palatable wilderness, ‘escape’, and exotic cultural otherness. Tourism today is still informed by these earlier narratives of Scotland’s highlands and islands as a place apart, with anticipations of edge, discovery, and escape celebrated in narratives generated around iconic destination sites such as Glencoe or the island of Skye (FIGURE 1). Furthermore, and from within the British Isles research and cultural establishment, Scotland presented a site for gentrified gratification in research, career, and pastimes. Celebrated scientific and ethnological ‘curiosities’ could be found and ‘discovered’, including the exotic framing of the north Atlantic archipelago of St Kilda as a place and a people, ‘clinging on’ at Europe’s ‘furthest edge’. Filmmakers, artists, researchers, and elite and extreme sports vloggers are today an expanding body of visitors still appropriating these offshore spaces for professional and personal fulfilment, and for creative gain.



FIGURE 1
Kyleakin, Isle of Skye, Scotland

The expansion of modern tourism in Scotland’s islands to the west (the Hebrides) and (remote) rural Highlands was overlaid upon an ancient Gaelic culture and clan society. This cultural iconography has been appropriated in selective terms by mass tourism in Scotland across the decades. The rupture and social transformation beyond the mid-eighteenth century, following the quelling of the Jacobite uprisings culminating in the Battle of Culloden (1746), was an impactful juncture in how the region fared in the following centuries of economic modernization and cultural ‘progress’. It cannot be underestimated how

such significant historical events have inspired and informed destination experiences and a range of tourism products in Scotland even today, albeit in varying degrees of what might be considered cultural authenticity, and creative integrity. The eighteenth century’s events and repercussions shaped and informed the tourism that followed, portraying the highlands and islands people and their landscape as ‘wild’, as ‘peasant’, and exotic other. Scotland’s celebrated European writer Sir Walter Scott is considered a ‘Grandfather’ of Scottish tourism, whereby his popular literary output romanced both the Scottish landscape but also produced an enduring (even if a somewhat skewed and selective) representation of clan history and Highland culture for Europe’s literary masses. Such narratives and gaze have shaped our actual and imagined tourist landscapes then, and now. Creative and cultural giants of Scottish literature, art, and music (such as Scott, Burns), and those periodically lost from view, are nonetheless available for reframing and rediscovery. History, and our sense of the past in Scotland, plays an unshakable role in the current and future shaping of creative tourism experience, including our island and ‘remote rural’ promotion.

Tourism discourses are nonetheless variously authored, often contradictory and hotly debated in a country that values its capacity to voice dissent. Whilst elites and dominant icons of history and culture still have great capacity to frame the anticipation of Scotland’s rural and island tourism, there are counter approaches to both rid Scotland’s destination image of outdated and misrepresentative symbolism and ideas, as well as innovating and reconfiguring Scotland as a destination offer that is both personally and politically aware, eco-social, future focused and sustaining ‘for all’. Tensions over the ownership and claim on the assets of island, rural and remote places are generating debate where differing views, agencies of power and ideologies clash. The islands in Scotland are therefore interesting spaces of creative tourism debate. Rewilding, and energy production debates, second-home ownership, spaceport development, overtourism, and the excesses of promotion of many island and remote rural destinations, coupled with limited structural investment and unsustainable demands on island and rural community infrastructure, including health and transport (see FIGURE 2), all speak to core issues over island and rural resilience: and this informs wider narratives of ‘special’ places. Who speaks for islands and rural places is then a critical and ongoing debate. The next section examines Scotland’s islands offering creative tourism as more especially conceived and activated from *within*, with a brief outlining comment on creative tourism as a concept more broadly.



FIGURE 2
Looking toward the Sound of Barra from the pier on the Isle of Eriskay, Scotland

Creative tourism: Scotland's remote rural and island offer

Galvagno and Giaccone (2019) have suggested that creative tourism consists of two broad fields of focus. One aspect relates to the processes and practices by which organisations create (i.e., how tourism is creatively imagined and marketed) interesting and memorable tourism products and experiences, often significantly participatory in form. The second field of focus is the alignment of tourists as co-creators in their tourism experience. They actively engage with tourism experiences as 'authentic' and meaningful, as a process of creative enhancement, identity affirming, and indeed personally (or indeed professionally) transformative (Brouder, 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020). Nonetheless, as Galvagno and Giaccone (2019, p. 1256) note, while "the relevance of creative tourism cannot be disputed, there is still the need to achieve a consensus on its main theoretical constituents, as well as to develop appropriate research." VisitScotland: Alba (Scotland's national tourism agency) promotes Scotland in various terms but significantly as a destination that offers a "powerfully enriching personal experience" (2024, n.p.). Creative tourism policy in the country has expanded current strategies to "inspire life-long love affairs with Scotland" (n.p.). The focus is on reinforcing a sustainably aware and responsible destination brand notably: "to support the creation of relevant, compelling, and effective activities" (n.p.). Of particular focus in the Visit Scotland Strategic Framework 2020-2024 is the idea of fostering a longer-term relationship with a range of visitor groups that includes aiming "to influence investors, students, and migrants" generating products and policies that can "actively manage the lifetime worth to the country of these aforementioned groups."

Scotland's islands are well established, and certainly embracing of their status, as places for good creative tourism. Shetland is rich in energy production (oil, gas, and renewables), and marine and fishing sectors with a tourism offer that celebrates its 'pristine' coastal and marine environment. The Scottish archipelago's Viking and Norse heritage (with its seafaring associations) is configured as especially unique to Shetland, however. Shetland's arts and craft cultures, music, language, and historic textile heritage—each further underpin the island region's powerful USP (unique selling point). Shetland Wool Week (2023) is one example of an established creative tourism success. This event celebrates the knitting and wool heritage. It is claimed that "each area in Shetland has its own unique knitting heritage" (n.p.). It also highlights future creativity, learning exchange, and collaboration with cultural worker contributions (Harling Stalker and Burnett, 2016). In offering a range of quality intimate creative experiences Wool Week offers visitors direct access and participation with producers, practitioners, educators, and enthusiasts. This is a successful, sustainably informed, and restorative tourism experience with the visitor experiences actively contributing to this cycle of promotion: "it means you can really absorb the place."

Elsewhere, Orkney's craft and design innovation, inspired in no small part by the archipelago's rich natural history and deep archaeology on land and sea, offers a range of creative tourism options. This includes its British military heritage and wartime tourism sites such as Scapa Flow, with its recently refurbished museum on the island of Hoy (population c. 400). A pioneer in Scottish food and drink tourism promotion, as with other rural and island regions, Orkney capitalises on the islands' natural and cultural resources and assets. Research and learning (such as in Orkney's strong tourism development links to archaeology science) are recognised in Scotland as examples of key creative tourism development and growth. For successful, sustainable, and a healthy symbiosis of economic and ecologies, good creative tourism in places and environments necessitates *in situ* policy assessment, research, and debate. To foster resilience, creative tourism should embed itself actively and collaboratively within island and rural communities through education partners (schools, colleges, universities). This has been especially welcomed in Scotland but there is much work to be done.

Perhaps learning best and most might occur within places where tourism has impacted most such as the island of Skye (*Eilean a Cheo*, the island of mist). Images of Skye are especially privileged across Scottish tourism promotion, and significantly informs tourist anticipation. It is the Scottish highland and island pilgrimage; a Scottish tourism 'must do' (a

narrative not always welcome by the islanders themselves). In this challenged 'honey pot' destination, Skye also hosts a flagship community facing site of research and education, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Scotland's National Gaelic college). Now part of the multi-campus University of the Highlands and Islands, the college was established as a visionary enterprise in 1973 to revitalise, support and promote the region's Gaelic language and culture, not least in recognition of years of under investment and neglect. Through the college—the physical site and its community—Gaelic language, arts, and culture form the basis of a successful programming of events, visitor stays, and creative activity across the year, with considerable numbers of repeat visitors and a number relocating to the island for longer residency. Such regional learning infrastructure offers considerable potential for future reciprocal creative tourism growth across Scotland's smaller communities, not least the islands. Skye experiences some of Scotland's busiest tourism. The island is well experienced in how local cultures and ways of life (notable Gaelic) have been impacted by tourism development. Nonetheless in association with organisations such as education providers, creative tourism's potential in Scotland's small island and remote rural regions can be purposively and locally embraced, yet critically aware.

As a final comment on Scotland's creative tourism island success, consider Islay—the 'Queen of the Hebrides'—offering a different pilgrimage spirit. A flagship island destination for whisky tourism the narrative is one framed by what constitutes the islands' 'remote rural' representation as mythical yet rural industrial and textually often suggesting a masculine yet effectively *solitary* space. Nearby, in the Inner Hebrides, lies Mull, and offshore of this lies the tiny island of Iona. Integral to the narrative of early Christianity as a 'Celtic outpost' to Rome, many of these islands in their isolation presented valuable opportunities for deep spiritual reflection. Spiritual tourism (including both the religion and whisky kinds) serves Scotland's tourism economy well, and not just in the islands. There is a new kind of faith emerging in Scotland's 'remote rural' places. Small communities, such as those on Scotland's islands, are making good on state policy changes and opportunities. Islands have become increasingly emblematic of a Scottish spirit of regeneration, creativity, and renewal, and this from within regions once considered marginal and lacking resilience. The accounts of a collective faith in 'alternative remoteness' and 'people power' fosters creative opportunity and responses. Being potentially part of such a regeneration spirit is a narrative informing creative tourism activity to be locally realised across Scotland's remote and rural places. Several small communities in the islands and rural regions of Scotland have undertaken to reassess, own, and manage local assets together for the greater good of their place. How this aligns with creative tourism potential is worthy of further research (as the conclusion suggests). Brief examples aligned to the sustaining of creative tourism that is good for the islands, and good 'for all', are considered next.

Creative tourism: Negotiating where the 'margins' are good for all?

Across Scotland's rural and island places there is a rich arts and literary heritage that draws visitors but also kindles new creative response. The creative energies of the past inform current interest and participation, as well as festivals and events. Small scale yet impactful event planning across the island and more rural and remote regions has offered a key enterprise interface for informed policy, new products, and creative tourism expansion that celebrates the creativity of place in place. Scotland's island and 'remote rural' places are recognised as key indicators of restorative, 'good for the soul' and wellbeing destinations. Economically and socially, tourism continues to stack up as 'good business'. The industry is important in addressing peripherality concerns and it underpins structural investment, entrepreneurial clustering, and ambitions for expanding visitor economies with an ever more diverse tourism offer anticipated. Regenerative, or restorative places 'at the edge' or geographical margin are a key part of this wider Scottish national tourism offer. The following examples illustrate some key aspects of creative tourism, namely: integrity,

authenticity, and affirmation. In regards to integrity, for example, Scotland's many small island and more remote communities have sought more local ownership and management of their own tourism product. Furthermore, by way of countering misrepresentation from outwith the place, voices from within island communities have especially opted to use media more actively to tell stories with greater authenticity from within the local island and 'remote rural' place. Island-centred examples are briefly discussed here that each highlight some indicator aspects of Scotland's current creative tourism growth as locally generated and aspiring to be 'for all'; that is, they highlight policies that champion collective ownership, social enterprise, island and rural remote place connectivity, local particularity, and community-generated and responsive ecologies of media production.

First, consider the small island of Eigg (population c. 100) (see FIGURE 3). This island is an example of small community resilience. The islanders fought to sustain its future whilst also actively resisting against a long legacy of island ownership by a private landowning class. As one of the more celebrated acts of Scotland's community buyout policy, the Eigg islanders 'came together' to fundraise and eventually buy the island for themselves. They have activated sustainable island ethos; expanded island infrastructure with a view to reversing previous fragile and acute socio-economic concerns for the island's longer-term future. This story of Eigg's socio economic regeneration has fostered considerable media and visitor interest. The island's narrative is one of innovation, creativity, and inspiration. Eigg is a model for other communities to follow. Creative (and related) tourism on the island is managed on the island's community's own terms. Its local island ecologies (natural, social, and cultural) are central to the community ownership model for development and regeneration (including tourism) with the residents the collective custodians (caretakers) of Eigg's resources. Examples of regenerative destination creative tourism success on the island include Eigg's Earth Connections (2023) ecotourism centre. This offers wellbeing activities (such as yoga) and active participation for visitors in the island's ecology—visitors can volunteer in the organic orchard and garden, or take an active interest in the island's sustainable living (renewable energy and net zero) projects and activities. Such tourism aligns (ahead of the curve) with the 'Think Global, Act Local' and increasing volunteerism visitor trends outlined by Visit Scotland: Alba (2021). A different example is the island's contribution in 2013 to The Bothy Project (2023). By building Sweeneys Bothy as an artist's residency space on the island, the Eigg community involved itself further in rural creative place contexts to replicate "bespoke small-scale, off-grid creative residency spaces to explore creativity, landscape and living simply" (n.p.). The residency invites artists onto the island and into the community, effectively as a creative tourist (of sorts) yet one also as managed in terms of time spent on Eigg. Island spaces historically are spoken of as creatively challenging (testing/trying) yet affirming in a space of silence and isolation, as an extract from artist Maria Fusco's (2019) 'blog' from her time on Eigg attests: "A daily measure, I tested my own voice against the silence: a sort of prayer perhaps." Such commentaries allude to the Early Christian anchorite history, a practice that was well established in Scotland's Hebrides.



FIGURE 3
Bay of Laig, Isle of Eigg, Scotland

The Eigg community, as a model of collective ownership seeking to manage creative tourism on its own terms, fosters a wider discourse therefore of connectivity, creativity, and renewal out of a particular kind of remoteness. A different model of small island creative tourism is generated via a creative discourse and promotion of island place as being in regenerative inter-connection to each other. Similarly, in using online retail and digital storytelling island products are connected in a locational, place-based brand that promotes things to markets (including tourists) as 'island made'. The Isle of Tiree based social enterprise *isle20* (2023) is a CIC (community investment company) that fosters a sense of how island creative experience can be accessed digitally and materially whereby the ostensibly 'remote' islands of Scotland's can 'come to you' (until as a future tourist or return visitor you might come to them). This online retail portal highlights products from small (often micro) enterprises of craft producers and artisans from across the Scottish islands. It provides creative entrepreneurs a chance to collectively promote yet individually sell their island products. *isle20* reinforces a sense of how such an approach of collective enterprise is itself a key factor in framing island restorative capital: i.e., promoting a sense of good to make, good to sell from within the islands as locationally linked, 'apart yet together'. Products circulate powerfully to engage, inform, and impact visitor expectations and dispositions. Initiatives done well by island entrepreneurs, such as *isle20*, inform online visitor experience and expectation (anticipation) of island destinations more broadly. Tiree Tea is just one example of *isle20* products where its narrative is representative of the creative and special nature of the place of islands: "The beautiful artwork and wee stories which accompany each blend make sure that Tiree Tea raises a smile as folks drink in the magic of the Hebrides—wherever they may be!" Such narratives situate and anchor a sense of islandness locally from the place. Island made products are integral to wider representation and creative tourism anticipation. Such goods act as a lure and/or souvenir. Generating the narratives from within such as those promoted via *isle20* speaks to the integrity of sharing a nuanced understanding of local place that negotiates around both how others 'outside the island' but also how islanders too may see and understand the place. Such a confidence and a playfulness of island production and promotion offers insight on how ideas and narratives of the islands as destinations, island place consumption, and quality enterprise more widely are formed, appropriated, and changed over time. It also highlights the endogenous enterprise capacity of island creative labour and cultural innovation.

Tourism operationalises the 'specialness' of place in several ways. It either reinforces (reifies) or opens up (releases) different narratives and optics of how we all might see and know places. Tourism is powerfully integrated into our media ecologies. Cultural legacies of creative othering can be long-lasting and insidious as MacNeill (2023) recently reaffirmed regarding how Scottish Gaelic and island creativity experiences have been past represented. Local and national minority culture broadcasting voices in Scotland (specifically in Gaelic) are key to countering this legacy, however. The last example therefore looks at media production as it relates to 'within place' storytelling of island creative practice, and the island environment as a 'gift'. The Gaelic language television series *Trusadh* (BBC Alba, 2020) speaks to the creative and regenerative goodness of island places, such as those as experienced in the Outer Hebrides. In one programme entitled *Tha an Geamhradh a' tighinn le sholas fhèin* (The Winter Brings its Own Light) contributors speak of experiencing the islands as a creative artist (writer, musician, singer) most especially in the winter. They talk of the harshness, the remoteness, and the isolation often endured, yet they also speak of, and the programme visually reinforces, the islands as places of personal and professional creative resilience, as well as potential. Contributors spoke of being "alone in a good place," embracing the remote, "edge" or "margin" of a wider, inspiring sense of things. They highlight in their accounts how creatives, cultural workers, and artists (often who may have left places not previously being able to flourish) are increasingly drawn back (returning), and others (incoming) relocate to the islands. Highlighted in the programme is the regenerative spirit the islandness offers, best summarised here by one contributor: "it is the wildness of it ... it's a gift really" Knowing and speaking to the reality of an island place (as creatively good as well as challenging) offers important cultural framing of islandness. It reinforces islands as creative places to be experienced rewardingly throughout the whole seasonal year. The interface between creative tourism, migration and relocation,

and related discourses and representation should not be underestimated as having impact for 'remote rural' and island creative tourism's potential and its longer-term sustainable growth.

Conclusion

Creative tourism is interwoven with the representational nexus of place. This chapter has expanded a focus on Scotland's islands and remote rural destination experience. What then is good for the margin, or periphery, or edge, and indeed good for creative, regenerative tourism? Visitors are invited to 'come in' and experience 'an island way of life': to escape, find peace, cultural richness, creative joy, exhilaration, stimulation, validation. It works in visitor numbers of terms for our islands with a broadly good news story of tourism growth. But there are risks. Too much, too many? Just who and how is this being managed for in the longer term? What are the saturation points in hotspots? Uneven enterprise spread? Is infrastructure working sustainability for all? Furthermore, the legacies of concentrated private ownership remain problematic in Scotland. Land ownership shapes what is possible still, and how this is narrativised, in media for example, remains complex whereby 'empty lands' play-off with 'empty lands' and 'great estates' still dominate the global branding and image framing of rural Scotland. Communities are not easily defined, nor are they fixed. They are organic, negotiated entities of significance. What, where, or when is the local of regenerative tourism activity and impact is therefore slippery, amorphous, and contingent. Nonetheless this is a good and live debate to have, and Scotland's island communities continue to innovate and reflect. There is much to be grateful for. Scotland is a wonderful place to experience and to generate creative tourism. The tourism economy is strong, bringing income, enterprise, and structural development impact to once significantly challenged and fragile economies of both the urban but more especially rural and island places. Community enterprises, trusts, and many (often micro) SMEs make for engaging visitor experience and good local benefit. Nonetheless, the discourses of remoteness and of islandness informing the representation of creative tourism experiences remain powerful, often skewed and selective, and require ongoing critique. Understanding creative tourism, and its representation, as restorative 'for all' in Scotland's islands is a valuable undertaking and therefore worthy of further exploration.

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Regenerative art tourism for creative revitalisation in peripheral communities

Meng Qu

Regenerative art tourism has emerged as a crucial link between art tourism and the re-generation/revitalisation of peripheral communities, addressing issues of sustainability and local engagement in non-urban settings. While creative tourism and the creative class has been extensively studied in urban areas, the focus on rural revitalisation strategies has been limited. This study explores the transformative impact of regenerative art tourism in the Japanese countryside, through community-embedded art case studies in Kamiyama, Katsuyama, and Kasaoka archipelago. The research examines the shift from socially engaged art to community-embedded destinations, emphasising the importance of local involvement in creative tourism co-creation and interaction.

All case studies involve small-scale art revitalisation projects that have continued for over five years, including the COVID-19 period. Those cases, chosen for their resilience-building efforts in the face of depopulation, represent instances of regenerative art tourism in rural mountains and remote islands. The cases delve into the intersection of arts, tourism, and community revitalisation, shedding light on the potential of regenerative efforts in addressing challenges like depopulation and ageing in peripheral communities. This research aims to provide a novel research framework for investigating 'regenerative art tourism for creative revitalisation', integrating elements such as community-embedded art, tourism co-creation and learning, and creative community enhancement.

Despite the fact that regenerative art tourism is very difficult to achieve, the findings reveal successful small-scale long-term art projects showcase the impact of arts activism in fostering community resilience, sustainability, and even revitalisation. The communities actively engage in co-creating immersive art experiences, integrating local culture and traditions into artistic endeavours. This study highlights how the role of regenerative art tourism emerges as a catalyst for empowering rural communities, sustaining cultural practices, and positioning locals as active contributors to their vibrant future.

From socially engaged art revitalisation to community-embedded regenerative art tourism

The literature currently has limited direct links between creative tourism and regenerative tourism in rural contexts, primarily discussing the shift from regional tourism to more sustainable approaches (Duxbury et al., 2020) and the importance of local engagement at the

smaller scale (Scherf, 2023). In major cities, creative tourism has been a growing research area, but there is a gap in exploring development strategies in non-urban settings (Duxbury et al., 2020). During the regenerative creative tourism creating process, Souca (2019) underscores the importance of involving the local community in creative tourism planning for rural tourism potential. Duxbury et al. (2020) and Scherf (2023) both highlighted that small regional creative tourism initiatives can be part of regenerative tourism. While small-scale tourism in less-visited areas may not solve mass tourism problems or COVID-19 related issues, the current crisis offers an opportunity for community-led micro-tourism, stressing the importance of informed local engagement in crafting tourism experiences (Scherf, 2023).

Rural art tourism, in particular, socially engaged contemporary art events and projects that bridge urban creativities within regional contexts are further away from the scope of creative tourism and rural studies. This has led to a scarcity of research linking community-engaged arts, rural arts tourism and community revitalisation. Studies highlight the potential of art tourism for rural community revitalisation, emphasising community engagement and the use of art to combat social decline and depopulation (Qu and Cheer, 2021; Gimbut and Rega, 2022; Qu and Zollet, 2023a). Rural arts activities increasingly emphasise community-centredness and prioritise local quality of life (Mahon and Hyyryläinen, 2019; Qu and Cheer, 2021). Activities that are community-embedded or can bring community enhancement are potentially regenerative.

The social practice of community revitalisation in the arts is often accompanied by both successful and unsuccessful outcomes, and we cannot focus solely on successes while ignoring that potentially successful approaches can still result in failed community outcomes (Qu et al., 2022). Furthermore, over time the same successful arts revitalisation model often brings to completely different revitalisation directions in different communities (Qu and Zollet, 2023a). Works of art that are loved by residents are often the ones that can reactivate a community's decaying cultural heritage (Qu and Cheer, 2021). Additionally, some studies also emphasise two issues that require our attention, namely the relationship between the blurring of urban-rural relationships and the difference between art revitalisation and resilience.

Previous studies have concluded that, unlike urban-based creative tourism, arts, culture, and heritage are increasingly seen as vital for the future of rural communities (Duxbury and Campbell, 2011). However, art activities in the countryside are also constantly and rapidly exchanging resources between the urban and the rural, and from the perspective of the geography of urban-rural relations, this makes it difficult to define the countryside as an isolated entity (Prince et al., 2021; Qu and Zollet, 2023a; 2023b). Although scholars have repeatedly emphasised that the creativity of the countryside is distinct from the city's, in the context of the exchange of resources between the urban and rural areas through the arts, this distinction is perhaps more of an innovation based on traditional values.

Additionally, while resilience is a valuable concept in many aspects of community development (Mahon and Hyyryläinen, 2019; Qu and Cheer, 2021; Cheer et al., 2022), including tourism, it tends to focus more on the ability to withstand and recover from shocks and challenges rather than on actively seeking transformation or renewal. Revitalisation, with its emphasis on renewal and vibrancy through cultural and artistic means, aligns more closely with the goals of promoting tourism and enhancing the overall appeal of a community (Qu and Zollet, 2023a). Collectively, these studies suggest that socially engaged art tourism, driven by regional engagement, has as great potential to contribute to both rural revitalisation and community resilience. Hence, the aim of this research is to acknowledge that the regenerative category encompasses the strengthening of the capacity for resilience against internal community issues (such as depopulation and social declines) as well as external challenges (such as a global pandemic). Additionally, it is crucial to juxtapose this with the augmentation of creativity and vitality associated with revitalisation.

The transformation to regenerative tourism involves addressing three critical aspects: systems change, mindset shift, and practical implementation (Dredge, 2022). This transformation requires a social-ecological shift towards community thinking and away from individualism, reductionism, and market-driven approaches. Emphasising a bottom-up, place-based, community-centric, and environmentally focused approach is crucial for

regenerative tourism (Dredge, 2022). A recent study of art in rural revitalisation has updated this type of top-down/bottom-up dichotomy with an intra- and extra-village relational perspective. Drawing from the literature on arts tourism and community revitalisation, Qu and Zollet (2023a) explore the concept of neo-endogenous revitalisation by combining top-down art development with bottom-up community entrepreneurial efforts to create a neo-endogenous way of thinking about community revitalisation. Other recent studies by the same authors also highlighted how micro rural entrepreneurship often encompasses a mix of social enterprises and creative tourism businesses that make a dual contribution to both revitalisation and resilience goals and to sustainable tourism development (Qu and Zollet, 2023a, 2023c).

From the perspective of rural tourism and entrepreneurship, this is still a process whereby the commodification of rural landscapes attracts migrant entrepreneurs (Klien, 2021; Cheer et al., 2022; Zollet and Qu, 2023). Creative endeavours contribute to the impact of small-scale artistic activities on rural revitalization and, in particular, in smaller destinations facing both external and internal challenges (Qu and Zollet, 2023b). They do not only enhance communal assets, but also foster future tourism growth via active participation from local residents (McCormick and Qu, 2021; Qu and Zollet, 2023b). Establishing creative business in communities with limited resources not only requires creative entrepreneurs to shift between the roles of businesspeople and art curators, but also emphasises the act of rural patchwork and entrepreneurial networking needed in resource-constrained rural societies (McCormick and Qu, 2021; Qu and Zollet, 2023b, 2023c). These efforts on rural tourism entrepreneurship are precisely those that have a regenerative social dimension.

The discussion around art, rural communities, and regenerative tourism above allows us to return to the core model of creative tourism: co-creation and learning (Richards et al., 2018; Duxbury and Richards, 2019). Richards et al. (2018) further explained the creative tourism co-creation through the 3S model (Storytelling-Senses-Sophistication) that highlights the role of community creativity, marketing creativity, and visitor creativity. If the community can fulfil all three of these points at the same time when designing creative tourism experiences, the destination meets the premise of 'community interaction' in creative tourism (Richards et al., 2018). In order to examine the complex topic of 'regenerative art tourism for creative revitalisation', we need to consider all of the elements outlined above in order to bring the subject into greater focus.

Methodological framework

This study aims to establish an integrated research framework to explore 'regenerative art tourism for creative revitalisation'. The framework integrates components such as community-embedded art, tourism co-creation, and learning (incorporating marketing and visitor creativities) as well as creative community enhancement, with a focus on community creativity. Consequently, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: How does community-embedded art tourism contribute to the regeneration and revitalisation of rural communities in Japan, specifically examining its transformative impact and long-term sustainability? Additionally, how does the convergence of arts, tourism, and community engagement address community internal and external challenges?

To answer these questions, this research employs mainly qualitative case studies, since small-scale art revitalisation projects are best suited to be explored through qualitative approaches (Robert, 2017). Furthermore, while there are many art revitalisation activities in the Japanese regional context, not many cases qualify as renewable and have been sustained for a sufficiently long period of time (more than five years). Given that the selected cases must also have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic during this five-year period, the changes that occurred during that period are also highly informative for their test of resilience and revitalisation.



FIGURE 1
Map of the case studies
(author's illustration)

As shown in FIGURE 1 and TABLE 1, the three selected cases are Noren Art of Katsuyama (from 1996), Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge (from 2016) in Okayama Prefecture, and Kamiyama Artist in Residence Bed & Studio programme (from 1999) in Tokushima Prefecture. These cases focus on a small number of organisers who set out to develop artistic and small-scale creative tourism activities in the countryside through a long-term effort. Many of them exist as not-for-profit organisations and through community support and outside sponsorship, they continue to create new types of arts tourism activities by restoring cultural activities and resources in their communities. The case of the art project in Kamiyama has also been considered by other scholars as a successful model of 'creative depopulation' (Klien, 2021). The three cases were chosen in unfavourable conditions in the rural mountains and remote islands, and each community faced attempts to develop art tourism under the pressure of community depopulation. In other words, all of these cases simultaneously represent attempts at resilience building, community revitalisation, and regenerative efforts between art, tourism, and community.

Cases	Data	Sources	Quantity
Kamiyama Artist in Residence Bed & Studio programme (1999-)	Observation	Participatory observation through a guided tour by organiser	March 9-12, 2020, with 5 pages of field notes and 250 photos
	Interview	Unstructured interviews with the main organiser	2 (60 mins each) unstructured interviews with 2.5 pages of transcript
	Archival documents, online information	Official website, Art Event Yearbook, Facebook	20 pages of transcript in English

TABLE 1
Research cases, methods, and data

Cases	Data	Sources	Quantity
Noren Art of Katsuyama (1997-)	Observation	Naturalistic observation as visitor	July 27, 2020, and November 6, 2022, with 2 pages of field notes and 120 photos
	Interview	Unstructured interviews with the main organiser	2 (15 mins each) unstructured interviews with project members with 1 page of field notes
	Archival documents, online information	Official website, Facebook and YouTube channels, content of media interviews	15 pages of transcript in Japanese
Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge (2016-)	Observation	Participatory observation through a guided tour by organiser	August 17-18, 2019, and September 10-11, 2020, with 2 pages of field notes and 70 photos
	Interview	Unstructured interviews with the main organiser	1 (30 mins) unstructured interview with 1.5 pages of field notes
	Archival documents, online information	Official website, Facebook and YouTube channels	18 pages of transcript in Japanese

Source: Developed by author.

Interviews were conducted in both English and Japanese, and Japanese interviews, as well as secondary data, were translated into English when the research was summarised. This study attempts to condense the results into cases rather than a categorisation of different research analyses. It was difficult for this study to examine these cases together at the same time due to the epidemic and budgetary constraints. Also, all research interviews were limited to informal interviews with organisers only, so results regarding the community level are based on observations.

Findings and discussion

KAMIYAMA ARTIST IN RESIDENCE—LONG-TERM AND SMALL-SCALE BED & STUDIO PROGRAMME

Kamiyama, which literally means God's Mountain, is a rural town deep in the mountains of Tokushima Prefecture and is facing depopulation and ageing. The town, however, has implemented innovative strategies for community revitalisation. Among these, the Kamiyama Artist in Residence (KAIR) programme, established in 1999, invites three to five Japanese or international artists annually from September to November to collaborate with locals on art projects in the town. This includes creating artworks displayed in an exhibition, conducting workshops, participating in cultural events, and holding open studio days. Encouraging artists to have 'encounters with the unknown' and thus experience different natural and rural human environments is one of KAIR's hallmarks. The core organiser of KAIR is a young female immigrant, which is also co-organised by community members and

volunteers. KAIR distinguishes itself by its handmade approach, emphasising mutual cooperation between artists and the community. Applications are accepted in winter for the upcoming full support KAIR programme. Kamiyama's historical connection to Ningyo Joruri (Puppet Theater), where artists created illustrated stage panels with local assistance since the mid-1800s, reflects an enduring tradition of artist-in-residence practices and traditions in the community. In this way, the artists' residency itself is in fact a revival of tradition that is relevant on the ground.

Because of its small size and budget constraints that limit the invitation of well-known artists, a limited number of artists and budget is chosen by an annual community vote. KAIR also promotes more of a Bed & Studio programme approach to keep artists on a more permanent basis. Consequently, villagers sometimes opt to extend an opportunity for artists to reside in the village within numerous vacant houses. The belief is that prolonged stays will lead to the organic creation of works that align with the local culture. Additionally, the materials for these creations are locally sourced, and through collaboration with villagers and volunteers, the art activities become achievable without substantial financial expenditure.

During the fieldwork visit, the locals led me to visit many of the local artworks and explained to the visitors the process and meaning of how the works were made. The locals will happily introduce the funny stories between the artist and the locals who built the work together, and these have become their fond memories. KAIR's work ambience includes sites outdoors (Oawa mountain area, in FIGURE 2) and indoors (reusing the old theatre and school). In terms of outdoor site-specific art, land art, and eco-installations, the materials and the concept of the work are very local and respect surrounding natures (FIGURE 2). On the KAIR website, past KAIR artists have shared memories, insights, and challenges, such as memorable experiences in Kamiyama's mountain lodge and hot spring, the surprise of temperature differences, the exceptional beauty of Kamiyama and community temples, cultural adjustments and challenges, preferences for local beverages, and reflections on time management and project completion, offering a diverse perspective on their residency experiences.



FIGURE 2
Artworks in Oawa mountain of Kamiyama (author's photograph, 2020)

Another reason for Kamiyama's success is the fact that it is not just limited to art events and tours, but actually seeks to create a creative community. The success of KAIR laid the groundwork for broader initiatives, such as the Green Valley not-for-profit organisation, promoting a 'work in residence' programme to attract individuals who could contribute to

the town's future, or attracting IT industries to relocate from Tokyo to Kamiyama. This is a revitalisation strategy that, at the same time, copes with rural decline while strategically attracting younger residents and creative talents to maintain a balanced and sustainable community. The town's efforts have defied demographic predictions, with in-migration surpassing out-migration for the first time in 2011. The town's creative approach has led to the establishment of IT satellite offices, lots of creative restaurants (including a French one), and various entrepreneurial ventures, demonstrating the power of art as a catalyst for social regeneration through a diversified range of entrepreneurship–community co-creations.

Within this investigation, we also recognised certain challenges, including the tendency of local residents to maintain a distance from high-priced upscale restaurants designed for the younger urban demographic. Simultaneously, discussions with entrepreneurial immigrants unveiled constraints on their actions, attributable to the robust decision-making authority within the community. Nonetheless, the artistic activity and community creativity enhancement in Kamiyama has resulted in a more diverse public space. At the same time, this process of rapid change highlights the conflict and negotiation between urban and rural areas, older and younger generations. But these issues also do not negate the revitalising lift that arts and creative entrepreneurship have brought to the area.

Noren Art of Katsuyama—a cultural deep mapping of modern style and tradition

In the town of Katsuyama, Okayama Prefecture, a community-led project has transformed the designated 'Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings' since its recognition in 1985. This riverside 800-metre-long area showcases well-preserved samurai residences and merchant houses. The Noren Art initiative, initially focused on preserving cultural heritage, took an innovative turn approximately nine years ago, introduced by a local liquor store owner who commissioned a colourful Noren (fabric divider) to invite visitors.

Noren Art, initiated as a textile weaving project, serves as a revitalisation of the local art community led by women entrepreneurs. The project's founder, born in the town in 1947, established the Dyeing and Weaving Studio in 1997 after studying in Tokyo. Despite initially comprising 16 buildings, the project, developed over 25 years, has adorned 110 houses. According to local media, the organiser recalls that the motivation behind this expanding request was the transparent windows allowing tourists to constantly look through the windows and invading the privacy of the residents. This is something that made residents uncomfortable. This initiative therefore helps to balance the needs of the ever-increasing number of tourists with the need to satisfy the privacy of the residents of the community.

Concerned also about the uniformity of the district's appearance as part of the preservation project, especially as roofs were being repaired, the founder of the project believed that curtains were essential for maintaining the unique character of the town. Originally not designed for tourism, its purpose evolved to attract visitors to the area. The community and local government later shifted their focus toward the art project. The success of this grassroots approach, marked by over 100 vibrant curtains, not only adds charm to the district but has garnered awards and recognition, turning Katsuyama into a model for community-led town socio-cultural regenerative development (FIGURE 3).



FIGURE 3
Map of the Noren Art of Katsuyama and Noren designs for all households (provided by the organiser, 2020, 2022)

This study visited the site during and after the COVID-19 epidemic, except limited local businesses remain opening, despite most residents staying at home, visitors could still enjoy the artworks throughout the town. What is most interesting is that visitors can understand at a glance the history of each home or store through the design motifs of the artwork and the stories within (FIGURE 4). The Noren Art is not only a long-term piece of art that innovates local culture through local craftsmanship, but also serves as an example of a creative way to meet the needs of tourists and protect the privacy of locals. Not only does the site still retain the sake brewery, but three dyeing and crafts-based ateliers have been created on its site, allowing visitors to experience a creative tourism experience of traditional crafts such as tie-dyeing and weaving. The project has fostered local pride, improved communication among residents and attracted support from authorities for additional initiatives, making Katsuyama a noteworthy example in the broader context of town revitalisation. In addition, it is bringing this art form to other cultures and communities. For example, Noren Art has also been promoted to Naoshima, the art island of Japan.



FIGURE 4
Noren Art of Katsuyama (author's photograph, 2022)

Examining updates to Noren design motifs and presentation materials over two visits reveals an evolving design reflecting changes within the community:

We are adding new designs every year compared to last year. Because when a new store opens, we design a new Noren for them. (Founder of Noren Art of Katsuyama)

Producing over 100 tie-dye artworks in more than 20 years has been challenging, especially with core members ageing. Sustaining this creative renaissance requires addressing the challenge of involving a younger generation in ongoing efforts.

Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge—arts bridging traditional culture and events

Heart Art Link, the not-for-profit organisation (NPO) that created Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge (KIAB), was established in 1999 and officially recognized as an NPO in 2007. The founder of this project is also a female social entrepreneur. The organisation is dedicated to integrating art and culture into the daily lives of local residents in Okayama and in the Seto Inland Sea regions. It fosters expressive activities for diverse groups, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and children, using long-term collaborations and workshops in special locations through visual and performance art activities. The core concept revolves around cultivating a new artistic culture in daily life, emphasising the generation of innovative ideas through connections and sensory exchanges in the realm of art. The theme of each KIAB is linked to the history of the community, with a variety of community revitalisation activities in the form of performing arts, installations, and the revitalisation of community festivals. Themes range from island literature to historical figures, traditional rituals, religious backgrounds, education, street art, land art, and producing artwork on the spot (FIGURE 5). KIAB's works are expressed in a very personal and interactive way. The work constructs a relationship with the history and culture of the community through different narrative practices.



FIGURE 5
Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge interior art installation and Bon Dancing at the community beach of Shiraishi Island (author's photograph, 2019)

KIAB places a strong emphasis on the significance of creativity and social relationships, particularly collaborations between artists and tourists with limited forms of expression. These collaborations yield fresh concepts shared with the local community, revealing latent potential and promoting an alternative sense of independence. The organisation seeks to create a tolerant and inclusive society by reinforcing the value of artistic expression and highlighting relationships uniquely visible through artistic and cultural activities.

The artistic activities we carry out are very much intended to differentiate us from the large and well-known festivals [names omitted] that surround us. A small community can't afford to go big, we want to take our time and experience the local culture. (Curator of the Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge)

Unlike the other two cases, KIAB not only conducts community-engaged arts, but also highly integrates the arts activities with traditional cultural festivals in the community. In Shiraishi Island, one of the major venues of the art part of the Kasaoka archipelago, a traditional Bon Dance, specifically a dance with one melody and around ten unique dance variations, is preserved in its original form, making Shiraishi the sole island among Kasaoka Islands to maintain the old-style Bon Dancing. This art event has made this dance ritual a part of the KIAB. At the same time, a revival of traditional dances by performing artists is organised through the festival. This involves not only producing documentaries and artistic events to record and learn about the dances of the islanders, but also inviting performing artists to the island each summer to work with the residents (FIGURE 5).

Creating culturally diverse communities has become the mantra of KIAB. Amid the challenges of ageing and depopulation in the Kasaoka archipelago, where each island preserves unbroken traditions, those islands serve as a traditionally sustainable society embodying connections between different people and the past. Art activities are trying to build these elements into something that has value for future-societies with great potential for future creativity.

Discussion

By examining and analysing the three case studies, this study provides an in-depth analysis at three levels: art, creative tourism, and creative community. As shown in TABLE 2, compared with socially engaged art, the regenerative efforts are even more highlighted in community-embedded art. While socially engaged art can address broader societal issues, community-embedded art is specifically rooted in the dynamics and identity of a particular community. Among the cases presented here, ageing and depopulation represent a common challenge for these peripheral communities. Socially engaged art may involve a broader range of participants, including those from outside the immediate community, whereas community-embedded art tends to have a more localised focus. In these cases, we can see that the community goes beyond simple participation and becomes an important member (in all cases) and decision-maker (KAIR) as well as a contributor of creative material (Katsuyama Noren Art) in these artistic and creative activities.

The core concept of creative tourism consists of co-creation and learning (Richards et al., 2018; Duxbury and Richards, 2019). Through all cases, locals, artists, and volunteers join forces to create and showcase immersive art experiences, fostering collaboration and cultural exchanges between artists and villagers (especially in Noren Art) as they come together to celebrate through artmaking, festivals, and exhibitions, sharing their culture with both locals and visitors. The cultural background of the countryside, the daily life of its inhabitants, and its natural charm provide local resources that can be fully utilised by art tourism. In the process, it can become regenerative rural art tourism if utilised in a resourceful way (McCormick and Qu, 2021). Dredge's (2022) systems change, mindset shift, and practical implementation allows for regenerative approaches through this implementation.

Finally, the enhancement of creativity and new cultural identities is discussed from a community perspective. The ultimate vehicle for regeneration and revitalisation is the rural community that is unable to solve its own problems on the ground. KAIR implements eco-friendly installations to transform a sacred mountain into an art-infused symbol for Kamiyama. Noren Art is reshaping town culture through innovative crafts rooted in tradition and the daily life of Katsuyama. Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge is achieving seamless integration between local festivals and art events while preserving and enhancing the traditional festivalscape. All three cases highlight the fact that long-term efforts in arts activism are the cornerstone of increased community resilience, sustainability, and even a degree of community revitalisation. A hybrid space that is not only artistic but also full of creativity on a social level, constantly enabling the exchange of new resources, is a prerequisite for a regenerative art tourism environment. It is not just small-scale local participatory activities like in Scherf's (2023) vision of small creative destinations, it is also sustainable in Duxbury et al. (2020)'s sense, leading the way to a more regenerative creative form.

Cases	Community embedded art	Tourism co-creation and learning (marketing and visitor creativities)	Creative community enhancement (community creativity)
Kamiyama Artist in Residence (KAIR) Bed & Studio program	Local decision-making (locals vote for choosing the artists) Art handmade by the locals	Locals, artists, and volunteers collaborate to complete the art and celebrate at exhibition	Eco-friendly installations What the locals saw as a sacred mountain became a sacred mountain with art
Noren Art of Katsuyama	Household and local business mapping and artistic representation	An immersive art experience for visitors Artists become villagers	Re-mapping the town culture Innovation in crafts based on tradition crafts and local everyday life
Kasaoka Islands Art Bridge (KIAB)	Local festival, memories, and places	Celebrate with locals and tourists, passing on culture to locals and outsiders through festivals	Integration between local festival and art event Traditional festivalscape were continued and enhanced

Source: Developed by author

By comparing three small renewable rural art events, the role of female curators and founders cannot be ignored. In particular, the works of Noren Art and KIAB clearly express a rethinking of rural revitalisation and community-embedded art from the perspective of female artists and curators. This may lay a foundation for a future of continued research into a female-driven regenerative art rural revitalisation.

Conclusion

This study attempts to fill a theoretical gap by examining community-embedded art, creative tourism, and creative community revitalisation through three rural art activities. The findings emphasise the transformative impact of regenerative art tourism, particularly in community-embedded art. Addressing both internal challenges, like ageing and depopulation, and external threats such as COVID-19, the study highlights local decision-making, collaborative approaches, and resourceful utilisation of what is attractive locally. The case

TABLE 2

Summary of findings based on the research framework

studies illustrate how arts activism becomes a cornerstone for enhancing both community resilience and revitalisation (Qu and Cheer, 2021; Qu and Zollet, 2023a), establishing a hybrid space that is both artistic and socially creative. This regenerative art tourism environment, extending beyond small-scale local participation, aligns with sustainability principles (Duxbury et al., 2020; Scherf, 2023), advocating for a more regenerative creative form through the power of community-embedded art. Regenerative art tourism emerges as a catalyst for community revitalisation, empowering locals to actively shape their environment. The intertwining of traditional elements with contemporary art interventions not only sustains cultural practices but propels them forward, providing a unique and evolving narrative for residents and visitors. This holistic approach not only celebrates the intrinsic value of local culture but positions the community as active contributors to their vibrant and regenerative future.

The study primarily relies on three limited case studies, which limits the generalisability of the findings that connect with the diversification of artistic approach and creative form. The uniqueness of each rural community and its specific circumstances might not be fully captured in a broader context. This research heavily relies on qualitative data from the case studies, and there is limited mention of quantitative metrics to support the transformative impact of regenerative art tourism. While the paper highlights the long-term efforts in arts activism, it does not explicitly discuss the methods or criteria used to assess the sustainability of the initiatives presented. A more detailed examination of the long-term sustainability of these art projects would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding from future follow-up research. This study encourages the establishment of long-term case studies to explore the diversity and geography of creative endeavours. Finally, how female creative entrepreneurship in peripheral communities develops artistic activities from a perspective different from that of traditional male artists and creators is a very valuable and significant research topic.

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Outlining common horizons for culture and life: Lessons from the first diagnostic of the Network of Spaces and Agents of Community Culture in Spain

Rocío Nogales Muriel

The COVID-19 pandemic undeniably revealed not only the numerous challenges we face as a society, but also the limited and obsolete tools we have to face them. While this could represent an opportunity for reaching a 'collective awareness' after this crisis, in order for it to be effective and have a real impact, it should be translated into concrete citizen and business actions together with public policies that contribute to the general welfare of citizens and the planet. Such actions would involve minimising or annulling some of the elements that have made our economic system unsustainable: this situation of multidimensional unsustainability has been termed the 'ecosocial crisis'. In the midst of this possible awareness in a post-pandemic context and ecosocial crisis, other values and practices of arts and culture have been confirmed as spheres with a high potential for the regeneration and resilience of citizens and the planet. In particular, community culture (CC) is a concrete expression of 'other ways of doing culture' that, despite its long history, has received in recent years a growing interest from citizens, governments and administrations, the academic world and even the (generally non-mainstream) media.

The title of this chapter, "Outlining common horizons for culture and life," involves five elements worth outlining not as check points for a rationalistic transformation agenda but as interconnected leading lights in the firmament to guide us through the dark nights. Firstly, common horizons involve shared visions and destinations for our societies that are jointly built. Considering the rampant inequality and polarisation levels we are living, some may choose to deem such endeavours as 'utopist' while others (such as community culture agents) continue to work across disciplines to close gaps and find common languages and strategies. Secondly, as we imagine, describe, and walk towards such new horizons, culture and the arts constitute unique companions: not only they deal with the symbolic realm, thus enabling different narratives and imaginaries to tell other scenarios and pathways towards new horizons, but they also have an impact on the material conditions of cultural agents (both as professionals and as community members). Thirdly, as already mentioned, it is crucial to situate the generation of these horizons in an ecosocial transition context

which forces us to embrace the limits of our bodies, the planet and the way in which we have been living in it in the past two hundred years. Fourthly, it is crucial to ensure that these scenarios are viable from a material standpoint so as to ensure the possibility of dignified and fair lives for all and the mitigation of some of the fatal consequences for natural ecosystems. The practices of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and other approaches such as feminist economic theory or the (new) commons already offer solid ground to ensure this viability in the medium and long term. Lastly, the fifth element has to do with the need for coordinated action at the systemic level beyond organised civil society or social movements and involves public policy and the conventional private sector.

With these elements in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to describe some of the ways in which CC is contributing to such transformations through the specific case of a unique collective (later formalised as association) in Spain, the Network of Spaces and Agents of Community Culture in Spain ('Red de Espacios y Agentes de Cultura Comunitaria' or 'REACC') and most specifically, the learnings from its applied research initiative published in 2022, the first diagnostic of community culture in Spain. Before diving into the case of REACC and the contributions of the diagnostic, the second section of this chapter describes the main notions mobilised, namely community culture, critical thought and social action. Section four describes the case study at hand, REACC, and summarises the methodology and main findings from its first diagnostic. Based on the previous sections, the last one draws some conclusions for future actions to advance research and action within the ecosystem of community culture.

The concept of community culture and its crossing with critical thought and social action

One of the first actions that REACC undertook was defining the notion of CC in Spain and its relation to other world areas. The definition it provided was "any artistic practice that, in the same project or activity, involves agents and communities in creative processes of a collaborative and transformative nature" (REACC, 2020, p. 7; translation by the author). REACC understands CC as being popular, alternative or critical, and radically inclusive. Firstly, popular insofar as it reflects the social fabric articulated most of the time in traditions rooted in territories (e.g., pilgrimages, carnivals). This ability to convey these profound sets of beliefs, traditions and identities results from its rootedness in communities and emancipatory aim. Secondly, in connection to the search for emancipation, alternative or critical because CC seeks to generate processes of community autonomy and empowerment through collective processes of awareness leading to the agency activation of citizens. The result is a culture that is critical and can be understood as "a reconstruction of culture that problematizes it as a collective alliance of social transformation for all" (Muñoz López, 2000, p. 283). CC is concerned not only with 'what is' but with what 'should be' and often emerges from the margins of mainstream thinking and culture, although there are channels through which it can be diffused. Thirdly, CC counteracts processes of exacerbated exclusion at play in our socioeconomic system while it activates alternative worldviews, mobilising a kind of radical inclusivity (Caruana and Nogales Muriel, 2020; Nogales Muriel, 2024).

Keeping in mind the Weberian definition of social action—a human behaviour with a subjective meaning attached to it, taking into account the behaviour of others and re-orienting it on this basis (Weber, 1978)—I would like to add the social work perspective as a pathway to collective action. For social workers, social action has historically involved the wish to transform the social environment not only through individuals but through social institutions, laws, customs, communities (Coyle, 1939). Collective (or 'joint' social action is based on the shared knowledge of a joint intention ('joint plan') by all participating agents to perform it (Tuomela, 1998). In order to be performable, collective action requires two elements: a shared "we-attitude" (such as a joint goal, belief, or the like) and an action on it plus a shared "we-intention" about which there's a shared belief (Tuomela et al., 2020). Collective action is not the same as coaction or action performed by a group.

The social action of cultural agents goes beyond traditional cultural institutions to capture the diversity of realities that exist in our societies (Wright and Jenkinson, 2019). To this end, it is essential to recognise not only the variety of agents, but also the forms of expression that have developed outside traditional cultural institutions. In this context, new informal arrangements and institutional forms, together with co-produced cultural policies, are crucial to ensure the sustainability, the recognition and the support of alternative forms of arts and culture making. This new culture hybridises with areas of social action through four dimensions, reflecting the richness of the social connections existing in a particular community (which does not mean that conflict is non-existent): 1) creation of movements as a result of the intersection of culture, critical sense and activism; 2) emergence of a new culture as basis for a different way of doing politics that integrates the feminist agenda and 'situated' communities; 3) formulation of new cultural policies based on decentralisation, commons and 'citizen laboratories'; and 4) forging of a new citizenship articulated around culture, a sharing of experiences, processes and strategies and a confederation or cooperation between people aware of the transformative power they possess (Wright and Jenkinson, 2019).

The presence of artists and cultural agents has served not only to make the actions of collectives and platforms more prominent, thanks to the activation of powerful symbolic codes and the creation of common visual references, but also to integrate from the beginning a critical reflection on the outcome of these actions. A pioneering study in the Nordic countries recently confirmed that cultural activism is more successful than other forms of activism, so that culture is becoming, perhaps as a side effect, a fundamental element in (re)thinking new, transformative policies from the bottom up (Harrebye and Duncombe, 2018). In this way, culture is conquering its own autonomy in recent processes of activism, protest, resistance and (social, ecological, labour-related, etc.) demands¹.

REACC as unique case study: Origin, dynamics, and contributions

REACC was born in the spring of 2020 based on the principles of mutual aid and solidarity under the form of an open assembly for dialogue and support between artists, community organisers, and cultural organisations. The members who make up REACC unite to safeguard community projects and try to provide answers to the endemic problems of the cultural sector. By December 2023, it gathers almost 350 agents across Spain led by three basic principles:

1. Centrality of the well-being of the people and their ecosystems;
2. Artistic and cultural exploration aimed for social transformation, collective experimentation, and cooperation;
3. Citizen participation and mobilisation as fundamental elements of artistic and cultural practise, taking people as active subjects and not passive audiences.

Furthermore, REACC aims to contribute to a different way of distributing resources through an economy that is substantive, that is, that recognises the links existing among humans and the planet (Polanyi, 1945; Laville, 2010). In this aspect, the connection to SSE is specified by its bylaws and takes the form of alliances with its own entities belonging to the SSE and to SSE representative organisations. Regarding the provision of services, the network clearly defines as one of its main objectives to be able to provide services of quality,

1. There are numerous initiatives that illustrate this cross between culture, critical sense, and activism: the Serbian Yellow Duck movement, for example, which emerged to oppose a property development project in Belgrade and then spread to other countries, or the Graphic Liberation Movement in Barcelona. This artistic and cultural activism is generating new knowledge and new connections that will impact what is considered the arts and culture of our time.

both inward (to CC agents that compose REACC) or outward (to external cultural policy, research or praxis agents that may require specialised knowledge).

REACC functions as a decentralised network based on very committed agents who work for the common good, organised in thematic and territorial nodes and working in an assemblary manner. REACC does have a professional secretariat and also pays members that fulfil tasks associated with the various projects and initiatives. The four main sources of income of REACC are:

- ▶ **Philanthropy:** REACC has received funding for two consecutive years from a private family corporate foundation based in Spain and France. It involves presenting an action plan and delivering the various deliverables and outcomes. The focus of this funding has been, since the beginning, on the long-term sustainability and scalability of the model across territories.
- ▶ **Market revenue:** REACC offers services through the signing of contracts and partnerships with other organisations (mostly SSE entities but also conventional enterprises) in a competitive environment. For instance, we have been part of European projects that include an operating budget. As a principle, REACC has agreed to avoid competition with its own members in competitive tendering processes.
- ▶ **Public funding:** REACC mobilises grants but also service contracts from state, regional, and municipal administrations. They focus on cultural activities, training, and mentoring.
- ▶ **Donations,** which take two main forms: members' fees which are voluntary and vary in size (they range from €10 to €1000) and a percentage of the projects run by REACC members in recognition of the common good being built and also in return for generating opportunities for its agents.

REACC has organised its efforts around five thematic areas where most of the strategies and actions focus. All five areas are transversal and cut across the many activities that REACC members undertake, therefore benefitting from synergies and internal and external alliances.

The first area is on working conditions and labour dignity. Indeed, much of the collective work as a network focuses on endemic precarity and intermittence within the cultural sector, addressing issues such as restrictions on mobility, job insecurity and lack of political commitment to arts and culture. There are several core strategies for carrying out this area of work: awareness-raising through presentations, talks and policy fora and working groups (e.g., the recent 'artists' statute' working group); collaborations and alliances with public administrations and SSE agents; direct training for CC agents and public administration representatives; and the generation of work opportunities for members. REACC also criticises the modes of funding artistic and cultural work: the 'Anticonvocatoria' ('Anti-Call') initiative, now in its third edition, questions how calls for artistic or cultural projects make use of time, expectations, desire, and work from people who are already stretched thin, forcing them into competition between fellow artists. The Anti-Call disrupts this highly competitive and individualistic process by calling for proposals that require people to work collaboratively towards a shared outcome and with a caring and respectful attitude, empowering artists to embrace the process of co-building together.

The second line of work focuses on advocacy and networking: REACC has launched an 'advocacy node' working to render CC politically relevant for public administrations. Moreover, it joined Culture Action Europe (CAE) and was elected as part of its Board of Directors with the aim of defending community culture and promoting its unique role in eco-social transitions. REACC believes that European institutions have the capacity (and the duty) of facilitating many processes and ensuring that there are intermediaries that connect different levels of action and consensus-making. It is crucial not only to have consensus coming from the bottom up but also to ensure that it makes its way up and is respected in the end, at the 'top'.

The third area is knowledge production and sharing within the network and its associated spaces and agents but also with the rest of the cultural ecosystem and the general public. REACC launched a CC wiki that is regularly updated in collaborative hackathons as well as several cultural programs that we have collaboratively designed so as to ensure cross

fertilisation and mutual learning. They are adaptable and scalable for the various agents to take up. For instance, the 'Tandem programme' is an experimental and democratic intervention already tested and ready to be taken up in other territories. REACC implemented this artistic program to invite neighbours to share, play and reflect on community culture. It starts by creating an artistic experience, such as theatre, a musical performance, or a puppet show. Then, dialogue is facilitated between the artists and community members. It brings together diverse groups of children and adults and makes visible the cultural fabric of their neighbourhoods.

The fourth area, reflectivity and research, cuts across all the actions and initiatives of REACC and is connected to the previous one. REACC thrives to mobilise the ecology of knowledges across the territories where CC agents are active. Indeed, as mentioned above, critical thinking being a central part of CC, methodologies and practices of self-reflectivity are a must-have in all the processes REACC runs. In addition, there is an aim to structurally support the research and development and outreach effort within the network (as illustrated by the knowledge-sharing aim). The idea of a CC observatory was in the agenda of the diagnostic node as a medium/long-term goal but preliminary work had to be done as a way to set the ground for such a formal and demanding institutional approach to be put in place. In this context, the commitment of the network was to produce several articles, and a bi-yearly diagnostic of community culture in Spain. The first one was published in 2022 and received very positive feedback: it is widely used as a reference by the sector and cultural (and beyond) policymakers. The second one is planned for publication in fall 2024.

Lastly, but most importantly, the fifth area is related to well-being and care, which are crucial aspects for REACC. The network emerged digitally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and only after a year and a half were members able to start working face-to-face. Care should not be underestimated as it can allow for cultural agents to see each other not as competitors, but as colleagues who are connected in helping each other reach their shared goals of empowering communities. REACC follows the principles of caring and respect for each other and has created a specific 'care node' to lead internal functioning along these lines and promote them across our members.

A diagnostic to understand community culture

The idea behind the diagnostic was to take the first steps toward a more established way of gathering data and input from the CC ecosystem as a way to outline "common horizons for art and life in Spain" (the subtitle of the study). The group in charge of carrying out this first field research was the 'diagnostic node'. Usually, nodes have several members with varied levels of activity depending on the period. The will is to complete all the tasks in the most collaborative manner possible although usually a reduced group of node members devotes itself to actually delivering the result. The process included designing and revising the methodology through several interactions with other nodes and the assembly (which meets online every month except in August). The overall research design aimed at including a mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. However, the first step undertaken was quantitative due to budget limitations and later on completed with several iterations of a pilot of a qualitative technique generated in-house.

A survey composed of 19 open and closed questions that was distributed among the 200 agents and collectives associated (December 2021). Two reminders were sent and, after a month, 76 responses were received (a response rate of 38%). Although the response may not be statistically representative of the field of CC in Spain, the level of response was deemed as representative enough of the membership of REACC. In January 2022, a 'snapshot' of the diagnostic was produced, with special emphasis on main forms and fields, scope of action, and sustainability. These main findings and conclusions were discussed in detail with the network in a plenary session held during the first face-to-face meeting in the city of Toledo in February 2022. Finally, in March 2022, the diagnostic was published in the form of a report composed of five sections (one introduction, three thematic sections and one of forward-looking conclusions).



FIGURE 1
Awareness-raising action about the situation of community culture, first annual meeting of REACC in Toledo, February 2022. Photo: Javier Roche

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DIAGNOSTIC

The report is divided into four sections and contains very practical data. Instead of summarising each of the sections, I have extracted main lessons from the text which are relevant for the discussion thus far and which may guide future strategies of the network.

Community culture organisational forms, fields, and networks

The first set of questions dwelled on the formats existing within the network itself: REACC is made up of 62% collective actors compared to 22% individual actors and 16% spaces. A large majority of the initiatives (69.3%) have been created in the last 10 years with only one example of organisation founded in 1980.

Regarding the disciplines or fields of activity, CC appears as hybrid, without a single focus on a specific activity field. Indeed, 91% of the initiatives work in different areas of culture, the most prominent being arts management and cultural mediation (almost 70%), followed by the performing arts (50.3%). A salient aspect is how this hybridity is creating new opportunities for developing entrepreneurial initiatives within the territories that also incorporate tourism, heritage, memory, and identity.

The initiatives described by respondents are innovative and transformative as deduced from the types of approaches and practices they mobilise within their activities: 41% develop activities with behavioural/activist practices; 35% with feminist practices, and 25% with environmental practices. This finding illustrates the hybridity of contents at play within community culture, particularly with regard to integrating social and ecological issues.

The survey also revealed that 53% of the entities within REACC are linked to other networks. This confirms the collaborative spirit that characterises community-based initiatives. Issues that emerge in front of this reality relate to the hidden costs of belonging and being active in different networks as well as the need to articulate shared goals that go beyond an advocacy role and promote the economic emancipation of agents, such as the mutualisation of costs and benefits to invest in core activities.

Geographic location and participation

Spain is a country with a high degree of administrative and political centralisation. One of the aims of REACC was to address the need to decentralise policymaking and coordination of culture in the country not only through the Autonomous Communities regime but down to municipalities. However, the picture taken confirms that 45% of entities are

located in the centre of Spain, while the south of Spain gathers 19% of the entities². The analysis, therefore, highlights the urgency of decentralising so as to give voice to the variety of agents with the potential to join REACC.

In terms of the size of the initiatives, 85% of agents (individual and collective) and entities have less than nine people directly involved in the initiative. Such data mirrors the reduced average size of cultural organisations in Spain (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2023) and the need to develop umbrella networks and organisations that facilitate their articulation³.

Availability of spaces for community culture

An important aspect is the very low level of activities that are held in the spaces owned by the agents: indeed, only 14% can count on a space of their own to carry out their activities, which speaks of the precarity and limitation of their potential, and 25% of agents carry out their activity in public spaces, which highlights the work needed to promote this type of culture as community-based (see FIGURE 2).

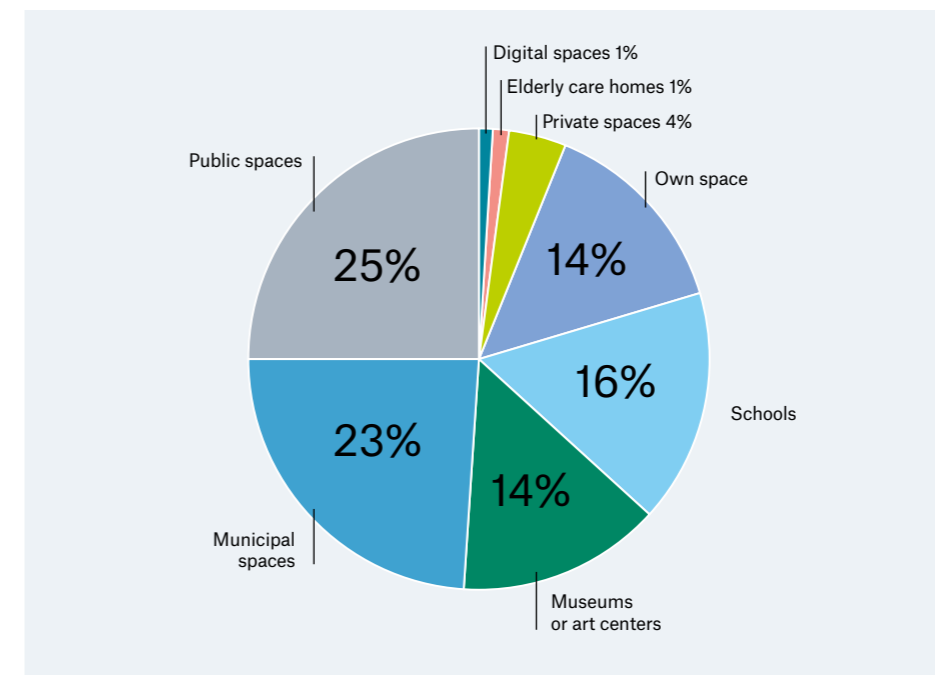


FIGURE 2
Spaces used

Informality and capacity to sustain lives and territories

Regarding the level of formalisation, about 20% of CC agents are of an informal nature: they have not established a legal entity to conduct their activity. For those initiatives formally established, the preferred legal forms are those considered as belonging to the SSE: more than 70% of the formally constituted CC initiatives take the form of associations (56%), cooperatives (16%) and foundation (1%) (see FIGURE 3).

2. As a way to simplify the analysis, several areas were identified (north, central, south, Mediterranean, and international). This result mirrors the general picture of the overall cultural sector in Spain.

3. In 2022, 68.9% of all cultural enterprises have no employees; 25.5% are small enterprises with 1 to 5 employees; and 5.1% have 6 to 49 employees. Only 0.5% are larger enterprises with 50 employees or more (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2023).

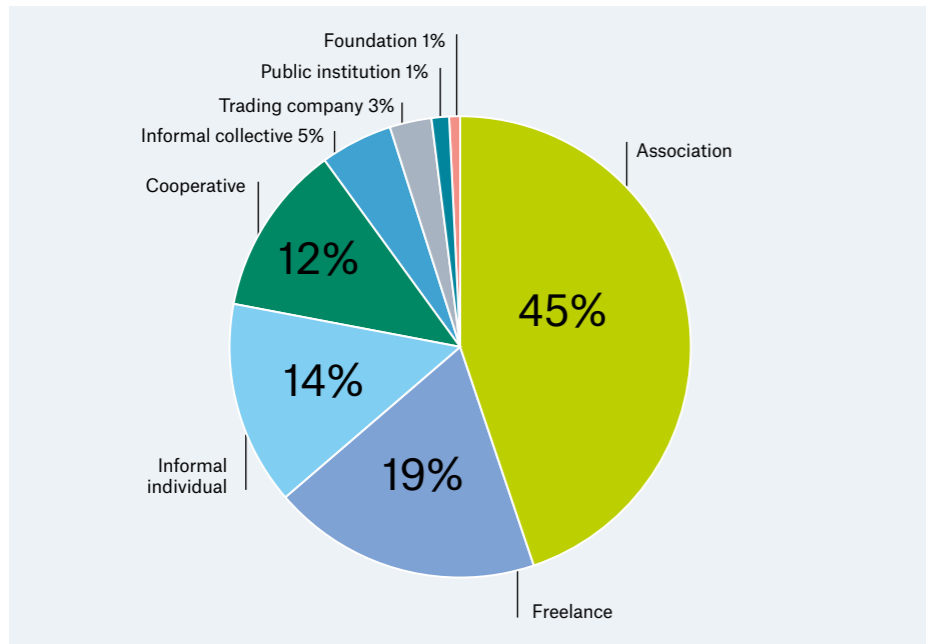


FIGURE 3
Preferred legal form to conduct the activity

Such preference for SSE organisational forms is likely to reflect an intention since the outset to set up organisations that care for the quality and life and work of their internal and external stakeholders. Indeed, when asked about the ability to make a decent living out of their work as CC agents, the responses point toward the precarity of agents and initiatives: only 5% of those involved in CC claim to be able to make a living from it. In other words, 95% of the CC entities and agents in Spain live either with a profound uncertainty about the sustainability of their way of life (36%), with a continuous situation of instability (21%), which means, de facto, precarity in view of the insecurity that this entails, or with a stable activity over time but in precarious conditions (38%) (see FIGURE 4).

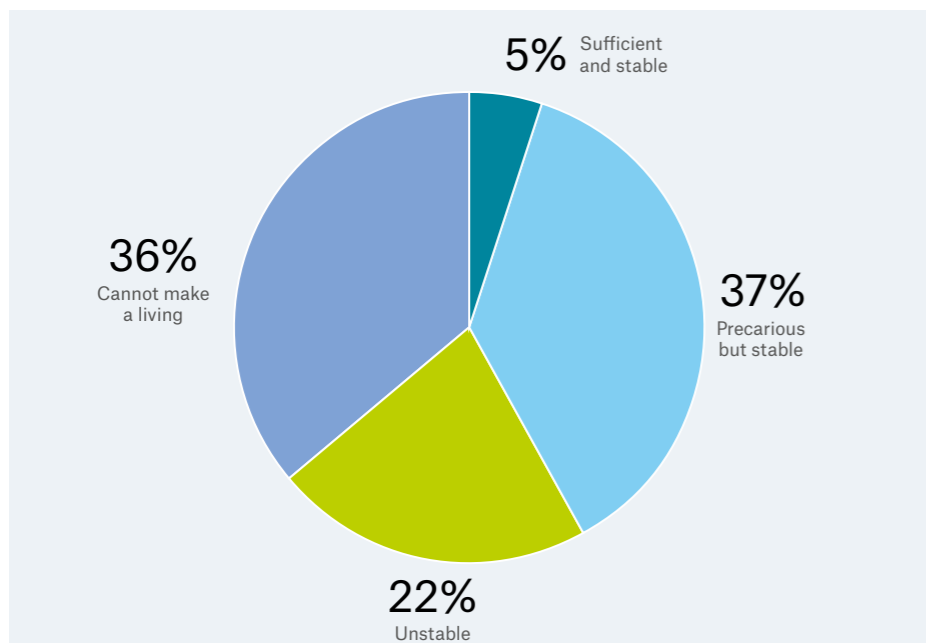


FIGURE 4
Ability to make a decent living

Sources of funding and economic viability

Most CC initiatives reflected in the diagnostic combine different sources of funding. Around 43% of funding for CC depends on public institutions, in particular 32% on public subsidies and grants, and 11% from specific agreements (see FIGURE 5). It remains to add 1% from public procurement and calls for tenders, which—although insignificant at the moment—could become an important source of funding based on the provision of services of general interest. The fact that responsible public procurement and public-communitarian partnerships are beginning to be discussed within public administrations and policy fora could contribute to a more favourable development of CC in collaboration with public institutions.

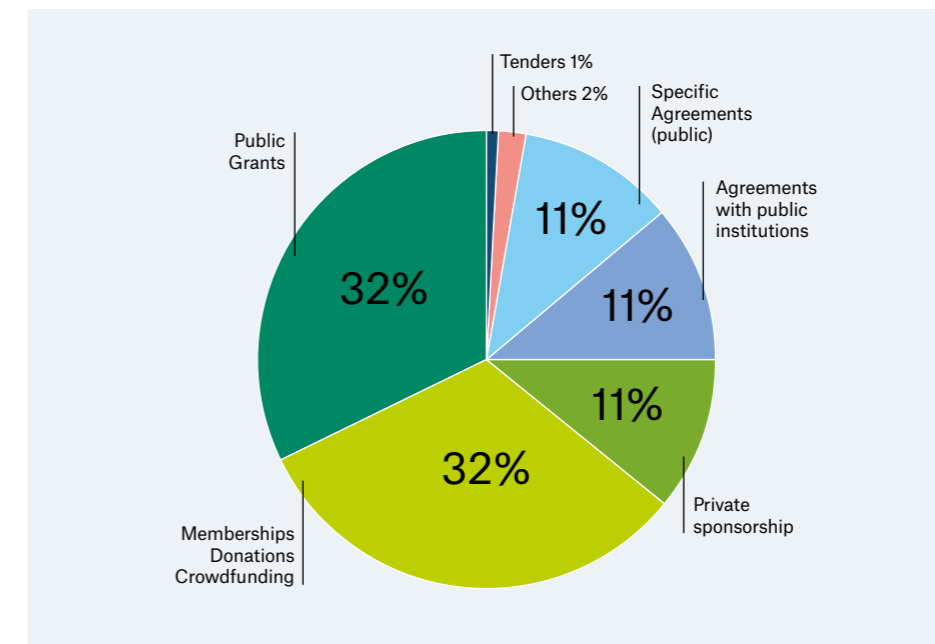


FIGURE 5
Sources of funding

In contrast to the presence of public funding, only 11% of the funding for CC comes from private sources, which represents a promising field of future development for private initiatives seeking win-win alliances for communities and their territories.

In the more entrepreneurial sphere of community culture, 32% of the resources are generated through the economic activity of the initiative itself (e.g., ticket sales, registration fees for training activities, and the provision of specific services). A total of 11% of the economic basis of the initiatives stems from their own members through membership fees or contributions through crowdfunding campaigns. While these strategies generate resources to ensure the operations of the initiatives, setting up and maintaining a membership structure as well as launching crowdfunding campaigns demand high levels of managerial and communication tasks that should be counted in.

The myth of CC being '100% subsidised culture' falls down with these findings as it shows that CC does generate its own revenues through community-based economies.

Incorporating artistic practice into the diagnostic

As part of the work of the diagnostic it was agreed that an original artwork would have to accompany each new edition. For the first edition of the diagnostic, a poem entitled "The hidden call of the Tree bursts forth" was co-written by two members of the diagnostic node. Each page of the report included one verse at the bottom and the complete poem was included in the last page. The poem, written in freestyle verses, recalls the similarity between community-work through culture and the arts and the caring role of trees to support their ecosystems through their contribution to biodiversity:

From the infinite roots of the trees
to the eternal branches that rise
we draw our path of beauty.

Diagnosis of fresh sap,
silent journey on the heights,
colourful growth of leaf-people
who handle non impossible calls.

We compose a diagram of words,
we connect with a brittle time,
we knead a thirst for movement,
we transform our ties into culture.

We draw living capillarities in territories
not depopulated, but emptied;
in cities that resist being without humanity
and generosity, in spite of being stabbed.

These many-oh-so-many leaves provide us with
the fluffy den where to put us on guard
before the worst crisis that is lurking, deadly:
that of isolation, loneliness and sadness.

From the infinite roots of the trees
to the eternal branches that rise
we draw our path of beauty.

Already entwined, we are but pure outbreak
of the hidden call of the Tree.

'Emotions that create'—Bringing the qualitative into the diagnostic

Once the analysis of the survey was published, it was confirmed that a qualitative approach was to be brought in. The need for such a qualitative strategy had been previously envisaged (through focus groups and interviews to expert panels) by some of the members of the node but it had to be left out due to lack of financial resources. Once the report was finished and right before its publication, the first face-to-face two-day assembly of the network took place in February 2022 and the main findings and preliminary conclusions were presented there. Although it was highly appreciated, it became apparent that statistically-based findings stemming from a quantitative technique (survey) had its serious limitations. The presentation of the quantitative data naturally channelled through an artistic and collective action based on the key words of the diagnostic, specific colours and natural materials. Together they unleashed a collective group work that resulted in a renewed transformative commitment and the introduction of emotions in the diagnostic. As a diagnostic it had to incorporate qualitative methodologies in order to unearth unexplored and latent issues: what matters are not only the conditions and status of CC agents with regard to specific factors but what the subjective appraisal of these conditions and status is, what they should become, and how to strengthen the most conducive conditions to achieve the potential of CC. Through the design and implementation of a specific artistic intervention involving colours and textures based on participation led by two members of the node, the qualitative strategy of the diagnostic began to emerge. Originally called the 'Emotions that create' diagnostic, different versions of this intervention were carried out in five different spatial and

social settings with completely different participants with the result of unique insights related to the information presented through the quantitative diagnostic⁴. These presentations aimed at capturing and modelling different qualitative ways to reach shared understandings around specific issues through collective and living practices. These interactive sessions with stakeholders allowed for qualitative feedback to emerge, namely with regard to emotions and feelings. In parallel, REACC has been developing another tool (the 'CC game') which, through gamification and creativity, seeks to enhance interaction and exchange among CC agents and beyond. The aim for the second and third diagnostic, sequentially, is to operationalise these two tools so as to make them techniques that follow the principles of participatory action research, prioritising the role of experiential and situated knowledge through individual and collective storytelling and creative participatory visual and performing methods.

Lessons learned and priority lines of action

As an exercise of active listening to the community, the findings from the first diagnostic were used to cast light upon the future action lines for the network. A total of four action lines were identified based on the results and they guided the initiatives and activities of REACC for the following two years.

The first line aimed to promote the visibility and capacity of CC by increasing mutual knowledge and proximity between different networks already existing within REACC. Such an exercise would require an extra effort in terms of communication and outreach as well as participatory governance. The idea of launching a strategy to meet other networks and collectives working beyond CC and upscaling the advocacy network upwards to the European level began to unfold as part of this first action line. As for the 'what' to render more visible, there seemed to be an agreement around the fact that the visibilisation of CC involves increasing awareness about its agents but also about the resources that it provides to communities and society in general.



FIGURE 6

Qualitative technique focussed on collective knitting and storytelling around the results of the diagnostic, second annual meeting of REACC in Azuara, March 2023. Photo: Javier Roche

4. In addition to the feedback from the wider network in Toledo in February 2022, working sessions were organised in Lima (Peru in August 2022), Barcelona (during the Culturopolis event co-organized by the city council and Culture Action Europe in November 2022), and Zaragoza (as part of an academic-practitioner symposium organised by the University of Zaragoza in April 2023).

The second action line addressed the need to support artistic and cultural activism for social transformation. The objective was twofold. On the one hand, to focus on activities and initiatives with the capacity to have an impact on people and their environments, paying special attention to the ways of making and producing artistic expressions that encourage community work as a means of social encounters. On the other hand, to systematise and promote how those transformative activities and initiatives came to be and have developed overtime, as well as the favourable and hindering factors impacting them. The ultimate goal was to unleash their potential for adaptation and replication across territories.

The third action line emphasised the urgency to improve the working and living conditions of agents of CC, through the presence in policy fora and ad hoc working groups and through the empowerment for self-organisation of CC agents themselves (training and capacity-building, collective or cooperative entrepreneurship, coordinating public awareness-raising campaigns, etc.). In this sense, the publication of Royal Decree-Law 1/2023 of 10 January on the Statute of the Artist was deemed insufficient and inadequate for CC, so further efforts are urgently required to improve the social protection of CC agents. Therefore, the activation of the European advocacy strategy of REACC includes the CAE active membership and the formal launch of the CAE Spain Hub in 2023.

Lastly, action line four seeks to promote accessibility and decentralisation of CC, particularly in rural areas. As mentioned above, knowledge sharing to boost replicability and scaling up of actions, programs and operations is within the *raison d'être* of REACC. In order to generate and share this knowledge, decentralisation, self-reflectivity, care and empowerment are supported throughout the network. Arriving members from territories across all Spain are encouraged to take up new responsibilities and launch projects with the due guidance in a kind of 'peer mentorship' that enhances the power of horizontal and equal relations.

Conclusions

Back in 2020, the invisibilisation of CC in Spain despite its strong presence across territories caused a perplexity that turned into activism inside a group of CC practitioners and researchers. Beyond the formal definition articulated by REACC, CC constitutes a reality based on a set of traditions, practices, processes, creations, and transformations that conceive creation, mediation and artistic participation as part of the communities in which they are inscribed (REACC, 2021). The wide range of cultural projects and initiatives that make up CC have a vocation for social transformation based on a collaborative logic and with an eye on processes and not only on results. Thus, the artistic or cultural event becomes something participated and governed collectively, based on solidarity and mutual support, contributing to social and territorial cohesion. The universalisation of the right of access to and decision on cultural resources is at the heart of CC, pointing to the evolutions from cultural democracy to 'cultural sovereignty' (Nogales Muriel, 2019).

The work carried out by REACC in the last three years has provided a unique environment whereby to approach over 350 initiatives, collectives and agents who self-define themselves as being part of CC. The diagnostic, with its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, has enabled to outline some of the features of CC in Spain but, in a fast-moving field in the present convoluted political and economic environment, keeping track of these mutations constitutes an urgency.

I would like to put forward some conclusions for future actions, focussing on the consolidation of some of the actions already in place as well as on the advancement of systematisation and research to ensure the sustainability of CC.

The fact that many CC agents are located far from urban centres constitutes a unique window to learn and systematise practices happening outside mainstream cultural centres. For instance, 'sustainable tourism' constitutes a very promising area for developing CC as it combines the custody of cultural and natural heritage as well as the activation of local communities as cultural agents.

Regarding policy advocacy, REACC agents not only concern themselves with advancing their own CC agenda but they also believe that CC could help us advance toward fair and dignified ecosocial transitions. In this sense, the framework of reference of 'cultural rights' is guiding the interaction with other policy actors, enlarging the notion of accessibility to include engaged participation and citizen agency.

All four areas of hybridisation between the new citizen culture and social action put forward by Wright and Jenkinson (2019) come to play within the experience of CC and REACC. Indeed, in the course of these three years, REACC has contributed to putting in motion a movement around CC that stands at the crossroads of culture, critical thought, and activism. The CC practices and experiences covered by the REACC umbrella firmly stand up for human rights, general interest, democratic decision-making, and citizen mobilisation, bringing to light different approaches to doing politics. These practices integrate critical approaches (such as feminist, ecological, or decolonial approaches) which are experienced by 'situated' communities with a high auto-reflective dimension that feeds back into these practices and their transformative potential. Moreover, through its continuous bottom-up political engagement and advocacy strategies, REACC is contributing to the formulation of new cultural policies. The principles of decentralisation and the commons are at the heart of managing the relevant resources at hand through new institutionalities (which may or may not result in concrete institutions). Lastly, what is emerging is a new type of citizenship articulated around culture based on the horizontal sharing of experiences, processes, and strategies within a logic of cooperation between people, groups, and communities aware of the transformative potential they possess against the societal and ecological challenges ahead.

The picture, however, is far from being all bright and shiny. The image depicted by the data from the first diagnostic reflects a sector whose medium and long-term sustainability is at risk due to the insufficient material conditions of their agents to support their own lives (informality, precarity, intermittency, etc.) and the continuity of their CC initiatives (lack of access to spaces and services, reduced mobility and capacity-building opportunities, hegemony of other models of culture based on entertainment and the creative industries, etc.).

Several strategies can be suggested to counteract this fragility. Firstly, the self-recognition and activation of all the agents of CC leading to collective actions that contribute to its visibilisation and institutional recognition. In this context, further research is required on what kind of social relations exist to weave supportive and resilient communities in the framework of CC. Defending cultural rights involves recognising the material conditions in which agents and entities develop their activity, while thinking about the power relations and dependencies that generate our cultural practices (as cultural agents and as citizens). In this context, learning about alternative ways of generating economies that respect communities (including workers and citizens) as well as the planet becomes a priority. Secondly, as repositories of the constitutional responsibility to guarantee a living culture that is accessible to all citizens, public administrations hold the key to continuing to ensure such rights in equal conditions to all citizens. Dialogue and mutual learning between public administration representatives at all levels should be promoted, particularly with a view on learning how alternative modes of governance could be explored, such as public-communitarian partnerships. Sustained participation in this dialogue cannot be supported by already endangered collectives or entities but it should be supported by the governance system in place. The time and human power required to 'participate' is simply not affordable by the majority of CC agents, which hinders their potential contribution to such dialogue and exchange.

In all, CC is consolidating as a practice realm but also one of theory and political action. Thanks to the action of thousands of agents and spaces devoted to CC across Spain and the articulation and facilitation roles of REACC, this kind of culture is now less invisible and begins to attract the attention of academia and policy makers at all levels. Numerous threats exist for CC, particularly the precarity of agents and initiatives and shrinking capacity to participate in sustained collective action, the limited understanding of its potential by citizens in general, and the return of populist governments at all levels implementing censorship via funding cuts or direct banning. Aware of the importance of defining genealogies

and solid references, REACC is facing intensive years ahead to act as watchdog and builder: denouncing abuses, proposing alternatives, and fine-tuning participatory governance mechanisms will be critical to continue to outline common horizons for culture and life.

Acknowledgement

This chapter is dedicated to all the colleagues who devote their energy, creativity, and inspiration through culture and the arts to the transformation of the unfair and unlivable conditions in which an increasing majority of our society lives. In particular, the effort of presenting and writing this research goes to honour all my dear colleagues of the REACC network as living proof of the fact that different values and practices are possible only if we, collectively, are ready to dare and commit. My deepest appreciation goes to Begoña Rius and María Camarero for the work of love we carry out in common, to Javier Roche for allowing me to use in this chapter two of the images that his unique photographic eye has contributed to the history of REACC, and to Elena Brea and Artemisa Cifuentes for their reading and comments on this chapter and their ongoing care and support.

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Creative tourism as a catalyst of regenerative culture: Contributions from the creative tourism plan of Recife – PE

Larissa Fernanda de Lima Almeida

The traditional tourism development model has presented high-impact results in destinations, particularly the displacement of residents from central to peripheral areas due to the high living costs and the exchange of essential day-to-day services for services oriented to tourists. It is possible to see the process happening over and over in different places around the world, and it is part of the 'globalisation of tourism' phenomenon: first, a location is 'discovered', it becomes known, tour guides start to recommend the place, and a wave of travellers starts to go there. When this process occurs without planning and adequate infrastructure (almost always), the impacts are severe for the residents: accumulated garbage; insufficient essential service networks such as water, sewage, and energy; increased prices for basic products; extensive international enterprises keeping the money; and the impacts of cultural changes in the community dynamics.

However, this can be different—it is feasible (and desirable) to involve the community in developing tourism activities, for instance, through creative tourism. This kind of tourism is built on reciprocal learning between guests and hosts whereby the participants co-create the experience using their shared references. Everyone involved is touched by these interactions, which leads to an extended transformation because, when returning to their original realities, they will spread these impressions and impact even those who did not participate in the event (Richards, 2011).

Creative tourism encompasses various activities, such as hands-on workshops, cultural exchanges, and participatory events, that allow tourists to engage directly with local artisans, artists, and cultural practitioners. This tourism fosters creativity, imagination, and innovation, providing tourists with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture. Furthermore, creative tourism initiatives are not limited to large metropolitan cities but are increasingly being implemented in smaller places and rural areas (Duxbury et al., 2021).

Given its potential to foster community wellbeing, holistic development, and cultural vitality, creative tourism is increasingly being recognised as a regenerative element within community development processes. The strategic alignment of creative tourism activities with the principles of regenerative tourism can be seen by their focus on reinforcing distinctive elements of local identity, fostering connections between the locale and the external, and serving as platforms for local collaboration, exchange, and development (Dredge, 2022; Sharma and Tham, 2023).

The paradigm shift towards regeneration, transitioning from exploitative developmental thinking to integrated intelligence, will transform tourism. The change is already happening in many parts of the world in small, fundamental ways that gradually connect in a wave of change. This is the case in the municipality of Recife, Pernambuco, which is a reference territory in the development of creative tourism: it has a specific public policy, the Recife Creative Tourism Plan. The policy process development in Recife was anchored in the principles of active participation, exchanges, learning, and processes that strengthened the social dimension in the community, enabling the emergence of a form of tourism that generates results in all dimensions of sustainability.

Regenerative tourism

Over the years, the sustainable tourism approach has evolved and gained attention in academic research. Scholars have shifted from examining the impacts of tourism to proposing tangible measures for achieving sustainable tourism development (Duim et al., 2015). They recognise the need to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations in tourism operations and development. This holistic approach to sustainable tourism aligns with the triple bottom line concept, emphasising the importance of considering economic, social, and environmental factors (Schianetz et al., 2007; Sivesan, 2019).

However, if humankind intends to guarantee life on Earth, more than being sustainable, it needs to be regenerative. The rise of regenerative tourism discussion is a paradigm shift in the tourism industry that challenges the traditional sustainability model. The goal of the regenerative approach is to offer a system of values capable of guiding intentions and actions that result in prosperous and fertile systems in which human beings also perceive themselves as nature and act as part of the flow according to the principles of wholeness, adaptation, and relationship (Reed, 2006; Gibbons, 2020; Wahl, 2020; Dredge, 2022).

According to Gibbons (2020), for the regenerative perspective to establish itself as a worldview, it is necessary to deal with internal and external issues. The internal aspects concern the intangible: worldviews, paradigms and the ability to transcend them, beliefs, values, thoughts, emotions, desires, identities, and spirituality. External aspects are expressions of the internal aspects and can be observed, such as policies, governance structures, economic markets, the built environment, and ecosystems. Gibbons explains that the external aspects reflect the internal aspects and that these are the acupuncture points for transforming the system in a lasting way. In fact, one acts according to what one believes in, so it is only by changing the belief system that one can change how one acts.

For Wahl, this co-creation dynamic is a design he defines as "human intention expressed through interactions and relationships" (Wahl, 2020, p.158). By becoming aware of other possible patterns, human beings can choose to interact in different ways and thus create the real world of possibilities, which is only possible through relationships. For Wahl, a regenerative process:

Creates cultures capable of continuous learning and transformation in response to and anticipating inevitable change. Regenerative cultures safeguard biocultural abundance for future generations of humanity and for life as a whole. (Wahl, 2020, p. 59)

The practices that emerge consider the context and the interrelationships between beings for the prosperity of the ecosystem; they are participatory, community-based processes for social learning, deep care, and conscious action. The result of this process is a regenerative system that is self-organised, shaped by feedback loops relating to internal and external aspects, which generate learning and adaptation and result in health, wellbeing, and vitality for the whole system.

Creative tourism

Destinations are not things; they are people's homes, cultural cradles, and natural ecosystems suffering from enormous flows. However, tourism is also an activity with transformative potential because, besides having a direct and indirect economic and social impact on various productive sectors, it is a social space for exercising empathy and intercultural learning, such as in creative tourism, which emerged as a reaction to mass cultural tourism and encourages more responsible tourism practices and transformative reflections.

Richards and Raymond (2000) first defined creative tourism as:

Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken." (p. 18)

Other definitions highlight active participation, learning experiences, connections with the local community, and co-creation (Duxbury et al., 2021). These dynamics enable the emergence of an original approach to establishing a new paradigm in tourism development. It is an alternative to the traditional tourist paradigm, which deploys unsustainable methods and frequently leads to unfavourable outcomes for the territory, such as the gentrification of places and the monetisation of cultural heritage (Duxbury and Richards, 2019; Remoaldo et al., 2020).

Sergio Molina (2011) identifies creative tourism as a local development approach focused on community participation to create a scenario suitable to the community's interests and expectations. This process can be started by strategic partners such as public sector institutions, investors, entrepreneurs, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The market is a tool to serve the territory's economic and social development objectives.

Beyond the local impact, the dynamics of creative tourism can resonate globally and impact other contexts by facilitating the meeting of diverse worldviews. Empathy can help people from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds build more ethical interactions by facilitating intersubjective understanding. It can even make people from dominant ethnic groups conscious of their privilege and, as a result, encourage changes in these structures. (Tucker, 2016; Almeida, 2020).

In creative tourism experiences, the local host establishes the relationship through creative techniques. This dynamic shifts the power from the centre (tourist) to the periphery (destination) because instead of being a consumer of the place, the tourist is in a position of exchange, learning a given dynamic. This process favours the exercise of empathy. The host develops a relationship of pride for his region and his creative/cultural practice by experiencing empowerment without erasing his roots, which stimulates affection, appreciation, and care. Travellers are invited to reassess their practices and understand that travelling is not about consuming a destination but developing relationships with locations other than their own.

Governance

It is noticeable that many public policies on tourism development still emphasise the economic aspect and minimise the importance of culture as a catalyst for innovation and social cohesion. Governance is a necessary condition to advance in the establishment of the tourism that we want. For the population to have the opportunity to influence the development directions of their territories, the decision-making process must be shared by all agents involved and impacted in the decision through mechanisms to strengthen citizenship and under the lens of the territorial approach.

Governance with a territorial approach consists of decentralised management, distributed in instances of governance that integrate the various entities—government, market, and civil society—at different levels of action so that local actors actively participate in the construction of strategies. The instance of governance in this system is a social body with

the assignment of articulation, proposition, analysis, and monitoring and can take various formats such as a forum, council, committee, consortia, and others (Cerqueira, 2014; Rodrigues and Souza, 2015).

The most competitive destinations are those with the capacity to adapt and reinvent themselves, and this is only possible when people have genuine community involvement, are capable of understanding the singularities of the territory, and can articulate emerging narratives with the stories of the place. As the project becomes the community's blueprint, everyone works to make it consistently successful and multi-sectoral community engagement encourages deep sharing of values and aspirations, facilitates dialogue between different actors and sectors, and helps foster a greater sense of community, ownership, and community empowerment (Silva et al., 2021). Because of its dynamic operation and ability to strengthen the community, creative tourism has been touted as a form of reshaping tourism because it has principles that respond to today's tourism challenges, generating sustainability and regeneration in territories and relationships.

Recife's creative tourism plan

Brazil has positioned itself at the forefront of creative tourism development in Latin America (Richards, 2018). Porto Alegre was the first city to develop a public policy to implement creative tourism in Brazil in 2012. Driven by global and local tourism growth and appreciation of the creative economy, creative tourism was chosen as a competitive differentiation strategy. In 2015, due to its cultural effervescence, the appropriation of public spaces, and the emergence of new activities related to the tourism industry and the creative economy, Brasilia decided to elaborate its creative tourism plan as an invitation to new ideas by looking and thinking the city in other ways and angles in a creative way. In 2018, stimulated by a dynamic ecosystem, favourable ambience, and the understanding that it was possible to improve the city through the strengthening of creative activities, Recife's government, through Recife's Secretariat of Tourism, Sports and Leisure, understands that creative tourism is a strategic segment for tourism in the city and work for the municipal plan for creative tourism.

Four actors were involved in the process of elaborating Recife's Creative Tourism plan:

- ▶ **RECRIA** – The National Network of Experiences and Creative Tourism was the organisational space for creative tourism initiatives that mobilised the public authorities and other actors considered relevant to the process;
- ▶ **SETUREL**: Public policy could only be established with the support of the Secretary of Tourism. The public power, through SETUREL, a technical team proficient in the area, and management eager to move the project forward met the demand from society for the development of the plan;
- ▶ The Working Group for the creative tourism plan (WG), a group formed to coordinate the process, was composed of representatives from the government, Sebrae, universities, RECRIA, and the creative tourism entrepreneurs; and
- ▶ General society, people and organisations touched by the project's invitation and message. They do not necessarily share the same identity as the WG participants. However, in the face of collective action in favour of the whole, they shared a world vision and felt called to contribute, even if indirectly or less actively.

THE INPUT

Recife Creative Tourism Plan 2019-2021 arose from the understanding that the strength of cultural and creative activities could contribute to improving the city's development. Recife presented a suitable environment for the growth of creative tourism in 2018 as a result of a series of events that occurred during that decade: the emergence of *Loa Turismo de Experiências*, a tourism agency focused exclusively on the development and commercialisation of creative itineraries; the realisation of the first International Meeting of Creative

Tourism in 2015; the emergence of RECRIA – National Network of Experiences and Creative Tourism in 2017; and SETUREL with a technical team trained to deal with the subject and a management team eager to move the project ahead—in addition to the city’s natural cultural effervescence.

Having a shared dream is an excellent mobiliser for transformation because it lessens the weight of differences and emphasises what is best in the group. It is the expression of human intention through encounters and connections. Motivated by the positive environment, organised civil society and public authority banded together to envision a fertile, creative ecosystem. All the previous conditions, plus the desire to keep the ecosystem improving, were the input for developing the idea. FIGURE 1 illustrates Recife’s creative tourism plan for the 2019-2021 development process.



FIGURE 1
Recife’s creative tourism plan for the 2019-2021 development process. Source: Developed by the author, 2023

CALL TO ACTION: MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

Once the idea was sown, the next phase was a call to action to mobilise the resources and define a solution. Brainstorming sessions with stakeholders were held to exchange information and find the best solution. These sessions were also a movement to reunite the resources, including people and align stakeholders’ interests. In the end, a working group was formed, the solution was designed, and there was a pact with the local government to develop a public policy.

Considering the common goal of boosting the city’s creative ecosystem, the path chosen to achieve this vision was to strengthen creative tourism. This system had already shown regenerative results, with integrative governance that could ensure diversity of ideas and approaches, innovation, and legitimacy of actions, and join political forces to articulate and carry out the actions.

DEVELOPING THE CREATIVE TOURISM PLAN

Then it was time to develop the idea. Recife’s creative tourism plan was developed through a bottom-up process, which means that the self-organisation of system actors united by values, identities, desires, emotions, and worldviews led the process. At this phase, the actors interacted in a continuous process of learning and adaptation. The WG was the catalyst of the system: it received information, processed it, gave it back to society, received feedback, analysed it, and incorporated the learnings into the process, guaranteeing social co-participation (see FIGURE 2). In this process, it is possible to see the realisation of a vision from interactions that seek diversity, stimulate learning, increase repertoire, strengthen collaboration, align values, and share integrative worldviews. This dynamic of learning and adaptation, sustained by relationships of affection and social capital, and guided by aligned values, enabled the construction of the tangible structure: the creative tourism plan. The results of this process responded to society’s initial yearnings to strengthen and provide feedback on the city’s creative ecosystem.

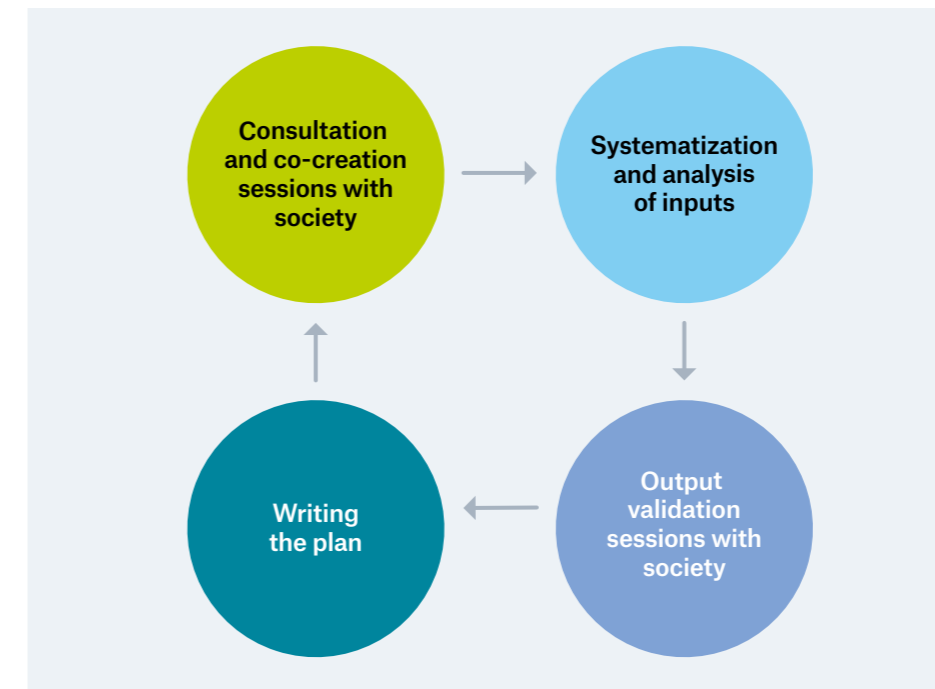


FIGURE 2
Feedback process during the creative tourism plan development. Source: Developed by the author, 2023

Regarding the resources to develop the project, the integrative approach looks at resources beyond money. The creative tourism plan is the tangible platform of expression of the shared vision where the resources converge, and each participant contributes with what they have available, making the execution of the project feasible. The resources can be:

- ▶ Social, referring to values and elements that enhance collaboration, such as networks, trust, reputation, and credibility;
- ▶ Cultural, referring to the knowledge and skills made available by the actors;
- ▶ Environmental, referring to the infrastructure, physical spaces, and platforms for information exchange and communication; and
- ▶ Financial, both monetary resources and volunteer time.

The Working Group was a space for resource processing; people made their technical knowledge and experiences available through conversations, events, seminars, and research, and then the Working Group systematised, analysed, and provided feedback to society. One of the characteristics of the regenerative system is adaptation and learning; by making its knowledge available to the whole, the repertoire of the whole expands, and the

system becomes a space for experimentation, learning, adjustment, and evolution. This dynamic increases the available knowledge and widens the openness for collaboration.

Perhaps because they are concrete, easier to identify objectively, and the most propagated as valuable, it is pretty challenging to take the focus off the financial resources and bring in other possibilities. The financial resources came from the city government through the Secretariat of Tourism, Sports and Leisure. They were used to make the process tangible by developing the document, Recife Creative Tourism Plan 2019-2021. The amount was small concerning the results, and this was only possible because people were willing to donate their time, energies, and knowledges to make the project possible. It was also the participants' in-kind resources that enabled the mobilisation and access to physical structures—provided by organisations that were not directly connected to the plan's process but understood the importance of contributing to a community project.

The sustainability of this process comes from the social resources that are strengthened in the interaction. Aspects such as willingness to cooperate, a shared vision, trust, and empathy are nurtured as one relates to each other and realises that one comes out of the exchange strengthened. As one becomes stronger, the system's capacity to perform, learn, adapt, and innovate grows. Unfortunately, these resources are difficult to measure and have variations over time that do not allow a cause-and-effect connection, making the resource the most important and neglected when discussing transformation processes.

We realised that the characteristic of creative tourism of looking at the territory through the lens of abundance favours the courage for action. Instead of assuming that there are no resources (the most common thought) since there was no money, the question is, 'What do we have?' Starting from the existing resources, we begin to realise the shared vision. Creating this movement according to an ethics of love makes it possible to talk and sign agreements, to minimise the feeling of giving more than the other and strengthen the will to cooperate.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

To make all these efforts concrete, the plan must be implemented. The Recife Creative Tourism Plan 2019-2021 aimed to:

guide the growth of this segment in our city in order to establish the basis for defining actions, priorities, and decision-making of the municipal tourism policy focused on products and projects, infrastructure, communication and promotion of local creative experiences. (SETUREL, 2018, p. 20)

The expected results of this objective were listed as:

- ▶ expansion, diversification and qualification of the tourism offer of the city of Recife;
- ▶ strengthening of Recife's image as a creative city and as a national and international reference in creative tourism;
- ▶ generation of job and income opportunities in various segments driven by creative tourism; integration and strengthening of entrepreneurs of segments related to creative tourism;
- ▶ expansion of social participation spaces for discussion on more effective public policies for the city;
- ▶ attraction of public and private investments to improve urban infrastructure and services;
- ▶ the local ambience is more welcoming, charming and fun. (SETUREL, 2018, pp. 20-21)

The plan's actions were defined to achieve these objectives. Of the 52 proposed actions, 34 were completed, 2 were added, and 18 were cancelled due to the low governance that SETUREL and the Recife Creative Tourism Forum have over the resources necessary for their execution. During the execution of the plan, the feedback process kept happening, so it was possible to add and cancel activities without much harm to the initial goals of the plan. Learning and adaptation were also indispensable to dealing with the impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic, which happened a year after the launching of the plan, significantly affecting the execution of the proposed activities and requiring adaptation of actions and revision of some intervention methodologies.

THE OUTCOMES

The document presents a strong orientation for the community, pointing out actions that integrate the population into the creative ecosystem, such as sensitising young people, training creative and cultural entrepreneurs, and offering creative tourism experiences for the population to make contact with this type of tourism dynamics. Tourism is an activity in the population's imagination as elitist, distant from everyday life, and only valuable in luxury spaces. These actions made the population aware that it is possible to experience the city in a touristic way, including peripheral places; that the cultural and social resources of the city are precious raw materials for tourism; and that it is possible to undertake business from one's own place and knowledge.

Understanding the value of the place and its knowledge generates pride in the residents who, more confident, are empowered to start to look and show their place through their perspective. Conversely, consumers change their view of the periphery by having contact with this narrative, so the transformation cycle continues. This process has inspired new official and independent routes, for instance, creative tourism experiences offered through the 'Olha! Recife' project of the Secretariat of Tourism and the emergence of 'Visit Macaxeira', through which this peripheral neighbourhood is now a stage for creative experiences. The symbolic displacement of the periphery in the imaginary influences the environmental interconnections. By perceiving the periphery as an accessible place, people are willing to go there and demand activities that provide this experience. Thus, the routes of the bike lanes have been expanded, services have emerged for rides along the river that enhance the landscape and show the city from other angles, and gastronomic festivals have been held in spaces that were previously invisible. These symbolic and physical displacements generate meetings and approximations of realities that amplify the diversity and increase the ecosystem's vitality.

Another outcome was the traditional industry's (which operates following the conventional logic of mass tourism) approach to innovative tourism initiatives. A fair for the promotion of innovative travel items called 'Expovivências' emerged from this exchange. When two groups interact, both groups get knowledge from the other's environment. Creative tourism initiatives learn how to interact with the traditional trade ecosystem and its commercialisation strategies, while the traditional tourism enterprises began to think about alternative modes of operation (even though its primary concern is financial gain, it is possible to consider other interests). By examining various variables and spreading the possibility of more inclusive practices, this integration helps the transformation proceed gradually. Once more, we see a group of people working together on a project where a common objective mitigates their differences.

Perhaps the result with the most significant impact is the institution of the Recife Creative Tourism Forum. One of the plan's actions was the establishment of horizontal, participative governance that would enable interaction between civil society, commercial/market agents, and public power, with the capacity to analyse, propose, implement, and monitor the actions in this area. Once the Working Group was formed, legitimised as a representative space of the segment, and with the capacity to develop governance actions, it was decided to transform the Working Group into the Recife Creative Tourism Forum, an instituted governance body of creative tourism in the city through decree No. 32.786 of August 21, 2019. This means that its governance has independence from the government and, even with political changes, the Recife Creative Tourism Forum (hereafter referred to as 'the Forum') has legitimacy. So much so that even with the political change, the Forum mobilised public power and the public policy continued with the second edition of Recife's creative tourism plan, for 2022-2024.

The Forum has shown itself to be a strong governance body with power for social mobilisation. For example, the Forum organised public hearings to align expectations about qualification for creative tourism conductors, articulated resources with the legislative

power to realise the course, and guided the Secretariat of Tourism in executing the action. We see here the capacity for self-organisation to ensure that everyone plays their roles without prejudice and in a way that strengthens the system. This is just one example of how horizontal and participative governance has worked in this case.

The strengthened Forum made it possible to expand the discussion of creative tourism to other political spaces: the Sectorial Chamber of Tourism of the State Development Agency (ADEPE), a decision-making space on investments and structuring projects for tourism, and the Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social do Recife (CEDES, Council for Economic and Social Development of Recife), a public forum where all sectors with economic and social relevance for the city are represented.

When we bring a different relationship logic to the negotiations, more human, slow, focused on people, and with distributed results, we can sensitise players who are still cut off from our praxis. Similarly, given our location in political settings, we have adopted a horizontal, participative view of learning and collaboration. The outcomes are invitations to participate in decision-making, the opening to work more collaboratively and creatively, and even when we are only asked to justify an opening to diversity, articulating this viewpoint to those unwilling to accept it, is a step toward sensitisation.

This is a continuous and evolutionary process, as an ascendent spiral. The outcomes of these first actions become the catalyst for brand-new organisational movements that are more developed due to the process's lessons and more expansive due to the results' impacts on other spheres.

In this process, creative tourism is the platform for social transformation that stimulates creative practices from which people connect with the appreciative gaze of potency and abundance that gives courage and confidence for organised action in the network. Thus, creative tourism is the force that drives governance, that drives public policy, and that results in impacts on society and regenerative transformation. The plan reflects the maturing of the creative tourism concept that today guides a creative tourism destination imbricated in networks without a clear distinction between the visitor and the host. The direct results of the plan's actions unfold in other actions with results that feed back into the system and strengthen and legitimise the public policy, as well as the governance body that, strengthened, can influence more public decisions in favour of society's desires.

Conclusions

The transformation we need to continue existing as humanity involves transforming our worldview. For this transformation to happen, we need to feel integrated into the whole, and the deepest and lightest way to experience this is through connections and creativity. So, creative tourism is a powerful channel for us to experience integration with the whole. By connecting with the place through creative activity, people connect with themselves and access resources that were dormant; the activity generates meaning for themselves in connection with the place.

The dynamics of the creative tourism development model in Recife have characteristics of regenerative design and are the starting point for thinking about a regenerative tourism development model. Issues such as looking at the place through the lens of abundance and presenting it from the point of view of its potential make the traveller change the way of looking at a destination. It also stimulates a review of the power relations between centre and periphery as the view that the natives have of themselves, their knowledge, and their territory has an impact on their belief in themselves and that other realities are possible.

Learning is fundamental in creative tourism, both as a product and a process. As a product, learning is the principle from which the relationship with the territory is established through which the host reveals the destination to the traveller. As a process, no experience is the same as the other; with each interaction, it is necessary to process the exchanges and reorganise the delivery. This also happens in interactions on the network and in the actions developed in the creative tourism ecosystem. Learning is an essential dynamic of regenerative systems because it favours an empathetic outlook when one understands the other

person's reality, increases the system's repertoire, and contributes to an adaptive and resilient ecosystem.

The process of drawing up the creative tourism plan made it clear that public policy is a process, not a product. The project does not end when the published document is delivered but is transformed to generate the results needed for society to move forward. By looking at public policy as a process rather than a product, we can use the results as raw material for the next level of action, broaden the scope, and deepen the issues. That is design. Collaboratively doing this, with popular co-participation, learning, adaptation, and diversity, guided by loving ethics, is regenerative.

The social resource has much influence on the regenerative dynamics of creative tourism; it is the resource that encourages collaboration, through which other resources reach the system, but the fact that it is intangible and often intertwined in the dynamics means that it is often not recognised and valued. There is no doubt that the most valuable resource in drawing up Recife's creative tourism plan and in creative tourism practices is social capital; it is through interaction that it is possible to transform worldviews and realities. A diversity of resources needs to be brought to the centre of the system to generate wealth for everyone.

One issue to be improved in the creative tourism ecosystem in Recife is the establishment of indicators to monitor and measure the impact of the activity in the city. A suggestion for future studies is to develop and implement indicators to monitor a range of results and impacts, tracking transformations beyond economic results. In addition to the usual tangible measurements, these indicators need to consider the intangible and qualitative elements of the actions.

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Nature and culture in a tourism development strategy: A French-Canadian rural regeneration perspective

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The COVID-19 pandemic restricted foreign travel, resulting in an increase of the number of interregional visitors in many regions of the province of Quebec, particularly the Gaspé Peninsula and the St. Lawrence North Shore. Because of travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic, in summer 2020, the municipality of Rivière-au-Tonnerre recorded a large increase in tourist traffic, particularly in the city's natural areas. Travel restrictions are now lifted around the world and traveller behaviour has returned to pre-pandemic patterns. Nonetheless, although temporary, this increase in the number of tourists aroused the Rivière-au-Tonnerre's municipal governing body's interest in developing tourism. The municipality wishes to attract a greater number of tourists, using sustainable development strategies, and become a successful actor in tourism in the Côte-Nord region⁵.

To provide some orienting information on the geographic context, Rivière-au-Tonnerre is a very small municipality of about 400 people on the North Shore (Côte-Nord) of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, Canada. Located in the northeast of Quebec, Côte-Nord is a very large region totalling over 300,000 square kilometers (approximately 21% of the Quebec territory) but sparsely populated. This region spans from Tadoussac at the western extremity to Blanc Sablon at the eastern extremity (see maps in FIGURES 1 and 2).

Blanc Sablon faces France's overseas territory of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon Island. Rivière-au-Tonnerre is located about midway between the two extremities, approximately 120 kilometers east of Sept-Îles and 100 kilometers west of Havre-Saint-Pierre. Sept-Îles is a much larger municipality of over 28,000 people. Havre-Saint-Pierre is also larger than Rivière-au-Tonnerre, its population totalling about 3,500 people. Both Havre-Saint-Pierre and Rivière-au-Tonnerre face Anticosti Island, a renowned tourist destination now recognised as a UNESCO world heritage site.

5. This is also in line with the current provincial government priorities. For instance, to develop its regions, this government proposed in 2022 that regional airfare from large cities, such as Montreal and Quebec City, should be limited to 500 Canadian dollars. Although this measure helps some municipalities in the Côte-Nord region, such as Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles, it has no direct impact on Rivière-au-Tonnerre because the municipality has no airport. Also, the reduced airfare is available for only a limited number of tickets, and for personal use. Moreover, agreements are signed with individual air carriers for only one year at a time. This measure is thus favourable for the Côte-Nord region and indirectly for Rivière-au-Tonnerre. Will this pandemic induced measure be short-lived as many other measures have been after the pandemic? Time will tell.



FIGURE 1
Map of Canada

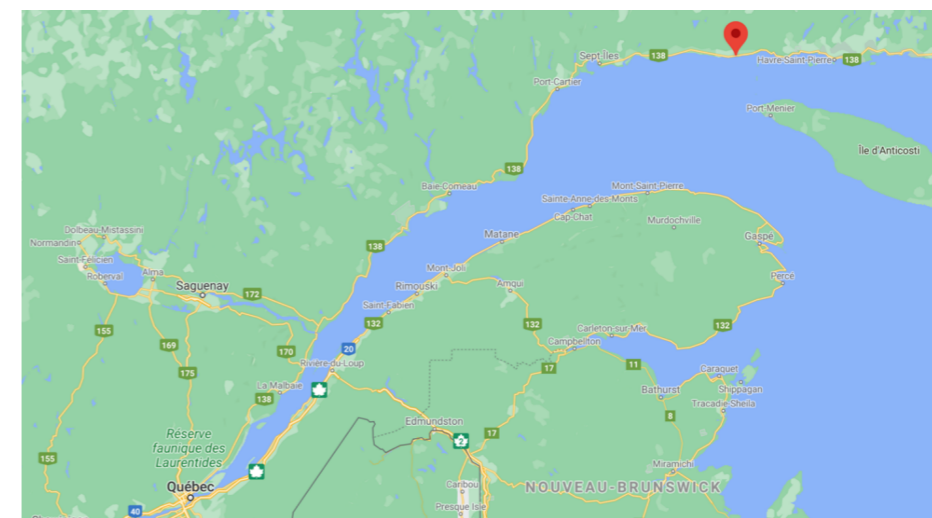


FIGURE 2
North Shore of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec

The municipality of Rivière-au-Tonnerre wishes to highlight the natural and cultural attractions of its territory in its tourism offer. In terms of natural attractions, the municipality has a rich aquatic heritage. The 70-km-long coastline facing Anticosti Island alternates rocky points and granite hills with long fine sandy beaches. In addition to those bordering the municipality, Jupitagon and Bouleau, which along with the Sheldrake River are so-called 'salmon rivers', you can also admire the Manitou, Chaloupe, Couture, and Tonnerre rivers. The latter is particularly well known because of its waterfalls.

From a cultural standpoint, the municipality has, amongst other things, the St. Hippolyte church, one of the only Norman-style churches in North America made entirely of wood carved by local craftsmen. It also features houses with unique architecture and local gastronomy (see cultural features in FIGURES 3 and 4).

We aim to understand how a small municipality in a rural region can responsibly utilise its natural and cultural features and attract more travellers through a tourism offering. The analysis presented in this chapter uses data collected in a research report submitted to Rivière-au-Tonnerre, which aimed at developing strategic orientations for sustainable tourism development calling upon the natural and cultural features of the region.



FIGURE 3
Exterior of St. Hippolyte church



FIGURE 4
Interior of St. Hippolyte church

Guiding concepts

Our argumentation rests on five main concepts: ecotourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, and regenerative tourism.

ECOTOURISM

According to the UNWTO, ecotourism includes “all nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas” (UNWTO, 2002).

The definition of the concept of ecotourism is at the heart of several social and economic debates; for some authors the definition of the concept remains elusive. Hetzer (1965) was one of the first to define the concept of ecotourism as tourism based essentially on natural and archaeological resources from a historical account (Hetzer, 1965, cited in Björk, 2000, p. 190). On the other hand, Allcock et al. (1993) integrate the notion of sustainability, defining ecotourism as “nature-based tourism that includes an educational component and is managed sustainably.”

Some authors present ecotourism as the practice of activity related to nature with a sustainable dimension aimed at preserving natural areas, sensitising tourists to practices that are respectful of the environment (Graja-Zwolińska and Spychała, 2013).

However, while ecotourism is often associated with sustainability, it is not necessarily always sustainable. Indeed, ecotourism does not always respect the principles of sustainability; some types of activity can even deplete available natural resources (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010; Manning and Dougherty, 1995). Also, according to some authors, ecotourism is not necessarily practised in a natural environment; some define ecotourism as a form of nature tourism considering culture (Graja-Zwolińska and Spychała, 2013; Björk, 2000). Indeed, the culture of the local populations allows the tourist to travel in an authentic setting, avoiding depletion of resources, and thus contributes to sustainable development (Björk, 2000). In short, as we envision it, ecotourism should be characterised by the balance between ecological, economic, social, and cultural aspects (Björk, 2000). Thus, ecotourism should benefit local communities and the destination environmentally, economically, and culturally.

As R. K. Blamey points out in “Principles of ecotourism,” within *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*:

An analysis of definitions such as these indicates that three dimensions can represent the main essence of the concept. According to this interpretation, ecotourism is:

- ▶ nature based,
- ▶ environmentally educated, and
- ▶ sustainably managed.

The last dimension is taken to encompass both the natural and cultural environments involved in supplying the ecotourism experience. Thus, where Ross and Wall (1999) outline five fundamental functions of ecotourism; namely: (i) protection of natural areas; (ii) education; (iii) generation of money; (iv) quality tourism; and (v) local participation, the last three fall under the heading ‘sustainably managed’ The three-dimensional interpretation is also consistent with Buckley’s (1994) restrictive notion of ecotourism in which ecotourism is nature based, environmentally educated, sustainably managed and conservation supporting. (Blamey, 2001, pp. 6-7)

Ecotourism is thus nature-based. But is ecotourism a subset of nature tourism or is nature-based tourism a subset of ecotourism? In the section that follows, we discuss this issue, and others related to nature tourism.

NATURE TOURISM

Nature-based tourism is frequently used synonymously with terms such as eco, sustainable, green, alternative, and responsible tourism (Weaver et al., 1998; Weiler & Hall, 1992). For the purposes of this paper, nature-based tourism is defined as ‘tourism that features nature’ (Western Australian Tourism Commission and Department of Conservation and Land Management, 1997, p. 4). This is a simple and broad definition, including a range of tourism experiences such as adventure tourism, ecotourism, and aspects of cultural and rural tourism. Several of these terms appear self-explanatory and not all fall within a rigid definition of nature-based tourism. Ecotourism is a subset of nature-based tourism, and it relates to an experience in remote or natural areas that fosters an understanding and appreciation of the need to conserve the natural environment in a way that sustains the resources, culture, the economy, and the local community (Fennel, 1999). (Priskin, 2001, pp. 638-639)

Nature tourism integrates several forms of tourism and experience in the natural environment. Indeed, many forms of nature tourism are associated with a natural environment in reference to an ecosystem such as polar, forest, or even adventure tourism, which is practised in nature, but are associated with different types of activities (Priskin, 2001, p. 639).

Nature tourism is therefore a very broad concept since it encompasses different tourism practices related to nature. The confusion of the definition of nature tourism is particularly associated with the use of the term ecotourism which is considered a synonym of nature tourism by many authors (Graja-Zwolińska and Spychała, 2013, p. 38).

As D. B. Weaver explains in “Ecotourism in the context of other tourism types,” within *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*:

Ecotourism was often portrayed in the early literature (e.g. Boo, 1990; Sherman and Dixon, 1991; Whelan, 1991; WTTTC, 1993) as being indistinguishable from ‘nature-based’, ‘nature-oriented’ or ‘nature’ tourism. This tendency was no doubt fostered by the equation of ‘nature’ with a relatively unspoiled natural environment, and with the close association between ecotourism and that same sort of environment. However, even at that early stage, some analysts such as Ziffer (1989) argued for the differentiation between ecotourism and nature-based tourism on the grounds that the former implied adherence to a particular set of sustainability values. In contrast, nature-based tourism according to Ingram and Durst (1987) is simply leisure travel that involves utilisation of the natural resources of an area.

This early recognition of a distinction between ecotourism and nature-based tourism is now more normative in the literature and among practitioners (e.g. Goodwin, 1996; Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1998). Fennell (1999) suggests a growing consensus around the view that ecotourism is but one component within the latter broad category...

The Venn diagram depicted in [FIGURE 5] puts forward the view, with one major qualification, that ecotourism is a subset of nature-based tourism. The fact that ecotourism is not subsumed entirely under this category recognizes that certain past and present cultural attractions may constitute a secondary component of ecotourism. Such a view, for example, is contained in the original definition of ecotourism provided by Ceballos-Lascuráin (in Boo, 1990). The logic of incorporating this cultural component is best demonstrated with respect to the influence and presence of indigenous cultures, wherein the boundary between culture and nature may be perceived as cloudy at best, and arguably even as an entirely artificial construct. (Weaver, 2001, pp. 73-74)



FIGURE 5
Nature-based tourism and ecotourism. Source: Weaver (2001, p. 74)

Having established that ecotourism is a subset of nature-based tourism, we will now explore how exactly cultural tourism is positioned within that realm.

CULTURAL TOURISM

In November 1976, the ICOMOS Tourism Committee adopted the Cultural Tourism Charter during the International Seminar on Contemporary Tourism and Humanism held in Brussels. This Charter is generally recognised as “the first international document focused on the need for a responsible tourist approach to cultural heritage and it also anticipated the recognition of sites and monuments as a source of economic benefit and cultural education”⁶.

The third founding principle of this Charter states:

Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose object is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and sites. It exerts on these last a very positive effect insofar as it contributes – to satisfy its own ends – to their maintenance and protection. This form of tourism justifies in fact the efforts which said maintenance and protection demand of the human community because of the socio-cultural and economic benefits which they bestow on all the populations concerned. (ICOMOS Tourism Committee, 1976, p. 2)

The definition adopted by the UN Tourism General Assembly is more detailed and thus more useful not only as a theoretical framework but to help applying those principles in the field:

A type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions. (UN Tourism General Assembly, 22nd session, 2017)

Inherent to this definition is the fact that cultural tourism must be sustainable.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Nature tourism, ecotourism, and cultural tourism are ways to implement sustainable tourism in a destination. As Butler (1999) notes, the original definition of sustainable development was provided by the Brundtland Commission in *Our Common Future* as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p. 9, citing World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). More recently:

The UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization describe sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.” Some popular sustainable initiatives include reducing the washing of bed linens, stopping food buffets to limit food waste and encouraging guests to limit their consumption of water, which are all valid efforts helping educate guests but are still often limited to financial decisions. Sustainable tourism therefore considers neutralizing tourism’s negative impacts completely. (Reymond, 2022, n.p.)⁷

Sadly, tourism development is not always sustainable in all destinations. In fact, it can be destructive for the natural environment and disturbing for the population living in the destination. Too often, tourism needs to be restricted, and sites or artifacts restored or re-generated.

6. ICOMOS Open Archive: <https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2902/#:~:text=It%20can%20be%20considered%20the,economic%20benefit%20and%20cultural%20education>

7. Cited on UNWTO website: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-culture>

REGENERATIVE TOURISM

Regenerative tourism is needed when and where sustainable tourism has failed. However, ideally, regenerative tourism principles should be applied before any degeneration has occurred. Amongst other things, regenerative tourism promotes a greater involvement of people in tourism decisions:

In this way, Canada's tourism sector has an opportunity to be the change the world aspires to see happen. Tourism—viewed from the perspective of hosts welcoming guests into their communities—has potential to be a catalytic force in the transformation of Canada's economy and social fabric, helping to put the country onto a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous trajectory by:

- ▶ Reconnecting people with each other—nurturing mutual benefit across geographies, industries, cultures;
- ▶ Reconnecting people with nature—reawakening us to our interdependence within a larger living system, adding value without extraction; and
- ▶ Elevating the role of communities of all sizes—discovering their inherent potential, weaving purpose, place, people, and profit together again. (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 3)

For too long, the world has been viewed as mechanistic and fragmented. However, as Destination Canada observes, “an alternative paradigm is gradually emerging—and in many ways re-emerging. It recognizes the world not as a machine but as a living ecology, with humans playing an integral part” (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 12). This paradigm of this new worldview involves six main shifts:

1. The World is not a machine, it is a living ecology.
2. The World is not separated and fragmented, but, on the contrary, integrated into a greater whole.
3. The World is not simple and linear, but, on the contrary, complex, and non-linear.
4. The World cannot be governed by a central Command and Control system, guardians must create conditions allowing quick and flexible responses to emerging tendencies.
5. Generic solutions cannot solve World problems, solutions can only be found locally.
6. Still today, the World is governed by self-interest of a few and based on transactions producing financial transactions gain for those few. Stewardship of the World must be exercised in spirit of mutuality and reciprocity.

The World as a machine degenerates, while the World as a living system regenerates:

With this understanding of shifting worldviews, we see that calls for new approaches to tourism are part of a larger regenerative movement arising over the past several decades in sectors as wide ranging as agriculture, business, architecture, fashion, urban planning, and more. (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 13)

To promote regeneration, Destination Canada proposes five principles (see FIGURE 6):

These principles offer ‘guides to action’ and help us choose how to advance our shared purpose and put our values into practice. Expect that engaging with these principles of regenerative practice will be challenging at first and then increasingly enriching. And although it is a non-linear and iterative learning process, there is something of a natural starting point and progression. (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 17)

We will apply those five principles to Rivière-au-Tonnerre in the ‘Regenerative tourism’ sub-section of our ‘Suggested strategic plan of action’.

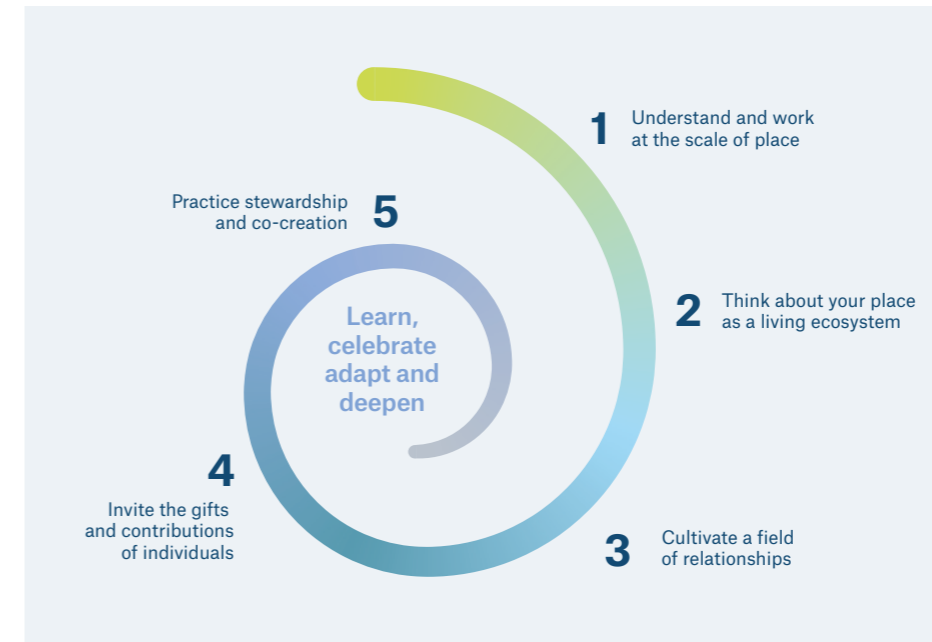


FIGURE 6
Principles of regenerative practice. Source: Destination Canada (2023, p. 17)

As Destination Canada (2023) elaborates,

The starting point is learning to see, understand, and work at the scale of your whole place. This is the home you share with neighbours, with innumerable other species, and with the local geology, hydrology, economy, culture, and more. Place is the largest manageable living system, a scale at which we can all understand and see the impact we are having. (p. 18)

The next step is to co-discover the potential for vitality that is possible in your place, based on its unique nature as a living ecosystem. Here, the work is to sense, serve and manifest the vision of your place's fullest, most healthy, alive, and evolving state. In other words, it is to align stakeholders around the common purpose of what is possible and profoundly meaningful here. (p. 19)

In an ever-deepening awareness of the story and potential of place, the work of this phase is to begin to align and nurture a network of people and businesses interested in working together in support of their place. Their ongoing task is a shared tending of community interaction and the continual learning it generates. (p. 20)

Building on the previous phases, the work here is to invite and begin to integrate the motivating gifts and service-focused passions of a wider array of people, community groups and enterprises. (p. 22)

In setting our intention to enable regeneration, we take on a new role of adaptive, responsive stewardship. Such a practice calls for a process, rhythm and infrastructure for continuing to learn, share and grow together. One concise definition of stewardship is ‘care for the whole.’ In other words, it is the ongoing, collective practice of tending the whole living system of place, in all its layers and all its complexity. (p. 23)

This concludes our guiding concepts. Let's move on to the methodology we used for data collection.

Methodology

For this study, we conducted a content analysis of official documents produced by two governing bodies in the Côte-Nord region (ATR Côte-Nord and MRC Minganie) and of individual interviews. In the latter case, respondents were asked to answer open-ended questions on the following themes: role and interest, institutional environment and achievements, perceptions, and expectations for tourism development.

We interviewed 14 respondents from three types of organisations:

1. Elected officials and administrations: Regional representatives of tourism development, MRC Minganie, Regional representative of the Ministry of Culture and Communications, Mayor and other elected officials of Rivière-au-Tonnerre;
2. Associations: Tourism Development Advisor, Côte-Nord, ATR Côte-Nord Director; and
3. Business partners: business owners (sea excursions, cruises, fishing, camping grounds), travel agency directors.

Findings

As mentioned in the introduction, Rivière-au-Tonnerre is a very small municipality of about 400 people on the North Shore (Côte Nord) of the St. Lawrence River. Côte Nord is a very large region totalling over 300,000 square kilometers but sparsely populated.

Nature tourism is understandably a prime appeal in Rivière-au-Tonnerre and the surrounding wilderness. The region has three distinct zones: the hinterland, the coast, and the maritime zone. In terms of nature tourism, potential tourist attractions are therefore numerous and diverse. We can think of travelling in a natural environment, beaches, the St. Lawrence River as a support for outdoor activities, hiking, picking berries, observing, and interpreting nature. To this day, the region is too remote to be swarmed with tourists.

Thus, a large majority of respondents mentioned the importance of promoting the municipality's natural attractions, a vision like those of Tranquard (2020) and Weaver (2001). This extract of an interview illustrates this statement:

"I see for Rivière-au-Tonnerre a broad and varied vision to represent the assets of the city, everything is to be built in Rivière-au-Tonnerre, there are many natural resources available for adventure tourism or nature for example, but they are not developed or promoted, they are merely contemplative. It would also be interesting to expand the offer, because there are few accommodations to allow tourists to enjoy experiences."

According to most respondents, natural attractions should be exploited for tourism. While we agree with this vision, we believe that such development must be integrated in a larger plan for all municipalities and rural areas in the very large Côte Nord region located on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River.

Nature tourism activities raise questions about respect for the nature of the environment and the conservation of natural resources. Many respondents expressed their desire to see the tourism development strategy oriented towards ecological values. This extract of an interview illustrates this statement:

"The tourist development of Rivière-au-Tonnerre must be geared towards an ecotourism vision to guarantee respect for the environment and keep the authenticity of natural resources to avoid harming it."

This statement supports the need to include the ecological dimension in the nature-focused development plan, which aligns with the concept of ecotourism according to Ceballos-Lascuráin (1991). Furthermore, because this statement clearly states the need to prevent harm to natural resources it respects the principles of ecotourism, sustainability, and regenerative tourism.

Overall, respondents want Rivière-au-Tonnerre to develop its tourist offering based on both natural resources, such as rivers, lakes, beaches, and forests, and cultural resources, such as the St. Hippolyte church, houses with unique architecture, and local gastronomy. This extract of an interview illustrates this statement:

"In terms of tourism development, there is an opportunity to showcase the gastronomic aspect of the city with the cloudberry house, a local product, the boreal granary with vegetables and blueberries picking, most of our residents having their own small garden. They could also participate in markets or even be involved in hunting and fishing activities. There is also the possibility of developing an interpretation centre."

This statement is in line with authors such as Reisinger (1994) and Mousavi et al. (2016). There are existing resources in terms of built heritage, but they are underutilised and perhaps not properly maintained. Development of cultural tourism may be an opportunity for Rivière-au-Tonnerre. Furthermore, the aspects of gastronomy and interaction with the indigenous populations of the region are also overlooked intangible cultural assets.

Respondents also emphasised the development of activities to expand the tourist offering, including camping, fishing, cultural visits, and encounters with indigenous populations. They also proposed ideas for development actions such as landscaping, the creation of discovery circuits, and the development of infrastructure to attract tourists.

In conclusion, all individuals interviewed confirmed the need for simple, realistic, cost-effective actions that take optimal advantage of the availability of natural resources and existing heritage, and the necessity to protect said resources and heritage. Interview results reveal that, according to the respondents to our study, nature and cultural tourism contribute to tourism development in Rivière-au-Tonnerre. Those findings allow us to meet our goal, that is, to understand how a small municipality in a rural region can enhance its attractions, through a tourism offer based on nature and culture.

In the next section, we present how study results are pertinent in the perspective of the wider Côte-Nord region and MRC Minganie.

Analysis

Not surprisingly, so far, nature has been the main tourist attraction in Rivière-au-Tonnerre. It has not been fully exploited because of the municipality's small population and, therefore, its lack of financial resources. Also, Rivière-au-Tonnerre is currently not one of the areas most visited by tourists. Travellers see it as a stopover destination on Route 138.

The natural resources available in Rivière-au-Tonnerre may be promoted in a tourism development plan. This may be achieved by creating a structured offer, such as a route or path highlighting the most unique natural assets, documenting this offering, and promoting it online through social media and ATR Côte-Nord, the destination management body.

Rivière-au-Tonnerre is a remote municipality, but it remains the gateway to an alluring region that exists in the collective imagination: Côte-Nord, Anticosti Island, and Minganie Archipelago. Documentary research and various interviews have conclusively demonstrated the wealth of both tangible and intangible heritage, including natural, built, and cultural assets, possessed by the municipality of Rivière-au-Tonnerre. The city serves as the focal point for three distinct and complementary territories: the hinterland, the coastline, and the maritime areas. All these elements and attractions have the potential to constitute a generous and comprehensive offering for visitors seeking nature, discovery, and exploration. It is most important to note that this offering must be integrated in a tourist development plan for the wider Côte-Nord region.

A SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Strengths) analysis has been performed. The results are presented in TABLE 1.

Dimension	Key points
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of wild natural environments. Gateway to Minganie Archipelago (a national park). Rivière-au-Tonnerre is listed as a Village-relais du Québec (Network of tourist villages – Fédération des Villages-relais du Québec). The population includes Acadian and Innu communities. Proximity to renowned tourist destinations such as Anticosti Island and Mingan Archipelago. Unique cultural features include the St. Hippolyte church, one of the only Norman-style churches in North America.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourist infrastructure is limited and deteriorated, especially lodgings and restaurants. Absence of basic tourist services. Very little or no advertising or promotion. The municipality is perceived as a stopover destination on Route 138. Limited availability of qualified labour.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of short-term tourism for the populations of larger cities in the region, Tadoussac, Baie-Comeau, and Sept-Îles for instance. Designation of the city as an emerging tourist hub in the strategic tourism development planning of the Minganie region. Economic support from various government levels to promote the tourism industry in the region. Evolving tourism trends: nature tourism, ecotourism, micro-vacations. Quebec's Anticosti Island is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Increasing attraction for discovering Innu and Acadian communities—a “return to roots.” Gradual decline in the quality of winter tourism offerings in southern regions of Quebec (due to climate change).
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition from other intra- and extra-regional destinations. Distance from major potential markets, such as Montreal and Quebec City. Negative perception of the region regarding insects and weather.

TABLE 1

Results of a SWOT analysis conducted for Rivière-au-Tonnerre

Source: Developed by authors.

Suggested strategic plan of action

NATURE AND CULTURE TOURISM

Our suggested strategic orientations for sustainable tourism development are based on the current research as well as a previous report for the Regional Conference of Elected Officials of the Côte-Nord, prepared by The World Centre of Excellence for Destinations (CED) in 2012 (unpublished). The 2012 study used the CED's System of Measures for Excellence in Destinations (SMED) to focus on short term and long term goals of sustainable tourism, offering concrete and feasible recommendations for strategic interventions and continuous improvement. These recommendations are still pertinent.

The five most pertinent recommendations were:

First, provide opportunities to stop and stay longer. The core of tourist activity on the Côte-Nord is concentrated along the 800 kilometers of Route 138, from Tadoussac to

Natashquan. A majority of tourists explore the Côte-Nord by car and thus require services during their travels.

To better mark their journey and define stages that allow for a stop to access services, discover attractions, or engage in tourist activities, it would be interesting for some municipalities to obtain the status of a Village-relais. A Village-relais is a municipality (such as Rivière-au-Tonnerre) that, with the help of its merchants, offers services at least comparable to those found in service areas (e.g., restaurants, accommodation, fuel distribution and mechanical assistance, grocery stores, etc.).

Beyond these basic services, the concerned municipalities would benefit from highlighting and enhancing their offering of tourist activities and products, so that the stop is not just a brief pause for logistical reasons, but an opportunity for relaxation and discovery for tourists. This approach can help extend the duration of tourists' stays on the Côte-Nord, and municipalities like Port-Cartier or Baie-Trinité could strengthen their tourist vocation by applying to the Village-relais Committee and rallying the relevant merchants and local tourism professionals around this common project.

Second, highlight village charm and invest in natural and cultural resources. Rivière-au-Tonnerre is recognised as one of the most beautiful villages on the Côte-Nord and a ‘must-stop’ on the route to the islands of the Mingan Archipelago. This municipality is, in fact, the only one to benefit from the status of Village-relais in the tourist region of Duplessis.

With its current attractions such as its majestic church, Maison de la Chicoutai, surrounding waterfalls, and the possibility of walks on its beaches, Rivière-au-Tonnerre is already a noteworthy destination. However, this village has a strong potential for tourist development that could be exploited further. In this context, significant planning efforts have been made, resulting in an ambitious, comprehensive, and relevant Master Plan for development and enhancement, totaling investments in the order of \$9 million. The implementation of this plan, with its various and complementary projects, would enhance the status of Village-relais, adding a resort dimension justifying short stays.

The installation of boat-cabins as an original and authentic form of accommodation, the establishment of a shuttle to Anticosti Island, the development of cycling paths, the creation of an artisans' alley around the small cove, and the establishment of a camp for recreational vehicles are all relevant projects from the Master Development Plan. These projects would allow the Côte-Nord to offer a new, typical destination that meets the authenticity needs of a portion of the tourist clientele.

Coordinated efforts from passionate local project leaders, political authorities, and key players in the region's tourism industry are recommended to successfully carry out the tourist development of Rivière-au-Tonnerre, which deserves to be treated as a priority at the regional level.

Third, enhance mobility and connections in the region (part 1). Support for a proposed shuttle connection project between Rivière-au-Tonnerre and Anticosti Island, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will facilitate access to the island and diversify tourist activities from Rivière-au-Tonnerre. Rivière-au-Tonnerre, benefiting from the status of Village-relais in the Duplessis region, is already a very typical village. It offers a highly interesting potential for tourist development, as evidenced by a development master plan that deserves support.

In this context, the shuttle connection project between Rivière-au-Tonnerre and Anticosti Island is particularly promising and structuring. By providing additional and easy access to Anticosti Island, whose accessibility is one of the main weaknesses, this shuttle would greatly benefit tourist activity on both shores. This project, which has already undergone studies, representations, and financial support, including from the Regional Tourist Association (ATR), must continue to be actively supported by all stakeholders and be considered a regional priority.

Fourth, enhance mobility and connections in the region (part 2). The Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada is undoubtedly one of the main attractions of the Côte-Nord. The visit to the islands and monoliths is a highlight, even the primary purpose, for tourists during their stay in Havre-Saint-Pierre. Unfortunately, this experience is often rendered impossible because weather conditions and navigation conditions do not

allow boat operators to take clients to the archipelago. Additionally, some trips are cancelled because boat operators do not have enough reservations. These factors often lead to significant dissatisfaction among tourists who cannot access the islands.

The implementation of a guaranteed minimum service with one shuttle per day, even with a small number of clients, and at a fixed time to facilitate tourist information and marketing, could improve the quality of service provided to tourists. Of course, adverse weather conditions can still prevent boat departures, something clients are likely to understand and accept.

Fifth, develop accommodations rooted in local culture and place. Tourists' quest for original and distinctive experiences extends to the accommodation sector. Yurts or Hutttopia tents launched a few years ago by the SÉPAQ in some of its national parks are particularly popular, and treehouses represent a trend that is expected to grow in Quebec. There is an opportunity on the Côte-Nord to develop a unique and highly attractive lodging concept that could become a signature of the region, giving it a distinctive character while facilitating its promotion. For example, develop boat-cabins as a unique and distinctive lodging concept, such as those currently being developed as part of the projects in Rivière-au-Tonnerre.

Transforming fishing boats into tourist accommodations, in addition to providing an amazing experience, is particularly authentic in the Côte-Nord, as it references the Saint Lawrence River and fishing activity. Furthermore, its original visual aspect will undoubtedly be an attraction for passing tourists. But for this type of lodging to become representative of the region, the offer should not be merely anecdotal. It should address growing demands and justify promotional efforts. Therefore, it is recommended to gradually develop a critical mass of this type of lodging not only in Rivière-au-Tonnerre but also in Natashquan, which is particularly well-suited to this new concept.

The assistance of the Regional Tourist Association (ATR) in marketing would be required so that promotional activities around boat-cabins benefit the promoters of these projects, facilitating their rapid success. Additionally, this original concept could renew the image of lodging offerings in the Côte-Nord.

At the present time, there's no need to regenerate resources degraded by overtourism in Rivière-au-Tonnerre, because there is no overtourism in this municipality. It is unlikely that overtourism will ever be a problem in this very small town.

However, given the growing popularity of nature tourism, it is conceivable for overtourism to become a problem in the wider Côte-Nord region and MRC Minganie (sub-region). Thus, to our plan, we must add elements which respect the principles of regenerative tourism.

REGENERATIVE TOURISM

As mentioned in our theoretical framework about regenerative tourism, Destination Canada proposes five principles for regenerative practice (see FIGURE 6). We now apply those five principles to Rivière-au-Tonnerre:

- 1. Understand and work at the scale of the place.** Rivière-au-Tonnerre is a very small town with limited resources. Its main attraction is mainly nature with a little culture mixed in. The main culture artifact is St-Hippolyte Church which is unique in North America. This Church must be preserved at all costs. Subsidies from all levels of government should be secured year after year to maintain its pristine condition and prevent degradation. If this artifact ever becomes very popular, means of protecting it will need to be implemented, such as limiting the number of visitors per day.
- 2. Think about your place as a living ecosystem.** What is the essence of Rivière-au-Tonnerre? What makes it different from similar places in Quebec and other Canadian provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick being the closest. What is its potential? In other words, what differentiates it from other places? Can it attract people from overseas? Tourists from France adore the wilderness; they will walk several kilometers to reach a shed to sleep for the night. From such a perspective, it is conceivable that Rivière-au-Tonnerre becomes a popular destination. Only one large investor is required.

At such a time, Rivière-au-Tonnerre's ecosystem could become strained. Thus, development efforts must be planned in collaboration with community members who will be affected by this development.

- 3. Cultivate a field of relationships.** As we mentioned before, Rivière-au-Tonnerre is a very small town. Developing relationships is very easy at the present time. But if development takes place, all stakeholders will need to work together in support of the place. "The opportunity is to invite people out of their silos so that they can cross-fertilize thinking and actions in service of the health of their whole community, economy, and ecosystem. In this way, we develop an architecture for collaborating, which builds the capacity for vitality and healing among guests, hosts, community, and ecosystem" (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 20).
- 4. Invite the gifts and contributions of individuals.** The development of relationships requires individual contributions. Capitalise on passions, skills and talents of people genuinely interested in developing not only the destination, but the whole community. Some may even want to contribute gifts.

How do we do this?

- ▶ Invite people to consider what motivates them at a core level? What gives them joy? What would they do, how would they serve, if income were not the driver of their work?
- ▶ Invite a conversation with friends and business colleagues to help one another see what you each might not observe about yourselves.
- ▶ Like David Schonberger of Ottercreek Woodworks⁸, explore opportunities that might allow a network of complementary skills and passions to add value as a mutually supporting system of relationships. (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 22)

- 5. Practice stewardship and co-creation.** Destination Canada's concise definition of stewardship is "care for the whole" (p. 23). This means Rivière-au-Tonnerre as a whole: its forests, its streams, its beaches, its stock of fish in the St. Lawrence River, its cultural artifacts, and – last but not least – its population.

For tourism entities such as DMOs (Destination Management Organizations), this represents an expansion from managing the tourist destination to cultivating the hosting community. It brings the need for an evolution in culture and relationships, calling for a shift in the nature of the organization and the nature of leadership and governance. And it takes conscious practice to avoid falling back into the usual command-and-control operations and to engage an ongoing, emergent process so that relationships can become powerfully co-creative.

To this end, the next step is to gather a Stewarding Circle, which is an integrated group of people serving the whole. The ultimate deliverable of a regenerative development project is to leave the place, the community, and the ecosystem with a core group of people who have the capability to continue evolving this developmental process into the future. (Destination Canada, 2023, p. 23)

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8. Ottercreeks Woodworks website: <https://ottercreekwoodworks.com/our-story/>

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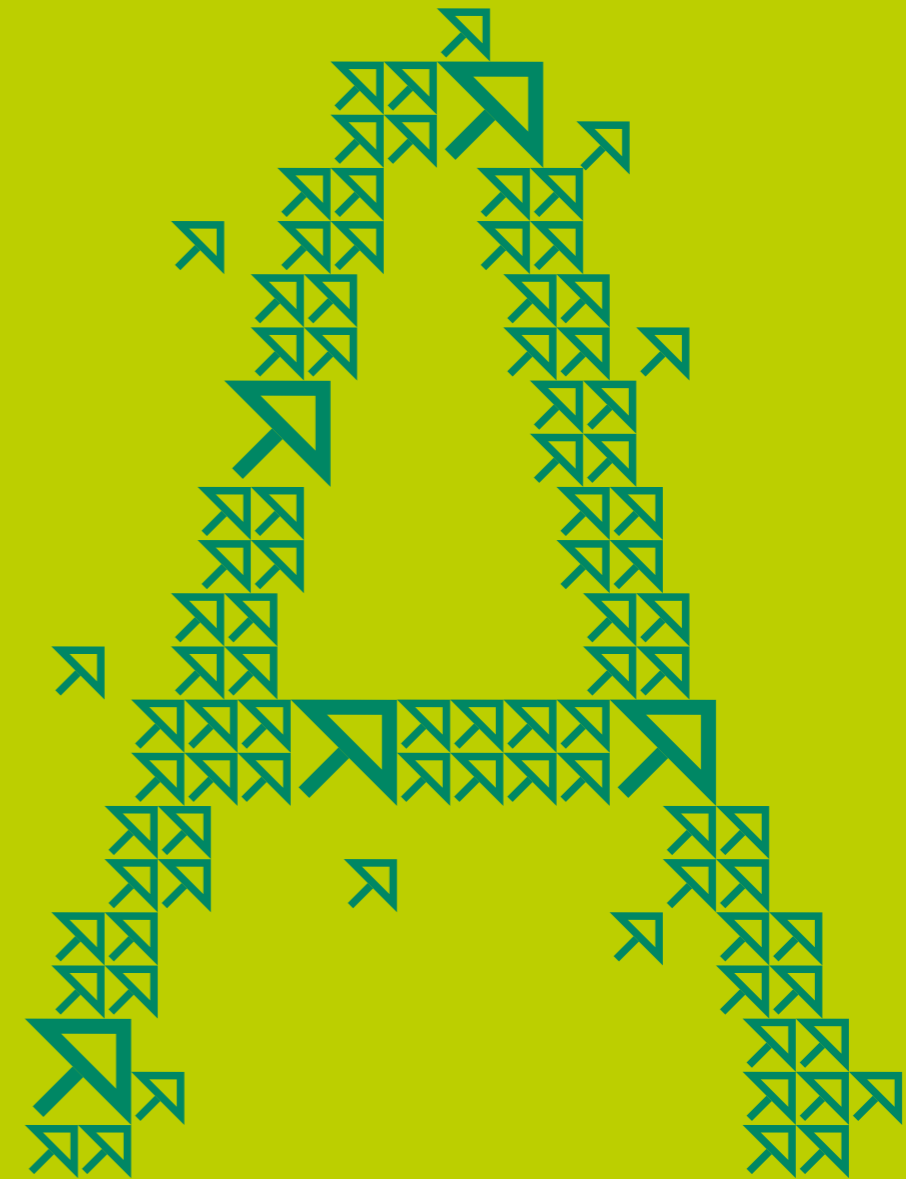
Benoit Duguay holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree, Marketing Major, from Sir George Williams University (1975), a Master's of Business Administration from Concordia University (1980), and a PhD in Communication from UQAM University (2000). Professor at ESG UQAM School of Management since 2003, he is also a Researcher at the Chair in Public Relations and Marketing Communication. He previously pursued a career in marketing and communications, in multinational corporations and small and medium-sized businesses. He passes on his knowledge and experience through teaching, publishing books and articles, consulting and coaching, and frequent media interventions.

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Annexes



Annex A.

About the CREATOUR Azores project

CREATOUR Azores – Turning the Azores into a Creative Tourism Destination was an integrated research-and-application project that aimed to advance research focused on creative tourism in island regions, diversify tourism offers in the Azores, and strengthen links with other regions of Portugal, where this model had already been implemented through the CREATOUR project, as well as with other islands where the approach could be replicated. The main objective of CREATOUR Azores was to empower various agents located in the Azores archipelago to develop, implement, and promote creative tourism experiences through which tourists could actively participate in creative activities, providing opportunities for learning, creative self-expression, and interaction with local communities. A creative tourism approach enables both visitors and communities to benefit from tourism exchanges, promotes cultural vitality and sustainability, and allows artistic and creative activities to play a driving role in socio-economic development.

The CREATOUR Azores project was coordinated by the Azores Tourism Observatory (OTA) and the University of the Azores/Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation, in partnership with the Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra, Portugal. The project was funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Azores 2020 Operational Program, and by regional funds through the Regional Directorate for Science and Technology.

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SUPPORT TEAM

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Associação Marítima de Pesca e Aquicultura da Ilha Terceira (Sara Silveira) – 2019-2021
Centro de Desenvolvimento Infantil dos Açores (Pilar Mota)
Mahilawake (Isabel Areosa) – 2022
MiratecArts (Terry Costa) – 2022
Norte Crescente – ADL (Miguel Brás)
Pedro Brum Photography Expeditions (Pedro Brum)
re.function – the eco sustainable art residence (Paulo Ávila Sousa)
The Farm (Gena Pinheiro)

Annex B.

Conference co-organisers

Azores Tourism Observatory

The Azores Tourism Observatory (OTA) is a private, non-profit association established in October 2006 with the objective of promoting the analysis, dissemination, and monitoring of tourist activity in order to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism in the Autonomous Region of the Azores. Its founding partners are the Regional Government of the Azores, the Azores Tourism Promotion Agency (Associação Turismo dos Açores – ATA), and the University of the Azores. It operates in an independent and responsible manner, guaranteeing the credibility, neutrality and robustness of its technical-scientific production. It is integrated into global regional development strategies.

www.otacores.com

University of the Azores

Since its founding in 1976, the University of the Azores has played a fundamental role in education and research, contributing to professional qualification, economic growth, social improvement, and intercultural awareness. The university has three campuses, located on different islands: the Ponta Delgada campus is in São Miguel Island; the Angra do Heroísmo campus is in Terceira Island, and the Horta campus is in Faial Island. Inspired by the natural diversity and beauty of the islands, their geographic location, and geological features, the university is committed to creating and promoting knowledge and technology on diversity, volcanology, tourism, marine and transnational issues, and the history and cultural features of the islands. It has partnerships with more than 200 universities and research centers internationally.

uac.pt

Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra

The Centre for Social Studies (CES) is a scientific institution focused on research and advanced training in the social sciences and the humanities from an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective. Founded in 1978, the Centre for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra has been conducting research with and for an inclusive, innovative, and reflexive society by promoting creative critical approaches in the face of some of the most urgent challenges of contemporary societies. CES' scientific strategy aims to democratise knowledge, revitalise human rights, and contribute to the establishment of science as a public good through five thematic lines of research. CES has 149 researchers, 53 junior researchers, 57 postdoctoral fellows, and 482 doctoral students (2023 Activities Report).

www.ces.uc.pt

The “Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience” conference was organized within the scope of the **CREATOUR Observatory on Culture and Tourism for Local Development** at CES. Focusing on extra-metropolitan areas of Portugal, the CREATOUR Observatory focuses on 3 thematic fields: 1) ecologies of culture and creativity; 2) cultural, creative, and regenerative tourism; and 3) local, regional, and community development. The Observatory is an intersectoral platform that brings together researchers and professionals from the cultural/creative and tourism sectors, in a logic of training, evaluation, and co-production of knowledge with practitioners and public decision-makers. It aims to develop spaces and approaches for co-learning, discussion, and exchange with an eye to examining and addressing issues, as well as more-than-economic regenerative dynamics that might be fostered through creative tourism and related activities. The Observatory also serves as a hub for an emergent “CREATOUR International” network which can foster wider connections and knowledge-sharing.

ces.uc.pt/observatorios/creatour

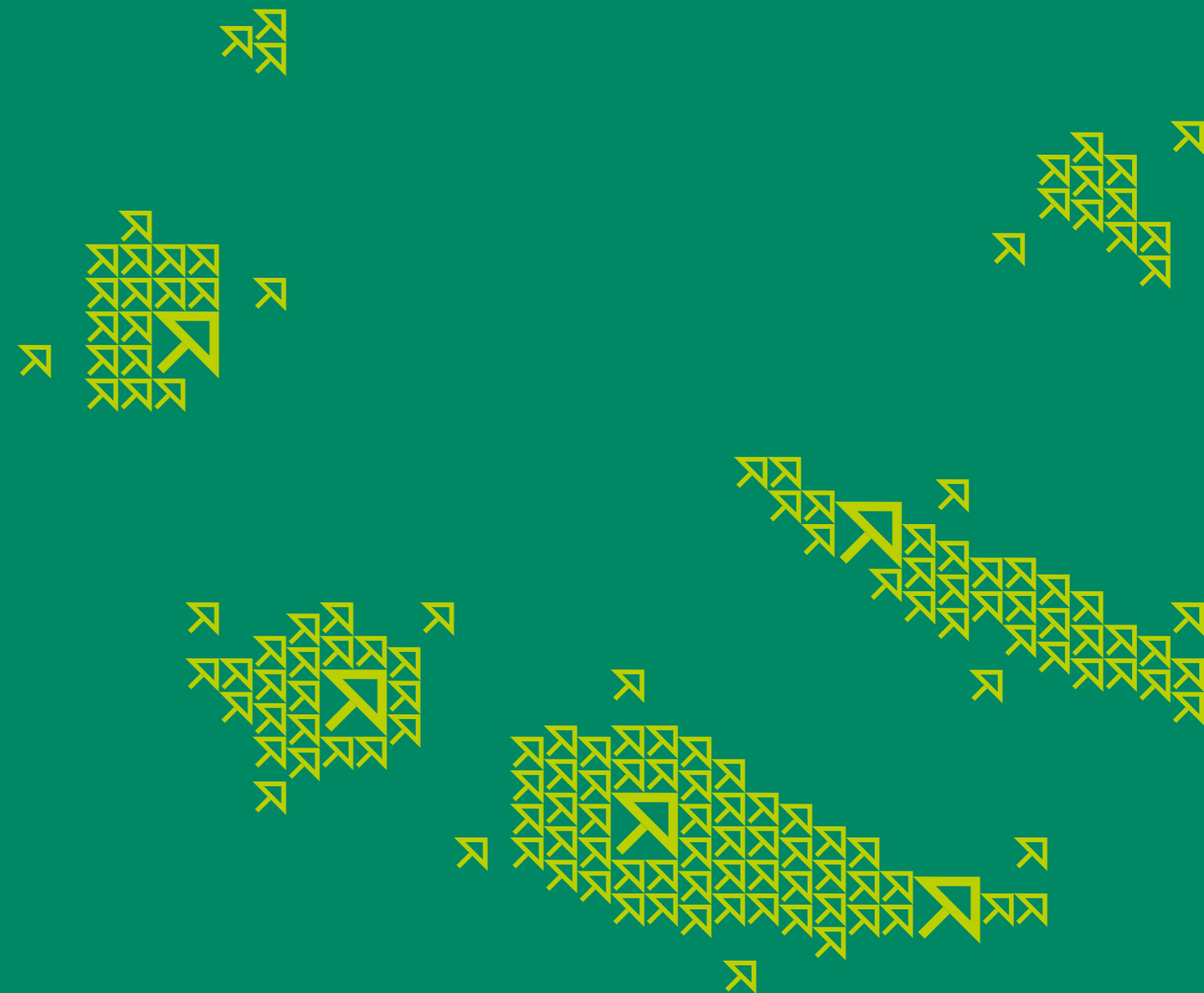
Guangzhou International Sister Cities University (GISU) Alliance

In December 2018, the Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities (GISU) was created. The Alliance aims to strengthen the ties and exchanges between Guangzhou’s international sister cities and their local universities, and provide a platform for member universities to share international academic resources, encourage education and scientific and technological cooperation, enhance the vitality of urban development, and promote urban development. Supported by the People’s Government of the Guangzhou Municipality, GISU’s mission is to attract and leverage the academic resources of its members in close collaboration for the sustainable development of our cities. Strategic goals of each city’s economic and social development should be considered with the basic idea of promoting sustainable urban development through scientific and technological innovation. At the time of the conference, the Alliance of Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities (GISU) included 18 members, representing 15 countries and 17 sister and friendly cities, with a combined population of almost 38 million, over half a million students, and 44,000 faculty and staff.

GISU ALLIANCE MEMBERS

Guangzhou University
Linköping University
University of Coimbra
University of Padova
University of Quebec at Montreal
Tampere University
Western Sydney University
Guangzhou Medical University
Incheon National University
Middle East Technical University
University of the West of England
National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
Durban University of Technology
Charles Darwin University
Belarusian State University of Physical Culture
Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources|
University of Zaragoza
Polytechnic University of Valencia

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