

The benefits of community co-creation for saving destinations at risk

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Objectives | In recent times, the longevity of tourist locations at risk as viable offerings has been compromised due to various factors, including the recent pandemic crises and the phenomenon of tourism overcrowding (Capocchi et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2016). The objective of this article is to provide a comprehensive understanding of community empowerment through international initiatives that involve co-creation activities in the context of heritage recovery and preservation funds. The City of Ani, located on the Turkish-Armenian border, and El Mirador in Guatemala are tangible cases of potential achievements that might arise via collaborative efforts including the resident population. The goal is to introduce non-existent, tangible memories into parallel realms, whether they be digital or two-dimensional (Pencarelli, 2020).

Methodology | In this particular study, a qualitative research approach will be employed, specifically utilising the comparison method. This methodology enables an analytical framework that entails the comparison of multiple cases, examining their similarities, differences, and patterns (Coutinho, 2011). In the context of the tourist industry, this analysis uses the framework to assess the destinations being examined, as well as the policies and strategies that manifest in the socio-economic and cultural effects on the populations involved (Ribeiro, António & Correia, 2020; Molina & Font, 2016). Based on the available secondary sources, such as articles and audiovisual materials, we will conduct an extensive literature review to find the relevant study and examine the illustrative cases.

Main results and contributions | From the perspective of creative tourism and co-creation, the implementation of sustainable tourism in vulnerable communities can be seen as advantageous due to its ability to foster activities that uphold the local culture and engage the community in tourism management. This results in the conscientious administration and advancement of current natural resources, the safeguarding of natural habitats, and the preservation of the distinctive encounters provided by the destination (Baker, Nam & Dutt, 2023). Creative tourism enables tourists to develop a heightened understanding of the significance of conservation when engaging with a community. In addition to relishing in a distinctive encounter, tourists are encouraged to

perpetuate this experience for future individuals seeking such destinations. This is accomplished through the provision of themed itineraries and innovative lodging options that authentically embody the local culture.

Limitations | The examination and research of vulnerable touristic destinations present a set of issues that give rise to diverse limits, notably the constrained availability of data. The study of the places is complicated by various factors, including political, economic, environmental, social, and border difficulties. Therefore, the significance of the preservation funds linked to UNESCO, specifically the Global Heritage Fund and the World Monument Fund, is in their ability to collect the essential data pertaining to the case studies under examination.

Conclusions | This study enables the development of a prognostication regarding effective strategies for the future of vulnerable destinations, which are becoming more susceptible due to the prevailing political conflicts of today. It aims to establish a tourist market that presents a distinct offering to an increasingly discerning audience, particularly in terms of exclusive and unhurried tourism experiences. The implementation of creative tourism has demonstrated efficacy in addressing destinations that are vulnerable to various risks. Creative tourism encompasses the promotion of genuine encounters and the active engagement of tourists in the cultural and artistic endeavours of indigenous communities (Watenpaugh, 2014; Montejo, 2022). By employing this methodology in vulnerable destinations, it becomes feasible to tackle the obstacles and facilitate the rejuvenation of these regions in an environmentally sound manner, by means of safeguarding cultural heritage, expanding tourism offerings, promoting education, and enhancing public consciousness.

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