32 Pursuing creative tourism for positive transformation and sustainable development

Nancy Duxbury,[a]* Sara Albino[b] and Cláudia Pato de Carvalho[c]

*a*Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal; *b*CIDEHUS, University of Évora, Portugal; *c*Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

We believe that the potential of creative tourism goes far beyond a marketing approach or a response to tourism trends. Internationally, there is growing attention to how creative tourism can be strategically designed and leveraged for both visitor and local benefit. And it aligns with community-based tourism, regenerative tourism, community development thinking, and creative placemaking – all areas that are receiving a resurgence of interest.[1] All this provides a robust platform from which to envision, design, and manage creative tourism initiatives.

Creative tourism is a place-embedded, relational, and potentially transformative approach – for both travellers and resident communities. In moving forward, creative tourism's multiple threads and trajectories must explicitly recognize and meaningfully engage with the diverse contexts in which it is being developed, while being more connected internationally. Creative tourism must incorporate a high degree of care for those involved and the broader communities, continually improve how projects are planned and managed, attend to how initiatives can be made more sustainable, and deeply consider the implications of the visitor–local relations that are enabled. Creative tourism must also be guided by the generative possibilities brought forth through processes of creation, sharing, and conversation.

This chapter is divided into three parts. It begins by discussing some strategic areas to consider to advance creative tourism development locally and internationally. Then, we consider creative tourism in light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Filling out the chapter, we close by exploring some of the potential trajectories of creative tourism in the future, in a section entitled 'Going forward with transformative aspirations'.

Advancing creative tourism development

This book contains an array of insights, examples, and advice on creative tourism development and practice in many geographic and cultural contexts. While it is not possible to synthesize all this here, we have included a list of general points that resonate with us on the practice of creative tourism development (see Box 32.1). A few words on advancing creative tourism as a field of international practice are also in order. We propose three themes as key areas for collective attention: developing innovative milieu, public policy and support frameworks, and knowledge networking and collaboration.

Developing an innovative milieu

In order to continually improve and refresh creative tourism initiatives as well as to imagine and formulate new ones, processes of continuous innovation must be supported and sustained. These processes help to propel new ideas and 'expand the

*Corresponding author: duxbury@ces.uc.pt

Box 32.1. Key points for creative tourism development

The book's authors provide a wide range of advice and guidance, and it is impossible to summarize the depth and breadth of these insights in a concluding chapter. We have compiled a few points that reso-nate with us in moving forward:

General

- The potential of creative tourism goes far beyond a marketing approach or a response to tourism trends.
- Use creative tourism activities to contribute to local socio-economic and cultural development.
- Use creative tourism activities to engage with broader societal and global issues.

Cultural resources

- Creative tourism values local resources and enhances place identity.
- Continuously identify interesting aspects and embed ideas and actions in local resources.
- Pay attention to the invisible, the everyday, and less prominent aspects of communities and places.
- Creative tourism can help keep traditions alive and revitalize local cultural practices.

Entrepreneurship

- Continuously innovate new approaches to keep creative tourism vital, interesting, and relevant.
- Consider how creative tourism can support and extend other economic activities, traditions, and community-based initiatives.
- Involve a range of individuals from local communi-ties to make local tourism meaningful to both resi-dents and visitors.

- Diverse types of cross-sectoral collaborations are challenging but necessary. Continuously build capacities, knowledge, and inter-sectoral media-tion skills.
- Regularly engage in knowledge-gathering about local needs and opportunities.
- Articulate motivations and strategic objectives, and integrate moments for systematic self-assessment of project developments and moni-toring impacts.

Engaging creative travellers

- Creative travellers are diverse in nature. Market segmentation exercises and building profiles can guide the development of creative tourism initia-tives for different types of travellers.
- The motivations and interests of creative travellers must be linked to a close understanding of what may be interesting to them in your community.
- Individuals 'travel to be creative' in both touristic and professional contexts. Travelling artists and digital nomads are complexifying the profile of creative travel.
- Destination attractiveness is linked to the cultural, creative, and social scenes as well as the spaces and infrastructures available.

Moving forward

- The value of a creative tourism offer is linked to its relevance to the local community and its spe-cific context. This vital connection to place must be active and dynamically cultivated.
- Bridge research and practice to co-build knowl-edge and foster knowledge networking. Together is stronger – learn from one another.

---

potential' of a culture, with exchanges increasing 'collective knowledge, skills, and understanding' (Wisansing, Chapter 12, p. 86). This speaks to organized moments of co-learning and co-creation, knowledge and skill exchanges, opportunities for experimental explorations, and processes of crea-tive tourism ideation, prototyping, and testing.

As Lénia Marques notes, the future of creative tourism requires 'more structural, managerial and governance innovations' that can facilitate capacity-building processes and provide 'the space for continuous innovation to occur' (Chapter 23, p. 82). Marília Lúcio of the Municipality of Loulé also

stresses the importance of encouraging continuous innovation in a structured way. Beyond networking and capacity-building sessions that the municipal-ity organizes, Loulé Criativo creates 'enabling con-ditions for research in arts and crafts and related topics, to foster new knowledge and flows of infor-mation that can innovate working practices and perspectives' and supports a 'creative laboratory' that includes research, experimentation, and design, incubates companies, and fosters connections within the creative community and more widely (Chapter 21, p. 164). These types of structures are still rarely linked to creative tourism.

Public policy and support frameworks

Public policy frameworks to nurture, support, and foster a generative milieu for creative tourism are integral to advancing creative tourism development. As Larissa Almeida observes in her work in Brazil,

> If public policies offer structure, people become more confident to invest in the process. Public policies are necessary for the creation of infrastructure. When people see the ongoing construction of structures, they feel more confident about investing in the development process because they realize that they are not alone and there is a greater chance that their efforts will be rewarded. (Chapter 24, p. 186)

Based on the experiences of 40 pilot creative tourism initiatives geographically dispersed in small cities and rural areas of Portugal, the CREATOUR® project developed a series of public policy recommendations, which are organized into five interlinked domains:

1. Product and enterprise development.
2. Inter-sectoral co-operation, networking, and soft infrastructure.
3. Capacity building and training.
4. Communications and marketing.
5. Research, monitoring, and industry intelligence (Gonçalves *et al.*, Chapter 31).

We note that achieving the necessary co-operation between agents as diverse as public stakeholders, businesses, local authorities, cultural associations, and tourism agents can be a significant challenge but is also a necessary one (Gonçalves *et al.,* Chapter 31).

At a local level, with community-based creative tourism integrally connected with the development of multi-sector networks and partnerships, public authorities can play a key facilitating and supporting role. For instance, Rita Salvado and Guida Rolo see that the continued development of the COOLWOOL creative tourism initiative would greatly benefit from the municipality's involvement:

> As the project is focused on networking and on the city and its industrial heritage, the involvement of the city council appears to be a determining factor to its further evolution and development, to increase the visibility of the project, to articulate it with local policies and strategies for tourism, and to enhance its impacts in other local growth and development strategies. (Chapter 17, p. 128)

With regional development objectives in mind, building an extended and ongoing network is imperative. As Larissa Almeida writes,

In order to develop creative tourism initiatives capable of developing a territory, it is essential to establish a trust relationship not only within the community but with partners who can help to support initiatives in that space. Tourism needs to be integrated within many areas and its development requires joint efforts from both public and private sectors. Development agents such as governments, promotion agents, and big enterprises need to play the role of supporting creative entrepreneurs and connecting stakeholders who can catalyse the activities. (Chapter 24, p. 190)

From a broader perspective, programmes available from other levels of government can be an essential catalyst. For example, Elena Paschinger notes how European and regional programmes have enabled networking and knowledge exchange meetings that have helped 'stimulate the economic process of getting small-scale artisans off the ground in order to become ready to embrace creative tourism as a new market opportunity' (Chapter 3, p. 27). The international Creative Tourism Network® originated as a European initiative in 2011 with the support of the European Union (Couret, Chapter 8). The CREATOUR® project in Portugal was made possible by support from FEDER (European Fund for Regional Development) through the Joint Activities Programme of COMPETE 2020 and the Regional Operational Programmes of Lisbon and Algarve, as well as the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology.

Knowledge networking and collaboration

Forging ongoing opportunities for inter-sectoral networking, co-learning, and collaboration is central to advancing creative tourism development in a socially embedded and cross-sectoral way. To avoid the risk of traditionalism, it is important to secure local diversity within creative tourism initiatives, attending to the inclusion of different groups with stakes in the project. A solid platform for collaboration can facilitate entrepreneurs to innovate together, among themselves, as well as with the tourists, in processes of 'value (co-)creation' (Marques, Chapter 23, p. 175).

Creative travellers can become an extended community, connected to the local agent for some time after the creative tourism experience. As Diana Zuluaga and Diana Guerra note, 'creative tourism strives to shape a community … the success of creative tourism is people dealing with

people, and that means customers will belong to our community and they will want to keep in touch after their travel experiences' (Chapter 14, p. 110). Jaime Serra *et al.* found that over 85% of tourists participating in creative tourism activities indicated they would be interested in participating in creative tourism activities elsewhere in Portugal. These findings suggest 'the value of operating in a network where travellers' participation in a creative tourism activity at one location can lead to participation in other activities elsewhere' (Chapter 4, p. 35). Looking beyond individual, localized projects, 'coordinated creative tourism initiatives [can] generate international networks that encourage extended sharing and discussion of the ideas that are important to people' (Feeney, Chapter 5, p. 38).

Networking and knowledge sharing is also important for the creative tourism developers and innovators. We agree with Larissa Almeida and the members of Recria, the Creative Tourism and Experiences Network of Brazil, who 'strongly believe the full potential of local knowledge and experiences will only be harnessed when there is an exchange of knowledge between territories' (Chapter 24, p. 187). We view this collection as an important steppingstone in the development of creative tourism internationally, and a bridge to connect the many proponents and emerging initiatives within this dynamic field. We invite you to participate in a 'companion' international network aiming to foster ongoing knowledge sharing and capacity building among creative tourism practitioners and researchers – CREATOUR® International (see Box 32.2).

Creative tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals

As discussed throughout this volume and embedded in many of the examples presented, creative tourism can have a practical relation to local and regional sustainable development.[2] At the international level, the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide the world's collective development over the next decade (UN, 2015). As a 'plan of action', the Agenda and the SDGs provide a comprehensive framework to inform and shape public policy, development programmes, research agendas, and public discourse.

> **Box 32.2. Towards ongoing connections: CREATOUR® International**
>
> As a beginning to inform and inspire international knowledge sharing, we are teaming the development of this book with the launch of CREATOUR® International (www.creatourinternational.net; accessed 17 May 2021), an informal network to further knowledge exchange and capacity building among creative tourism researchers and small-scale practitioners internationally. It aims to encourage both researchers and practitioners to discuss experiences and emerging issues in the area of creative tourism, toward the development of a diverse, geographically distributed community of practice.
>
> It aspires to build closer research–practice relations through providing a platform for sharing experiences, practice-based knowledge, and insights from research; articulating and discussing issues and solutions; and learning from one another to collectively build capacity in creative tourism internationally. Ultimately, it aspires to advance both research and practice in the field of creative tourism, with special attention to initiatives in smaller places, and to foster and inform progressive connections between culture, tourism, and local sustainable development.

Thus, as part of reflecting on the chapters in this book, we reviewed and analysed the authors' contributions against the SDGs. Four SDGs emerged as most relevant to the current collection:

- No. 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- No. 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- No. 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- No. 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

We developed a table that aggregates some of the topics discussed in the chapters that relate to these four goals (see Table 32.1). A synthesis of the main narratives relating creative tourism to the SDGs 8, 10, 11, and 12 is presented in Box 32.3.

While we believe that creative tourism presents an opportunity to contribute to the SDGs and to alleviate poverty, we also recognize 'it is not a panacea to

all problems – not on paper, and not in the field' (Marques, Chapter 23, p. 175). This analysis is put forward for two reasons. Firstly, to help entrepreneurs and public agencies be more aware of connections between local creative tourism development and the SDGs. Secondly, to inspire new creative tourism initiatives that may be explicitly designed to tackle issues that have been identified as integral to building a more sustainable world.

Going forward with transformative aspirations

Thinking about the future of creative tourism can be facilitated through a process of placing intentional and careful attention to the dimensions of creative tourism that provide avenues for generative

and potentially transformative possibilities. In this light, in closing, we highlight four topics emerging from contemporary creative tourism practices that are discussed in this collection: fostering cultural revitalization and sustainability, opening a space for intercultural dialogue and understanding, expanding narratives and innovating new practices, and engaging with the environmental crises.

Fostering cultural revitalization and sustainability

While cultural revitalization is 'a complex aim', as Maria Huhmarniemi *et al.* observe, 'creative tourism can breathe new life into active practices and foster appreciation for traditional skills and designs' (Chapter 30, p. 243). Lénia Marques

Table 32.1. Connecting creative tourism to the SDGs – key points emerging from the chapters

Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)	Reduce inequalities (SDG 10)	Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)	Responsible production and consumption (SDG 12)
• Economic development of traditional communities • Tourism start-ups and development • Capacitation of cultural and artisan entrepreneurs • Creative tourism product development • Increasing the value of community-based tourism • Building infrastructures for creative tourism and cultural activities • Valuing stakeholder relations (e.g. artisan entrepreneur-mediator activities) • Co-operation among 'competitors' • Co-creation processes in tourism • Enabling public policies for cultural development and entrepreneurship • Nurturing a creative experimentation setting (public policy)	• Creative tourism leveraged from local initiative • Creative tourism as basis for local collaboration • Capacitation for social and economic cohesion • Valuing peripheral places • Recognizing peripheral cultures and informal knowledge • Support for cultural workers through grants and public policies	• Sustainability of creative tourism linked to economic competitiveness • Sustainability linked to uniqueness of place identity and values • Survival of traditions through creative tourism entrepreneurship • Creative tourism adding value to local resources	• Tourism in a market of proximity • Participative models of production • Responsible production through youth engagement • Intercultural dialogue between locals and visitors • Fostering a creative ecosystem • Responsible consumption through meaningful experiences • Local development through equitable accommodation

Box 32.3. A synthesis of key topics of relating creative tourism to SDGs 8, 10, 11, and 12

SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth. Creative tourism can be a source of meaningful work opportunities for artisans and other creators, enable the emergence of artisan entrepreneur-mediators, and help to enhance co-creation processes in tourism development. The importance of building capacities of entrepreneurs, as essential to attain economic growth and decent work and income for local communities, arose from several authors and we see this as a transversal theme. For instance, Jutamas (Jan) Wisansing (Chapter 12) notes that in Thailand creative tourism has been specifically linked to the notion of adding value to community-based tourism, which is a mainstay of the Thai economy.

SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries. At a local/organizational level, a number of authors discuss the importance of creative tourism in building the capacities of entrepreneurs, artisans and artists, and local communities dependent on traditional activities (for example, the Masaai tribe in Kenya, discussed by Lénia Marques in Chapter 23). Broader in scope geographically, the valorization of peripheral places, referred by Larissa Almeida (Chapter 24) as well as the CREATOUR® project, is important to bring recognition to rural and remote locations as well as subcultures and practices that are outside the mainstream. Creative tourism can activate informal knowledge resources to generate value in these places.

   The nature of creative tourism itself also aims to address traditional inequities between tourism and 'receiving' residents. Creative tourism developed and leveraged from local initiatives (Wisansing, Chapter 12) can be important to combat the impacts that traditional mass tourism and transnational tourism corporations have on developing countries. At a local scale, creative tourism initiatives are also discussed as a possible solution for better local collaborations between visitors and residents (Scherf, Chapter 25).

SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities. Tourism development in sustainable cities and communities cannot happen with unequal social systems and deteriorated landscapes. For this reason, three key topics emerged related to this topic: sustainability of creative tourism; economic competitiveness; and uniqueness of place identity and values. The survival of traditions through entrepreneurship by adding value to local resources is also transversal to several chapters. Some are more practice-based chapters, such as the entrepreneurial guide of Marie-Andrée Deslisle (Chapter 19), with a marketing focus, and the entrepreneurial story of the company 5Bogota in Colombia by Diana Zuluaga and Diana Guerra (Chapter 14). Kathleen Scherf's more research-based chapter (Chapter 25) provided insights on managing encounters between locals and visitors Barcelona and Copenhagen in ways that value local practices without 'touristifying' them.

SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production. Creative tourism can promote a dialogue between local communities and visitors, building an ecosystem of creativity and participation. Such an ecosystem, if composed of a variety of stakeholders and characterized by cooperative relations, can propose new interactions and collaborative modes of production. In terms of consumption, creative tourism designs and generates opportunities for active, learning, creative, immersive experiences that are responsibly and sustainably connected to the place they occur. For example, Sabrina Pratt (Chapter 22) and Britta Timm Knudsen and Jan Ifversen (Chapter 18) refer to how responsible consumption can reframe tourism through meaningful experiences. While Pratt refers to creative local arts and crafts workshops as an example of visitor engagement and interest in local cultures, Knudsen and Ifversen refer to co-creation practices that rethink tourism in coastal spaces.

   Moreover, it is important to recognize that creative travellers and creative tourism initiatives are, in practice, dynamically inventing new responsible and sustainable modes of consumption and production. For example, as young people today question their roles in the production and political systems, they are inventing new modes of expression, connecting, and taking action – all while envisioning ways to mediate their digital connections with 'grounded' local communities. As an example, in Chapter 26, Fernando Almeida considers how contemporary youth co-develop spaces of imagination and action through creative practices that play out in the experimental spaces of the participatory artistic festival Encontrarte Amares, which takes place in a small community in the north of Portugal.

explains how creative tourism can provide 'a significant local economic impact, enabling certain community values and practices to endure in time' (Chapter 23, p. 175). It can also allow the same community to evolve, pushing the tourism activities it organizes 'beyond framed ritualistic enactment' (p. 175). As Jutamas (Jan) Wisansing remarks,

> Creative tourism, if designed and implemented well, could be a mechanism to create local pride and stimulate cultural preservation, to reinforce a unique local sense of place based on visual quality and functional efficiency and, ultimately, to provide a better platform to engage different generations – 'the old meets new'. (Chapter 12, p. 92; see also L. Almeida, Chapter 24)

Creative tourism apprenticeships with master craftspeople can have an impact on 'the preservation of global crafts' (Agrawal, Chapter 10, p. 69) through contributing to knowledge transfer between generations and internationally.

Opening a space for intercultural dialogue and understanding

Embedding creative tourism activities into specific aspects of the culture of a place enables visitors to learn about a culture and locale in memorable ways, sharing perspectives, meaningful experiences, and creative expressions. As Larissa Almeida observes, the encounters and learning experiences provided through creative tourism tend to favour connections 'in gentle contacts with different realities' and thus 'is a valuable tool for human development that brings people together and reduces barriers' (Chapter 24, p. 190). Whether viewed from a domestic tourism context or a global one, creative tourism can deepen the experience of cultural diversity and richness (Huhmarniemi *et al.*, Chapter 30).

Sensitivity to fostering cultural plurality among creative tourism offerings can counter mono-visions and tourism stereotypes. Creative tourism activities can be intentionally designed to enhance understanding of the cultural diversities in a place and to foster intercultural dialogue. For instance, craft-based creative tourism activities featuring 'place-specific intercultural approaches' could 'create an open space for dialogue in which the values and the perceptions of cultural heritage can be negotiated' (Huhmarniemi *et al.*, Chapter 30, p. 246, referencing Härkönen *et al.*, 2018).

Expanding narratives and innovating new practices

As Melanie Sarantou and Satu Miettinen elaborate in Chapter 27, creative tourism activities can be designed that enable 'power shifts' through proposing 'new roles and ways to experience and comprehend the narratives by local communities' (p. 209). Narrative- and arts-based practices, sensitivity to embodied learning, and attention to local knowledges can provide room for 'creating and expressing personal stories, transformative social practice, and counter-narratives for past oppression and/or animosity' (p. 206, referencing Sonn *et al.*, 2013). Creative tourism can also serve as a ground for experimentation, a space in which, for example, youth 'try out alternate models of civic and political participation', blending arts practices, digital connectivity, intergenerational community encounters, and reciprocal dialogues (F. Almeida, Chapter 26, p. 203). Such dynamics can inform and impact the creative-traveller participants as well as contribute to host-community reconfigurations.

Engaging with the environmental crisis

An intentional engagement with the need to address the environmental crisis is another of the possible innovation trajectories for creative tourism. As Maria Huhmarniemi *et al.* elaborate, 'there is a need for transformative experiences that change our values to being holistic and respectful towards non-human nature or, in other words, to encourage our lifestyles to be humbler' (Chapter 30, p. 240, referencing Lin and Oxford, 2011). Similarly, Britta Timm Knudsen and Jan Ifversen suggest that 'creative activities in nature could enhance and confirm nature connectedness on a whole range of levels for both residents and tourists, connecting creative tourism to criticism of instrumental uses of natural resources in general' (Chapter 18, p. 134). Carefully envisioned and designed creative tourism

initiatives can enhance understanding of 'the inter-dependence of human and non-human nature as well as support participants' capacities to face environmental crises, stay resilient, and act for environmentalism' (Huhmarniemi *et al.*, Chapter 30, p. 248). This could build upon existing community-engaged arts practices that address environmental and sustainability issues (see Feeney, Chapter 5).

This book is a beginning

We invite readers to explore the possibilities in your local communities for creative tourism development, learning from the many contributors to this volume and innovating new approaches, activities, and development processes. We encourage you to consider the greater impacts and implications of these activities and to search for ways to pursue them, embedded in the design, planning, operationalization, and ongoing management of your creative tourism initiatives. Furthermore, we urge you to develop inclusive, participative, and effective structures that can inspire, support, and coordinate efforts – and make your creative tourism programme greater than the sum of its individual parts. We hope this book can be a useful companion on this journey, and we look forward to hearing about your experiences as we move forward together.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. For information on how different operational models of creative tourism relate with regenerative tourism, see Duxbury *et al.* (2020). For insights on connecting creative tourism with creative placemaking, see Richards (2020).

2. As Maria Assunção Gato *et al.* elaborate in Chapter 29, a multidimensional consideration of sustainable development, holistically conceived, can take into account 'economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors as well as the quality of life of local communities, their cultural involvement, civic participation, and the conservation and preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural forms' (p. 225). This scope sets a wide foundation for considering and identifying multiple effects that can arise from creative tourism activities embedded in local communities. See also Maria Huhmarniemi *et al.,* Chapter 30, for an elaboration of how creative tourism can address the cultural dimension of sustainable development in different ways.

References

Duxbury, N., Bakas, F.E., Vinagre de Castro, T., and Silva, S. (2020) Creative tourism development models towards sustainable and regenerative tourism. *Sustainability* 13(2), 1–17. doi: 10.3390/su13010002.

Härkönen, E., Huhmarniemi, M., and Jokela, T. (2018) Crafting sustainability: Handcraft in contemporary art and cultural sustainability in Lapland. *Sustainability* 10(6), 1907. doi: 10.3390/su10061907.

Lin, J. and Oxford, R. (2011) *Transformative Eco-Education for Human and Planetary Survival.* Information AGE Publishing, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA.

Richards, G. (2020) Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 85, 102922. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922.

Sonn, C.C., Stevens, G., and Duncan, N. (2013) Decolonisation, critical methodologies and why stories matter. In Stevens, G., Duncan, N., and Hook, D. (eds.) *Race, Memory and the Apartheid Archive*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, UK, pp. 295–314.

United Nations (UN). (2015) *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* UN, New York, New York, USA. Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda (accessed 17 May 2021).