

Article

Management Practices in Creative Tourism: Narratives by Managers from International Institutions to a More Sustainable Form of Tourism

Paula Remoaldo ^{1,*}, Olga Matos ², Ricardo Gôja ¹, Juliana Alves ¹ and Nancy Duxbury ³

¹ Lab2PT—Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory, University of Minho, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal; rsousacarvalho1@hotmail.com (R.G.); jalves.geografia@gmail.com (J.A.)

² IPVC—Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo and Lab2PT—Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory, University of Minho, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal; omatos@estg.ipvc.pt

³ CES—Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, 3000-995 Coimbra, Portugal; duxbury@ces.uc.pt

* Correspondence: premoaldo@geografia.uminho.pt

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Abstract: This article analyses the managerial practices implemented by international organisations that provide platforms for promoting and carrying out creative tourism activities and workshops. The methodology of this research was conducted in four phases. The first phase consisted of Internet-based research to identify organisations involved in creative tourism and 24 institutions were found. In the second phase, we analysed the information provided on the institutions' websites. In the third phase, we prepared an interview script and sent it to those institutions. We received 12 positive replies and held a semi-structured interview with those managers. In the last phase, the narratives of the interviews were subjected to content analysis. The 12 managers interviewed, between the ages of 35 and 56, belong to public and private entities and lead technical teams. The studied institutions displayed good practices for creative tourism and strategic lines to consolidate this tourist product in the future. This study is pertinent and original because no international study has analysed in detail the management practices implemented by creative tourism platforms and a consistent characterisation of the profile of the creative tourist is yet to be outlined. It can also help institutions involved in creative tourism to better understand the international state of the field in this tourism segment.

Keywords: creative tourism; experiential tourism; creativity; culture; creative tourists; co-creation; networks

1. Introduction

In 1993, Pearce and Butler coined the term “creative tourism”. For them it was a potential form of tourism. Taking into account their work, Richards and Raymond [1] defined creative tourism as a segment of tourism offering tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential. The active participation of tourists in experiences, learning, themes, and activities presented in the visit destination is one of its characteristics [1,2]. It emerged in 2000, contradicting the expression of the massified tourism paradigm that was happening in many territories and has been proven to be a more sustainable form of tourism. Creative tourism is a better solution for a more sustainable form of tourism as it is closer to communities and is centred in endogenous resources, which contradicts the massified form of cultural tourism. It can also be a good solution to the development of less dense territories that are unable to diversify their economies.

Creative tourism has also drawn attention due to complementary trends associated with meaningful and authentic experiences [3,4], creative activity for personal well-being [5], as well

as travellers' desire for active involvement with culture and contact with "real people" [6]. This segment encompasses many concepts such as creativity, capacity development [1,7,8], involvement with local people [6,8,9], local culture, active participation [1,8,10], and authentic experience [8,10,11].

Although there is no firm data on the size of the creative tourism field, it seems that over the last two decades creative tourism has spread internationally [2,6,12]. As the field developed and diversified, a widening range of activities has been associated with creative tourism, although creative activity remains at its core [12]. Creative tourism, much like heritage tourism, arts tourism, gastronomic tourism, or film tourism, is a niche that has emerged within the rapid growth and fragmentation of cultural tourism [13] and is also a response to the massified segments of cultural tourism.

As cultural tourism has focused on motivation, learning, experience, and discovery [14], this wider scope encompasses not only sites and monuments, but also everyday life and creativity [13]. The Confederation New Horizons Survey found that the percentage of young travellers hoping to develop their creativity rose from 18% in 2012 to 30% in 2017 [15]. These data suggest a growing market for creative tourism that may accompany and develop with this cohort.

Contemporary tourists crave new experiences. They are active and participatory, finding satisfaction in cultivating new skills and competences [16,17]. Kolb [18] highlighted that the creative tourists interact with the city in an unusual way, constructing a sense of place that may differ from the image that is promoted by cultural tourism. These "new" tourists have a new role as producers of the products and experiences that they consume and for this reason they are known as "creative consumers" [19,20], "postmodern travellers" [21–23], or simply "creative tourists" [16,20,24]. They are part of a highly educated global elite with a keen interest in culture [25]. They are active on a daily basis and enjoy activities on their holidays [2]. In recent years, the aims of creative tourism have changed from tourist behaviour to the relationship between tourist and destinations [26].

Within the international development of creative tourism, organisations that bring together and endorse creative tourism offer "platforms" that connect and promote disparate initiatives and have structured the development of the field. The networks and platforms that have emerged since around 2010 offer location-specific strategies to develop and propel their activities. These networks and organisations result from a commitment to involve cultural agents and prompt them to take advantage of the potential of creative tourism [27,28]. Grouping and promoting diversified experiences through networks and platforms encourages the originality and authenticity of the offers, in contrast to standardising a few selected offers in a "mass market" [29–31].

However, very little is known about the strategic practices and management of the platforms and organisations that play key roles in contributing to this tourism segment. We therefore interviewed the managers of these platforms and organisations with the aim of surveying and synthesising their practice-based knowledge, experiences, and insights to develop a macro-understanding of the evolving field at an international level. At the 24 identified institutions, 12 platform managers were interviewed. This research was conducted 2017 to 2019 within a research-and-application project in Portugal called "CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas". To our knowledge, this is the first time this type of study has been conducted at an international level. We think it is necessary to evaluate the management practices because the published literature has focused on the number of enterprises and institutions involved in creative tourism, the number of tourists, and their characteristics (this last issue centred mainly in cultural tourism), to the exclusion of other relevant dimensions. This approach can help in understanding if there is a year-round offer and how enterprises and institutions are economically surviving and interacting with similar institutions. This institutional system, within which creative tourism activities are being developed and promoted, has not previously been studied as a whole.

This article presents the findings from this research and analyses the managerial practices at institutions that develop activities or workshops in creative tourism. It also presents a synthesis of their perspectives and insights. Based on these assumptions, the questions that underpinned this investigation were: (1) What are the main difficulties mentioned by the managers of institutions

to develop creative tourism activities?; (2) which are the main gaps in the management of creative activities?; and (3) how do the managers of these institutions face the future?

It is structured into five sections. After the introduction, the methodology is outlined. A description of the key features of the organisations is presented, followed by a discussion of the results of the interviews conducted with the leaders and representatives of the 12 institutions that develop and promote creative tourism. The article concludes by highlighting good practices that have been identified, some limitations of the research, and recommendations for practitioners.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology is comprised of four phases:

- (i) The first phase (from March to October 2017) consisted of Internet-based research to identify and contact organisations involved in creative tourism. A total of 24 institutions were found;
- (ii) In the second phase (from September to December 2017) the information on the institutions' websites was analysed. Besides the type of activity developed, the type of place of implementation, the language used in the workshops, and the type of professionals involved in the activities were analysed.

The interviews complemented earlier research that identified 24 institutions through Internet searches by using the keywords "creative tourism initiatives", "creative cities", and "best practices in creative tourism", as well as an analysis of the members institutions that are certified and diffused by the Creative Tourism Network [28]. A total of 20 organisational features were noted, such as year of establishment, site, developed activities, place of development, type of partners chosen, and local community involvement. This research provided a snapshot of the macro-characteristics of the field in 2017. The results of this research were presented in Remoaldo et al. [2].

For context, almost all of the organisations identified in the initial searches were members of the Creative Tourism Network and the majority were located in Southern Europe. The Creative Tourism Network was founded in 2010, in Barcelona (Spain), as a central hub and reference point in the field of creative tourism, which creates connections and synergies for its members through networks of partnerships (Interview and website of Creative Tourism Network [28]). Although creative tourism activities are noticeable at an international level, only a small number of countries are significantly involved in creative tourism and few institutions are dedicated to this segment. Furthermore, even if some institutions had begun operating in that segment in 1988 (for example, Santa Fe in the United States and Madagascar Explorer in Madagascar), most of them have begun operating only in the last few years. Analysing the 24 institutions identified in 2017 involved in creative tourism, Spain is home to the largest number of institutions ($n = 4$), followed by France ($n = 3$), Italy ($n = 3$), and Portugal ($n = 2$) [2]. More recently, growing interest in creative tourism has been observed in Central and South America. Despite intensive efforts, no institutions in Japan, Thailand, Madagascar, Belgium, Guatemala, United States, United Kingdom, and Singapore replied to our call. Institutions from Southern Europe replied more quickly.

- (iii) In the third phase (from July 2017 to April 2018), an interview script was prepared and a semi-structured interview was conducted with the institutions. We received 12 positive replies from such set of institutions which corresponded to half of them;
- (iv) In the fourth phase (from May 2018 to January 2019) the narratives of the interviews were subjected to content analysis.

All organisations in this initial database were contacted for interview purposes. The initial contact was done by email. Organisations that did not respond were subsequently contacted via Facebook Messenger (around 10 times by email and Facebook) and then by letter sent at the end of March 2018 (only once). It was difficult to obtain positive responses from the 24 institutions, and in the end, only 12

organisational representatives responded positively. Six were interviewed via Skype and six asked to send their answers by email. A content analysis was performed on the transcripts of the 12 interviews.

The findings reported in this article are based on the third and fourth phases. The use of this network helped us with a certification of the creative activities that were proposed by the institutions.

The interviews were conducted over Skype. An outline of 17 questions, structured into 10 thematic groups (Table 1), was used to guide these interviews.

Table 1. Thematic groups and the number of questions used in the interview guide for managers of creative tourism ‘platform’ organisations.

Thematic Group	No. of Questions
1. Profile of the institutions of the creative projects.	1
2. Lines of action followed in recent years within creative tourism.	1
3. Type of equipment and financing for the implementation of initiatives of creative tourism.	2
4. The main challenges and opportunities arising from the creative tourism initiatives developed by the institutions in the short and medium term.	2
5. Best practices resulting from the initiatives of the institutions associated with creative tourism.	1
6. Contribution of the development of creative tourism to the sustainability of the institutions.	1
7. Partnerships or networks of partnerships for the development of the project and its activities.	4
8. Current trends and changes in creative tourism.	2
9. Creative tourists’ profile and their motivations.	2
10. Gaps identified by tourists when visiting a destination.	1
Total	17

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discusses the data gleaned from the interviews with the leaders and representatives of the 12 institutions that develop and promote creative tourism.

3.1. Insights from Practitioners Operating Creative Tourism Platforms

The Nature of the Organisations

Of the 12 institutions whose project managers that were interviewed in 2017 and 2018, three have operated for over 10 years, four were established for fewer than seven years, and three for less than five years. In addition, we found that Italy, Brazil, Spain, and Portugal hosted more than one institution. Three institutions are private, eight are public, and one is a non-profit organisation (Table 2).

The 12 institutions favoured three main lines of action (with the exception of one institution which did not respond to that question):

- 1) To encourage partners to create innovative creative tourism products (n = 5);
- 2) To focus on the quality of communication and the dissemination of activities (n = 4);
- 3) To promote regional and local culture through the tourism initiatives developed (n = 3).

These lines of action improve the quality of the experiences and services provided to the visitor, and raises the visibility of the activities.

Table 2. Organisational profiles.

Organisation	Country	Year Created	Type of Organisation	Profile of Organisations
Studia in Italia	Italy	2005	Private	The project is an online agency and features a technical team of all ages.
Salvador da Bahia	Brazil	2006	Public	The creative initiatives are developed and guided by the technical team of the Secretariat of Tourism.
Porto Alegre Turismo Criativo	Brazil	2007	Public	The creative initiatives are developed and guided by the technical team of the Secretariat of Tourism of Porto Alegre.
Creative Tourism Austria	Austria	2010	Private	This is an association, led by a director, with a technical team (between 35 and 56 years) and a network of partners.
Creative Tourism Network	Spain (with international scope)	2010	Non-profit organisation	The project is developed and guided by a technical team specialising in the area of creative tourism.
Louvre-Lens	France	2012	Public	The project is developed and guided by a public institution and a technical team specialising in the area of creative tourism.
Saint-Jean-Port-Joli	Canada	2013	Public	Coordinated and developed by a public institution (municipality).
Visit Empordanet	Spain	2015	Public	The project is coordinated by the municipality and the person responsible for the initiatives.
Loulé Criativo	Portugal	2015	Public	Coordinated by the municipality of Loulé and by the tourism technical team.
Toscana Promozione Turistica	Italy	2016	Public	Coordinated and developed by a public institution and by public and private partners.
Cordeira Village Art & Craft	Portugal	It was not possible to know the date	Public	Did not answer this question.
Easyfrascati	Italy	It was not possible to know the date	Private	Coordinated by a private institution.

Promotion is a central challenge for these organisations, and collaborations can create an extended communications network. The next narrative is an example:

We collaborate with a variety of institutions that help spread Italian culture abroad, by informing on activities in progress through the web and newsletter, email marketing, press, and participation of the organisation in various cultural events. (E.7 - Studia in Italia, Italy).

3.2. Networks and Other Sources of Support

In the tourism industry, networks have become a survival strategy for institutions in a globalised society where competition is fierce and a structured network among several stakeholders from different tourism areas is required for success. This is also true in creative tourism, especially given that this type of tourism does not usually bring high profit margins.

The institutional leaders interviewed (except one non-respondent) described three types of partnerships or networks of partners:

- 1) Public and private institutions, companies, and international creative tourism (n = 7);
- 2) A local, regional, and national platform to promote the offer of the partners of the creative project (n = 3) and;
- 3) A regional network of artisans and artists to develop activities and workshops (n = 1).

The results reflect a more sustainable approach in the tourism industry. Most of the institutions stated that they interact with public and private institutions. Institutions can profit from the help of different type of partners and different stakeholders can provide a synergy constructed on community-based tourism. At the same time, public institutions can provide support that the private institutions cannot, especially in terms of relationships with local authorities, community leaders, and other important stakeholders.

Collaborative local, regional, and national platforms are important ways to promote creative projects and develop creative tourism in the territories. It can promote the territory, publicise the material and immaterial heritage, as well as link artisans and artists. All of these factors can empower communities and make them more conscious of their culture and heritage in the following ways:

At the local level, we have the artisans themselves who help us. (...) At the regional level, we have the municipal council and other important partners, for example, the Tourism of Girona, which help us in the dissemination and communication of this product. (E3 - Visit Empordanet, Spain).

(...) Louvre-Lens Tourism (...) brings together a collaborative platform with seven partner tourism offices working together to promote, communicate and evaluate the destination (...). (E.10 – Louvre-Lens, France).

Seven out of the 12 interviewees did not receive any equipment or funding for activities. Portugal and Italy stood out, with no financial and equipment support. Seven of the organisations found it difficult to apply their action measures in the territory due to this lack of equipment and funding. For example, since Visit Empordanet (Spain) lacked the funding to promote and publicise its project and the project manager had to limit its advertising to the Internet. However, other public and private institutions did not need financing and equipment because it came with initial support. Many of them obtained programme funding to support rural or urban tourism projects and access to equipment through their networks of partners:

There was an initial concession to leverage the organisation's main cost of funding at the outset, issued by the National Tourism Bank of Austria (...) as well as some support in regional municipalities cooperation (...). (E6 - Creative Tourism Austria, Austria).

We have carried out the above activities within our annual programme of support to these low-budget initiatives. (E.11 - Toscana Promozione Turistica, Italy).

3.3. Contributions to Organisational Sustainability

Ten of our interviewees cited three contributions to the sustainability of the institutions:

- (v) Innovative aspects of rural accommodation, an increase in the number of creative tourism companies and teamwork among creative tourism institutions (n = 5);
- (vi) Creative tourism contributes to the valorisation of local areas and products (n = 3);
- (vii) Institutions can create and preserve all resources so that economic, social, and aesthetic needs may be met while preserving cultural integrity (n = 2).

These indicate that creative tourism can improve some aspects of the accommodation in less densely populated territories and can permit the pickup of creative classes at rural territories that tend to be more concerned with the urban ones. It can help rural places increase its innovative aspects and contribute to the valorisation of territory and traditional crafts.

The following narratives highlight some of these contributions.

What people usually seek in our accommodations is the differentiating factor of accommodation. People choose to take a vacation here because it has a different cultural aspect (...). (E2 – Cerdeira Village Art & Craft, Portugal).

The creation of the project promoted the integration of tourist activities in the creative economy, and, by 2013, we still had a very closed network in the urban arts when compared to the traditional arts (...). Artists work in solitude and (...) with few resources to develop the activity. (E4 - Porto Alegre Turismo Criativo, Brazil).

3.4. Profile and Motivations of the Participants in Activities

The profile and motivations of the participants in creative activities is still rather difficult to obtain. On the one hand, there are few studies on the profile of creative tourists and on the other hand, some institutions do not keep this kind of structured data while others do not disseminate the data they have.

According to the 10 project managers who answered (two did not respond as they did not know the profile of their customers), creative tourists tend to be families and friends who seek unique experiences, as well as creative professionals. They are usually between the ages of 30 and 55, while groups of friends are between 25 and 35 years old. They enjoy unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community. The creative tourist needs to be a participant in the experience (Table 3):

Generally, tourists range from 35 to 55 years old with children. (. . .) Creative tourists like to buy and consume local products They are people who dispose of average to high incomes because there are activities which are more expensive. (E3 - Visit Empordanet, Spain).

They are curious travellers interested in getting in touch with local people and learning something unusual about history, local traditions and local community lifestyle. (E.11 - Toscana Promozione Turistica, Italy).

Table 3. Views of the institutional managers interviewed on their creative tourists' profile and their motivations.

Institutions	Creative Tourists' Profile	Creative Tourists' Motivations
Visit Empordanet	They range between 35 and 55 years old, while groups of friends range between 25 and 35 years old.	The tourist wants a new experience.
Porto Alegre Turismo Criativo	They range between 40 and 55 years old and have high income.	The tourist wants a new experience.
Easyfrascati	They cover all age groups and are professionals in the field of creativity.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community.
Creative Tourism Austria	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	Tourists are looking for something completely different from mass-market products in tourism. They want to meet the locals, learn about their ways of life, and share their experience.
Studia in Italia	They are over 30 years old, have vast cultural knowledge and are curious.	The tourist likes to learn something about the culture and the local community.
Saint Jean Port Joli	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	The tourist's motivation was not defined.
Creative Tourism Network	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	The tourist's motivation was not defined.
Louvre-Lens	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community.
Toscana Promozione Turistica	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community. The tourist needs to be an actor in the experience they are experiencing.
Salvador da Bahia	The customers' profile was not mentioned.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community. The tourist needs to be an actor in the experience they are experiencing.
Loulé Criativo	They have a high academic level, like nature and range between the ages of 30 and 60.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community.
Cerdeira Village Art & Craft	These are families and friends looking for unique experiences.	They like unique and authentic experiences while being close to the local community.

The results of the interviews are in line with the profile of the creative tourist that has appeared in other international studies that define the creative tourist as part of the creative class, with high levels of education and income e.g., [16,18,20,22,25,26]. Creative tourists search for authentic experience linked with the culture of the place visited and want to live and experience the journey as locals do.

The nine institutional managers interviewed (three did not respond) see five gaps identified by tourists at their destination:

- i) Problems in communication and dissemination of creative destinations (n = 3);
- ii) Greater communication and cooperation between institutions (n = 2);
- iii) Poor public transport network (n = 2);
- iv) Concentration of tourism at weekends (n = 1);
- v) The signposting of places is considered problematic in tourist destinations (n = 1).

Even if most of the creative activities occur in urban or predominantly urban areas (20 institutions out of 24) some of them (n = 4) are developed in predominantly rural or rural areas. Some of them (including some urban areas) are not easily accessed by some transportation systems like civil plane or lack public transport.

The following narratives confirm these gaps.

Tourists staying on the coast do not have transportation facilities/vehicles to travel to the parishes located in the interior of the county to carry out the activities (. . .). (E1 – Loulé Criativo, Portugal).

Poor mobility and signage will make it difficult for the visitor to travel to the activity site. (E.10 – Louvre-Lens, France).

3.5. Best Practices and Challenges in Future

According to the 12 institutional managers interviewed, we conclude that these institutions presented five good practices for the development of creative tourism initiatives:

- i) Focusing on the quality of the tourism offer (n = 4);
- ii) Creating a good network of partners to facilitate the dissemination of the tourism product (n = 3);
- iii) Preserving customs and traditions and having a range of areas of activities (n = 2);
- iv) Creating creative tourism products that offer the visitor the opportunity to get to know the locations deeply and learn something new (n = 2);
- v) Investing in the quality of trainer education (n = 1).

These five practices confirm the opinion expressed in previous answers. They reveal that even part of the institutions that have been working in the field for several years need to organise themselves better and take advantage of the experience of others working in the same field. Only then can institutions gain the scale to combat seasonality. All institutions must be mindful of investment in training the trainer. The trainers must be from the local community and must be proficient at least in the local language (for domestic visitors) and in English (for international visitors).

The following narrative summarises this point:

We are trying to add public and private partners from various areas of Tuscany, while sharing best practices, good knowledge and strategies to promote an authentic Tuscany, by evaluating the history and culture of local traditions. (E11 - Toscana Promozione Turistica, Italy).

The nine institutional managers interviewed, and who answered the question on current trends and changes in creative tourism predicted three notable tendencies and changes in creative tourism. There will be an increase in creative tourism activities that will attempt to portray the culture and traditions of the territory and put the tourist in contact with the local community (n = 4). In addition, many activities will give tourists authentic and quality experiences (n = 4). Finally, creative tourism must develop in a coherent and intelligent way (n = 1). According to one of these managers:

Creative tourism will grow as an established form of cultural tourism, and its ramifications will be ever more creative and diverse, as more and more institutions and travellers get on board (. . .). (E6 - Creative Tourism Austria, Austria).

According to our respondents, there are seven challenges and opportunities for the development of creative initiatives and for the consolidation of the creative tourism project:

- vi) Improve spaces, increase the range of activities and develop information on the site in the short term, and create a consolidated tourism offer recognised for its long-term quality (n = 3);
- vii) Strengthen the network of partners (n = 3);
- viii) Provide the visitor with greater contact with the local community (n = 2);
- ix) Build a platform so that clients can share their experiences (n = 1);
- x) Combat seasonality and increase the number of tourists during the year (n = 1);
- xi) Provide greater knowledge on local handicrafts (n = 1);
- xii) Search for new markets (n = 1).

These results suggest that the managers of the institutions need to work more frequently with other institutions and profit from the spaces that can be used to develop different activities contradicting seasonality.

The great challenge is to combat seasonality; this is one of our objectives (. . .) but also at a regional level. As you know, the Algarve has this particularity (. . .). (E1 – Loulé Criativo, Portugal).

Put local project leaders in touch with the inhabitants (. . .). (E.10 – Louvre-Lens, France).

In this sense, the managers of institutions have a formidable challenge to reach a more sustainable operational model by working in partnership in multiple networks of different levels (e.g., local, municipal, regional, and national). This can be one way to reach domestic and international creative tourists and to arrange for public and international funding.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

To answer the first question posed in the introduction (what are the main difficulties mentioned by the managers of institutions to develop the creative tourism activities?), we can conclude that these managers have challenges establishing networks and a communication strategy. Although they are trying to implement good practices, this is difficult without public and private support for creative activities. This support can emerge at levels such as strategic communication. Managers also need to work with other institutions in the field of creative tourism to gain economic scale. We observed that the best practices carried out in creative tourism are the creation of partnerships or networks of partners for the communication and dissemination of activities, the valorisation, appreciation and preservation of local and regional culture through initiatives developed by the institutions, as well as the creation of activities that improve the quality of the products offered to visitors. Visitors are increasingly demanding for quality from the product offered. They want more contact with the culture and local community, and desire an active and authentic experience. Even if the results were derived only from a sample of 12 institutions, as they represent several countries in Southern Europe, they also reveal what is happening in this region.

The answers to the second and third questions (which are the main gaps in the management of creative activities? How do the managers of the institutions that develop creative activities face the future?) describe three impediments to visitors' access to the destination and that impair the quality of the tourism product offered by the institution: i) Issues in the communication and dissemination of activities; (ii) poor public transport network, mainly to areas far from urban centres; and (iii) weak cooperation among partners of the institution developing creative tourism. We found that most of the 24 analysed institutions had outdated websites. The results suggest that it is very difficult to work in the field without partnerships, but partnerships are hard to establish. Institutions must face each other not as competitors, but as partners that can help improve economic outcomes and social benefits to local communities.

We concluded that public institutions tended to be more limited in their financial and equipment support for their creative projects than private ones. This can be explained by policies in the public sector that often provide little support to new creative experiences. For example, in 2017, Porto Alegre had its website deactivated due to an ongoing political crisis. According to the manager of the Porto Alegre project, these political issues affected the development of the institution's activities. In our view, public institutions need to form more connections with private partners, and that hybrid structures may provide some added stability.

For these or other creative tourism institutions to follow the trends of creative tourism (i.e., visitors requiring quality tourism products, a close approximation to the local community, and participation in the process of creating something), they will have to improve transportation through the creation of a special bus service to the site of the activity or workshop. Institutions should collaborate to improve the communication and dissemination of information and to keep their websites up to date. Most of the analysed websites did not provide comprehensive information on their institution's activities. For example, they did not indicate the target language, the cost, and the target audience of the activity. This requires immediate attention because it will erect barriers between the institution and prospective visitors.

The research presented here is limited by the low response rate from organisations willing to participate in the survey, which limits the geographical scope of the observations and insights reportable. Nevertheless, as said before, one can figure what is happening in Southern Europe. The findings are also limited by non-responses to some of the questions, which may have been seen as 'corporate secrets' within the context of an interview with an unknown researcher. However, since many of the interview responses had key features in common, we believe that these responses are representative of the larger set of organisations. Nonetheless, further observations, especially from South America and Asia, would enhance our findings in a most valuable way. Another limitation is related to the focus of the research of the organisational scan which concentrated on institutions certified by the Creative Tourism Network. We are aware that other creative tourism organisations exist internationally and were not included in this research.

Since there are no records of detailed studies of the practices of creative tourism at an international level, or with platform organisations and their managers, we conclude that future research on this topic remains open. We encourage future research to extend and deepen this analysis, with a greater number of collaborations and entities, a more diversified array of situations, and better representation of regions around the world.

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