

Perception of the local community on the role of the gandraesa woman in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through tourism

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Abstract | In rural territories, tourism products are offering unique experiences to communities and tourists who are interested in knowing the experiences and traditions of these places, where communities are essential for the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. The world's competent authorities are aware of the importance of safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as the role of local communities in its preservation, which is vital for its future. This study aims to understand the perception of the Gândara community in the municipalities of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal) about the role of 'Gandraesa Women' in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through tourism. The Gandraesa Woman is a fundamental element in the creation of the local and regional identity of these territories, being a vehicle for the transmission of traditions and knowledge between generations. Interviews were conducted with the population living in the territories of Vagos, Mira, and Cantanhede (Portugal). The results show the evident importance that these women had in the transmission of traditions and knowledge, that have been passed from generation to generation. It is essential to raise awareness in the resident communities towards a greater knowledge of their culture, and tourism has an active role in the preservation of the Gandarês heritage. The combination of tourist activity with the revitalisation of this heritage seems to be accepted by the local community.

Keywords | Gandraesa woman, intangible cultural heritage, communities, tourism

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1. Introduction

Communities in rural areas have a vast tangible and intangible heritage. Intangible heritage primarily relies on oral transmission and is often passed down from generation to generation, enduring over the years. However, this intangible cultural heritage is disappearing, especially in places with low population density, and if nothing is done to preserve it, it will disappear (Bakar et al., 2014; Massing, 2018; Park et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has brought relevance to tourism in less densely populated areas because these areas offer a greater sense of security and tranquility compared to mass tourism destinations (Blake, 2002; Brito-Henriques and Larrabure, 2021; Figueiredo, 2014; Santos and Moreira, 2021; Silva, 2021; Vaishar and Šťastná, 2020). Tourism can be an important tool to revitalise these territories, boosting interest in protecting intangible cultural heritage (Kateli-eva et al., 2020).

The 1999 “International Symposium on the Role of Women in the Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage” underlined the importance of the role of women as agents of transmission of this specific heritage (UNESCO, 1999) and, in 2003, the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) emphasized the importance of safeguarding this heritage and proposed measures to ensure its protection and promotion,

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage; (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned; (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof; and (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance (UNESCO, 2022, p. 5).

These are considered key documents to contribute to the preservation of this heritage. The Gandaresa Women played a vital role in preserving the intangible cultural heritage of their community, safeguarding their cultural traditions, knowledge, and practices, but also by managing the household (*Casa Gandaresa*) (Cação, 2006; Cupido, 2006; Frada, 1992; Neto, 2013; Oliveira, 2010).

This study aims to understand the perception of the Gândara community in the municipalities of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal) about the role of ‘Gandaresa Women’ in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through tourism. It addresses the theoretical bases of tourism and revitalisation of intangible cultural heritage, the importance of communities in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, and the legacy of Gandaresa Women and communitarianism. The study also includes a chapter on the methodology, discussion, results, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Tourism and revitalisation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH)

Tourism was booming until the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. This global event, which marks a significant turning point in the T&H industry, increased the tourist demand in areas with low population density, driven by the perceived sense of “security and peacefulness” that these destinations provided to travellers seeking refuge (Pinho et al., 2023). In these areas, the development of tourist activity allowed “[...] the economic and social revitalisation of the most fragile areas, the improvement of accessibility, the enhancement of local cultural heritage and the generation of income, among others” (Mesquita, 2011, p. 43). Places like this - low-density territories - must reinvent themselves. Tourism used as a tool to pro-

mote intangible cultural heritage not only enhances economic value but also regenerates cultural and natural aspects attributing value to the heritage (Giudici et al., 2013; Ursache, 2015).

Establishing a link between rural communities and their traditions and past experiences is an important vehicle for the development of these territories (Cunha, 2012). Local communities can enhance their forgotten ICH by investing in its valorisation, enabling different types of interaction with tourists, who are seeking authentic and original experiences (Katelieva et al., 2020; Mesquita 2011). Other authors also state that “[...] cultural travellers are mainly motivated by getting to know another culture or heritage [...] and are looking for an in-depth cultural experience” (Beltrán et al., 2016, p. 359). On the other hand, when the use of tourism in a cultural context is unplanned, it can harm the communities where it takes place, especially when intangible cultural heritage is involved. Esfehiani and Albrecht (2018) study shows the importance of tourism planning when associated with cultural heritage, highlighting three different ways in which it can be used: (1) as a source of attraction to any tourism offer; (2) as a tool for conservation, especially when the natural environment has strong cultural meanings for the local community; and (3) as a driver to facilitate culturally and naturally sensitive visitor behaviour. Therefore, when addressing the topics of “Tourism” and “Heritage” together, there must be no mischaracterization of heritage by tourism. This sector should help with promotion, not distorting the traditions and values of ICH, but safeguarding them in their most authentic form (Katelieva et al., 2020). Besides tourism, technology also can help safeguard this heritage, being an opportunity to promote greater interaction and education about its value to communities and tourists (Kim et al., 2019; Park et al., 2020).

2.2. The importance of communities in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage

Rural communities possess a deep understanding of the cultural practices and traditions that have sustained them for centuries, passed down through generations, enhancing the community's identity and sense of belonging. This knowledge allows them to keep their intangible cultural heritage alive (Cunha, 2012; Massing, 2018; Park et al., 2020; Tiemblo, 2013). Heritage (tangible and intangible) is essential for future generations to understand and connect with the past (Blake, 2002; Figueiredo, 2014). According to Giudici et al. (2013), ICH refers to the knowledge, skills, practices, and especially “know-how” that have been passed down through generations within a community. Without its preservation, this heritage is being lost or forgotten (Park et al., 2020) because communities do not value it. The 2003 UNESCO Convention highlights the importance of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage and studies by (Esfehiani and Albrecht, 2018, 2019; Katelieva et al., 2020; Lenzerini, 2011; Loiacono and Fallon, 2018; Maldonado-Erazo et al., 2021; Massing, 2018; Vecco, 2010) highlight this convention in their work on the definition of intangible cultural heritage:

means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and

continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO, 2022, p. 5).

In Portugal, according to “Direção-Geral do Património Cultural”, the (legal) safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is supported by Decree-Law No. 149/2015 of 4 August and Order No. 196/2010 of 9 April, which requires the registration in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (INPCI) (PC, 2024).

Several studies emphasize the significance of Intangible Heritage and its connection to the transmission of oral traditions (Vecco, 2010) by the competent authorities in international terms. At the local level, should be encouraged methods for these authorities to show the importance of their culture to the communities and promote its preservation (Park et al., 2020; Yan, 2021).

Nevertheless, the role of local communities in preserving intangible cultural heritage is fundamental to enhance the sense of belonging (Esfehiani & Albrecht, 2018; Vecco, 2010). Massing (2018) states that the need for local communities to be integrated in the protection of intangible cultural heritage is essential to safeguarding. The need for preservation is influenced by the importance of identifying what is unique to each territory, but also adapting to the demands of the modern world, without distorting the essence of each territory's context (Giudici et al., 2013). However, with the constant changes in modern society, the pacing of safeguarding efforts is not enough (Park et al., 2020). Massing (2018), also states that there is a low effort to spread ICH traditions to the new generations, but also in safeguarding the skills and knowledge that the older generation of the communities have. There is a need to invest in heritage programs and education.

2.2.1. *The legacy of “Gandaresa Women” and communitarianism*

UNESCO has recognised the importance of women's role in the transmission of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 1999). Several studies in geographical areas around the world address the importance of the female role in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (Akkuş & Akkuş, 2018; Chiweshe & Mutopo, 2019; Loiacono & Fallon, 2018; Lu & Tong, 2018; Silva & Silva, 2016). In Portugal, women have always played a very important role in the transmission of values, memories and traditions, which have been perpetuated for generations, demonstrating the importance of their part in communities and in the preservation of their heritage (Mattos, 2018).

The beginning of the settlement in Gândara territory dates back to the 16th and 17th centuries (Cação, 2006; Cravidão, 1992; Reigota, 2000). For its consolidation, it became clear that the pillars of the community were based on mutual help and communitarianism, and that the Gandarês territory, as we know it today, is largely due to the role of the “Gandaresa Woman” (Cação, 2006; Cupido, 2006). The legacy of women and the community were a relevant symbol in the identity and culture of this territory. Women were the pillar of communitarianism - which positively marked the Gândara community - framing the creation of regional identity through a role in the preservation of the immaterial Gândara cultural heritage, which was transmitted from generation to generation (Ramos & Costa, 2015). “Gandaresa Women” were distinguished from the rest by their typical clothing, oriented towards agriculture and active work in the *Casa Gandaresa*¹:

the black hat (round, decorated with bird feathers), the “caixuné” scarf (tied under the lower jaw, or at the nape of the neck, to ease daily work), the

¹This is a typical house in the litoral of Centre Region (Portugal), called “Gandaresa Region” or “Gândara Region” that includes the municipalities of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal).

blouse (with various floral motifs), the skirt and the apron (tied to the body with a black belt) [...] they used to appear barefoot [...] or with clogs (Oliveira, 2010, p. 32).

The regional identity of this territory was based on everyday activities and Gandraesa society was essentially matriarchal, as women played a central role in the administration of the household (*Casa Gandraesa*), which included activities such as the management of the family economy, agriculture, and livestock farming, family education, etc. The “Gandarês Man” - migrated seasonally (from December to the summer months) to the Alentejo and Ribatejo (Portugal) in search of work and better living conditions (Cação, 2006; Frada, 1992; Neto, 2013). Gandraesa Women were responsible for raising their children, especially daughters, and for managing the household in the temporary/seasonal absence of their husbands, playing a role of independence that was rare in the society of that time (Oliveira, 2010; Vaquinhas, 2001). These premises identify this territory as “[...] a *sui generis* community with its own uses and customs that constitute a unique heritage to whose preservation some local associations have dedicated themselves in an attempt to guarantee its continuity” (Góis, 2007, p. 9). The adversities endured by these individuals nourished a strong sense of community, mutual help, and altruism, spreading the ‘true’ sense of belonging in the Gandraesa community (Cupido, 2006).

3. Methodology

This research employed qualitative methodology applied to the communities of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal) that integrate the Gândara Region. The in-depth interviews were conducted with people over 50 years old, to unders-

tand the perception of the Gândara community in the municipalities of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal) on the role of Gandraesa Women in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through tourism. Based on this objective, three assumptions were established for the research:

- (i) Assumption 1: Gandraesa Women passed on culture and identity from generation to generation in the territories of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede;
- (ii) Assumption 2: Awareness-raising among communities promotes further education on intangible cultural heritage;
- (iii) Assumption 3: Tourism plays an active role in the preservation of Gândara identity and culture.

The study by Kim et al. (2019) identifies relevant priorities that should be considered in the development of ICH as a sustainable tourism resource: (1) the promotion of ICH among communities; (2) the training of ICH professionals; and (3) the parallel development between tourism and the protection of ICH. These three points served as the basis for developing the associated assumptions, as well as the focus points in the analysis and results section.

Thirteen in-depth interviews were conducted in person between April and May 2023, in the territories of Vagos, Mira and Cantanhede (Portugal). The interviews lasted between 20 and 80 minutes and were recorded and transcribed with the consent of the interviewees. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling. Initially, reaching out to contact persons such as parish council presidents and local associations. These individuals provided contact information for potential interviewees who met the research criteria. Data saturation was achieved during the final rounds of interviews.

The data from the recorded interviews and the respective notes were transcribed and analysed

thematically. Once the interviews were conducted and transcribed, they were analysed and a content analysis was carried out. Categories were defined and responses were coded, resulting in the configuration explained in the following figure and the results presented below:

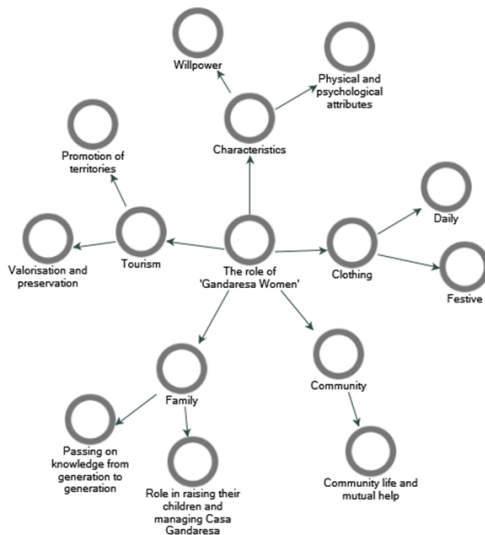


Figure 1 | Coding of thematic nodes
Source: Own elaboration using Nvivo

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the research, which align with the literature review. During the transcription of the interviews, codes were created with the main themes mentioned by the interviewees, which are related to the universe of the Gandaresa Women, but also the culture and identity of the three territories mentioned, namely: (1) family; (2) community; (3) characteristics; (4) clothing; and (5) tourism.

4.1. Knowledge transmission from generation to generation: the role of the “Gandaresa Woman”

4.1.1. Family: role in education and transmission of knowledge from generation to generation

In the families, the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation was mainly carried out by the Gandaresa Women - mothers and grandmothers passed on the knowledge to the younger generation (Ramos and Costa, 2015). They played an active role in educating children and preparing them for adulthood, particularly agriculture. Women mainly contributed to the education of their daughters, teaching them about housework and agriculture life, and fathers educated their sons. When men migrated to other regions of the country, women were the pillars of education. This education centered on practical daily life skills, ethical values, respect, and religious teachings, often conveyed through stories shared around the “*ceia*”² time. Girls received stricter and more supervised education compared to boys, who enjoyed more freedom, especially in social activities. The main contributions of each interview are identified in table 1.

It was the Gandaresa Women who took charge of both household management (*Casa Gandaresa*) and agriculture work. They were skilled and efficient in handling family finances and managing the household. Recognising the role of women managing both the family and *Casa Gandaresa*, can provide a valuable perspective for promoting cultural activities and heritage preservation (Ramos and Costa, 2015). By acknowledging the significance of women’s roles in the management of *Casa Gandaresa*, an inclusive cultural space can be created. The key contributions from each interview are outlined in table 2.

²Occurs after the main dinner.

Table 1 | In-depth interviews (Family node) (1)

I-1	"The transmission of knowledge and traditions was carried out by the Gandaresa Women: mothers and grandmothers. They are the main pillars of education. The father was always considered the person of respect and the pillar of the family, and everything else was the responsibility of the woman. It was up to the women to educate the children (especially the daughters) (...) they were very active in maintaining the household (<i>Casa Gandaresa</i>) (...) very strong and very independent".
I-2	"Women played a very important role in the preservation of knowledge and traditions. Gandaresa Women played a more active role in raising and educating the daughters. There was not much tendency for women to educate boys".
I-3	"Education was given by mothers to their daughters, but always with the aim of a more domestic and agricultural education".
I-4	"It was the woman who took care of the children when the husband emigrated. Many went to Brazil and to the Ribatejo area".
I-7	"In terms of child-raising... boys had a little more freedom than girls. The father was a figure of respect and consideration. There was a partnership in raising their children. This was evident in the marriage of children. They studied up to 4th grade of primary school and then went to help their parents in agriculture".
I-11	"(...) has a preponderant role. It is the woman who is seen as responsible for raising up the children. During the evenings, there was a joint intervention of the father and the mother, as a sign of respect for the elders (...) The basic principles of respect, education and religion were taught at home, but also in the church. We know that religion influenced people's lives a lot. Women guided them in these principles. In terms of food preparation and housework, a lot was passed on from mothers/grandmothers to their daughters. The boys had more freedom, during the time of the ' <i>escapadelas</i> ', when they went out at night".
I-13	"The Gandaresa Woman represented willpower and sacrifice. She played a very important role in the education of her children, following the religious assumptions, preparing her children for the adult life and the work in the field, passing traditions from generation to generation. In the vast majority of cases, when the male figure migrated to the Ribatejo areas or outside Portugal, it was the woman who managed practically all the family life".

Table 2 | In-depth interviews (Family node) (2)

I-2	"With so many children and the Casa Gandaresa was small? Yes... for example, my grandfather's house is about 100 years old. (...) A plot of land was worth more than a house, a yard (...) Women were left alone, they took care of the house (...) they were the ones who bought and sold corn, potatoes (...) because this territory is matriarchal".
I-6	"For me (...) The Gandaresa Women works at home and in agriculture (...) The Casa Gandaresa always ruled by them, because (...) Gandarês Men either went to the sea or emigrated. We had a lot of emigration. They continued here, managing the house and educating their children. As a rule, they are good at managing the family finances".
I-7	"The Gandaresa Women managed the house. She knew that the pig in ' <i>S. Martinho</i> ', raised at home, would have to last until the next ' <i>S. Martinho</i> ' (...) the pig had to feed the whole family. It was the Gandaresa Woman who did this".
I-10	"(...) I respected the work, the life of the house, it has nothing to do with today (...) I still had to work in the agriculture fields".
I-11	"Women are largely responsible for the management of the Casa Gandaresa".

4.1.2. Characteristics

The Gandaresa Woman is seen as a symbol of willpower and perseverance, of mutual help and communitarianism, with a great capacity for work, who adapted to the territory where she was located. She is the matriarch and, alone, rules the house and the children, while the men are often absent due to migration (Cação, 2006; Cupido,

2006; Neto, 2013). Resilience, willpower, and the ability to work and adapt to adverse conditions of women characterise the residents of the Gandarês territory. Both men and women worked hard, in difficult jobs that required herculean physical and moral strength. The demanding nature of their work led to premature aging, yet their persistent efforts to improve their lives contribute significantly to the identity of the Gandaresa region. The

main contributions of each interview are identified in Table 3.

For example, currently, in the labour market, concerning career advancement opportunities, women are more likely to face gender inequalities, and they are also the majority of the workforce in the tourism industry (Costa et al., 2014; 2017a),

so there is a need to manage gender roles and their social, economic and political aspects for the management of the tourism sector (Costa et al., 2017b). There is a need to invest in strategies and initiatives that promote female empowerment and gender equality (Malta et al., 2021).

Table 3 | In-depth interviews (Characteristics node)

I-2	"Families here used to be matriarchal. Women had a lot of willpower (...) and physical strength, due to the demands of the work (...) The Gandaresa Women were the pillar. It portrays a strong will, they grew old quickly due to the hard work they did".
I-3	"Women were often the breadwinners. Men travelled abroad (...) in internal and external migrations"
I-6	"Gandaresa Women (...) is very flexible, very versatile, adaptable... she does everything. The Gandarês Man is also like that, with a lot of willpower and a sense of community and work. They were people who had a great capacity for work, very hospitable".
I-7	"They are capable of anything, with enormous willpower, enormous humility, and a good education. The Gandarês could handle what no one else could".
I-11	"(...) we call Gandaresa Women until the 1960s/80s, because she lived in Gândara and was dependent on the natural characteristics of the territory. The agricultural cycle and religion heavily influenced their lives throughout the year. I think that the territory and the demands of the region are related. It was an area that needed to be worked, due to the infertility of the land. The Gandaresa Woman had to work and it was very important (...) she was a farm worker. She balanced domestic life with agricultural life. She had to manage all these problems very well. The big livestock was the responsibility of the Gandarês Man"
I-13	"For me, the Gandaresa Woman is a figure that exudes willpower, perseverance, dedication, and a lot of work (of suffering), both in agriculture and in the education of her children. Without the will of the Gândara people of the past, the Gândara region would not exist as we know today"

4.1.3. Clothing

The particular and unique characteristics of this community, a product of the nature of the Gândara Region, promote the need for specific clothes for agricultural activities or on Sundays and festivals. This attire called the "*Traje Gandarês*" (Gandarês attire), was tailored to suit the social and physical demands of the time (Oliveira, 2010). As strict moral rules of modesty, decorum, and respect were imposed, women dressed, under the influence of Arab culture, in long skirts that almost reached the floor, a striped '*chita*' blouse, a headscarf under the Gandarês hat, and a shawl in winter (Cupido, 2006; Oliveira, 2010). To ease their work, they wore a girdle around their abdo-

men to secure their skirts and an apron to protect against dirt. Some, the wealthier ones, wore a Sunday dress, in brighter colours, in addition to their work clothes, which were darker. As for jewellery, on Sunday they wore gold thread, called '*volta*', often passed down from mothers to daughters as inheritance or reward. Men, on the other hand, wore sturdier fabrics such as *burel* or *cotim*, better suited for agricultural labour. Clothing also reflected the marital status of women, with married women adopting more modest attire and widows or those whose husbands had emigrated wearing black as a sign of mourning and respect. The key contributions from each interview are outlined in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4 | In-depth interviews (Clothing node) (1)

I-1	"Naturally, the clothing is adapted to the social and physical environment (...) of the women was, as in the general Portuguese culture of the time, very modest (...) it must have its origin in the Arab culture (...) Gandarês hat and face are almost completely covered, just like the rest of the body (...) It was adapted to work in the agriculture field, just like the work in <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> . To lift the skirt at the front, the belt had the function of holding the abdomen when a lot of effort was made. The women would pick up very heavy weights and carry them on their heads".
I-4	"Here in this area, very few people had Sunday or party clothes because people were so poor that there were no shoes. During the week, the woman wore a skirt and an apron, which she took off on Sunday. If there was a new skirt... it would only be worn on Sundays. During the week they wore a belt to hold up their skirts and here we are talking about the 40s/50s/60s. This belt was dark coloured for work, and then on Sundays, they could have a red belt. But most of them adapted their work clothes for Sunday. There was a work cap and a Sunday cap, the scarf was pretty much the same".
I-6	"As for the clothing, it was typical and appropriate to the reality of the time (...) They wore long skirts that reached down to the floor. They wore a typical hat, with a feather on the side".
I-7	"They had their clothes, for every situation (...) daily life and festive occasions. The women had more elegant outfits (...) and had an outfit for working during the week, and they had an outfit for Sunday, but they were few. As for jewelry, they wore a necklace, given to them by their parents (mostly if the girl had helped her parents with their work)"
I-8	"For me, it is the culture... the <i>Traje Gandarês</i> is already disappearing, but there are still some Gandaresa Women. For me, it is the apron, (...) It was not only a question of clothing, or area. At least I say here in my region, where the apron was always very necessary (...) we used it on Sundays to go everywhere"
I-11	"They had their own identity, they had knowledge related to agricultural cultures that was transmitted from generation to generation, orally, knowledge related to the clothes that mothers taught their daughters and that was different from one region to another. Even within Gândara there are subcultures"

There was a change of attire when a close relative passed away (Table 5).

Table 5 | In-depth interviews (Clothing node) (2)

I-1	"The Gandaresa Women from the moment someone in the family dies (e.g. parents), dress in black or very dark. When her husband died or was away (migration to Brazil), she felt as if she was in mourning for the rest of her life"
I-3	"When the men migrated, the women dressed differently... they covered their faces, they covered their hair... not necessarily the colour black, this colour was used more in death, or in the prolonged absence of a family member (death, war). Under the skirt they wore 2 and 3 petticoats, called <i>'combinações'</i> ".
I-6	"(...) they wore black, which was when their husbands emigrated, either when they went to the sea, or when their sons went to war, it was immediately known that this woman was married".

4.2. Education and awareness-raising of resident communities

4.2.1. Mutual help, communitarianism, enhancement and preservation

Gandaresa culture and identity were anchored in mutual aid and communitarianism. Due to the difficult nature of the territory, the communities worked together, helping each other, for example through *"troca de tardes"* or the exchange of se-

eds, vegetable plants, and even bread. The rural community spirit was well rooted in the population, who helped each other in agricultural work and difficult moments of life (in times of mourning, at the beginning of a couple's life, or in times of hardship), but also in times of mutual aid, such as *"matança do porco"* (pig slaughters), weddings and other important festivities. Shared experiences extended beyond family and neighbours in the community, for example, in *"lavagem nos tanques"* (washing clothes in a community tank), *"descami-*

sar o milho" (removing the leaves that surround the corn cob), the construction of the house and the adobes which were done by all community, which united the community and there was mu-

tual help in carrying out the tasks (Ramos & Costa, 2015). The main contributions of each interview are identified in the table below.

Table 6 | In-depth interviews (Community node) (1)

I-1	"Right now, I think people (...) are much more open to preservation".
I-2	"These people lived by mutual help. There were the so-called ' <i>troca de tardes</i> ' (...) there was no money, they worked for each other. The economy worked like that. The needs of 1923 were to survive".
I-5	"For ' <i>descamisar o milho</i> ' they got together at <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> , because the work was much faster".
I-6	"For example, when they built the <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> , they got together to build the house and then went to help whoever needed it. There was this culture of mutual help and communitarianism (...) when someone died, the whole village would get together and prepare food for the mourners, for 2/3 days. There was no paid work...they were called ' <i>tardadas</i> ' (in agriculture...they went to the land to sow corn, etc. the next afternoon they exchanged with others). Only later did the hours start to be paid. I still experienced this".
I-7	"It started with the process of building the <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> , nobody built the house independently. Nor did anyone get married without having a house. Parents and friends of the community helped to build the house".
I-11	"For me culture, specifically Gandaresa culture, is related to clothing, speaking, living. This region is related to its natural conditions, and the community adapted to those realities (...) Work was done in the afternoon. When there was a wedding, the people of the village brought food (corn, beans, etc.) for the bride and groom. This spirit of mutual help and communitarianism was very visible, especially in agricultural tasks that were very difficult."

Local communities play a crucial role in preserving and valuing traditions and knowledge. There is a noticeable increase in the willingness of resident communities to preserve intangible heritage. Communication remains the primary obstacle and challenge – encouraging the local community to preserve both tangible and intangible heritage, anchored in the *Casa Gandaresa* and its culture, is a challenge, because collective memories of arduous times are not the ones they wish to remember. The responsibility for promotion, awareness-raising, and funding depends on local and/or central government entities (Ramos et al., 2021). It is essential to create tools capable of showing the population of the Gândara region the local architectural, gastronomic, and cultural value. Raising

awareness and providing information to all generations is vital for ensuring the continuity of this tangible and intangible culture over time (Ramos and Malta, 2023). In this context, cultural and recreational associations have played an important role through the creation of various events and initiatives. Women have been significant in preserving intangible cultural heritage in many communities, especially in the Gândara region. In this territory, they are also responsible for passing down oral traditions, crafts, and other forms of cultural heritage between generations. Their knowledge contributes to the promotion of local culture, attracting tourists who seek authentic cultural experiences. The key contributions from each interview are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 | In-depth interviews (Community node) (2)

I-1	"It was the folkloric group that began to protect what was being destroyed. Hundreds and hundreds of adobe houses were destroyed and replaced by more modern houses. There were no more adobe factories. The families could no longer live on 'adobes' because nobody would buy them anymore. There were still people who made adobes, but more for the walls of the backyards and to build corrals for the livestock".
I-2	"If things are not valued, they are not preserved. Without valuing communities, in the first phase, accompanied by local and governmental entities. The problem is that none of this is done if there are no subsidies and funding".
I-3	"The clock is ticking for the <i>Casas Gandaresas</i> (...) people are waiting for funding and if there is no way to convey the message that their property has heritage value, little or nothing can be done. However, there is more openness to preservation".
I-4	"It is very difficult to explain to the local community that this heritage needs to be preserved...tangible and intangible. The most difficult thing here is to get the current generations interested. There is a need to empower young people in innovative communication channels, which allow the message to be transmitted".
I-5	"From the preservation of the <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> , I think we can move on to the rest, i.e. the immaterial component. It is necessary to communicate differently to the communities. It is essential that first, the local community values the traditions (...) they have to be motivated in some way".
I-6	"We need to captivate the communities. There needs to be an openness in this sense. People are used to the existence of the <i>Casas Gandaresas</i> . There is no culture of preserving and valuing. It is not easy to change people's mentality. It has to be for the common good and that adds value".
I-13	"(...) it is essential that there is awareness among local communities about this issue. If residents don't value what they have, who can value it? Well... the tourists. A lot of times it starts there... when someone from outside values what you have. It is necessary to show that this tangible and intangible heritage has value and that it is essential to invest in it (...) The associations, in my opinion, have played a very important role. It is through them that this safeguarding of traditions and knowledge has happened. Without them, I think that almost nothing would exist anymore (...) How can this preservation exist? Well, I think through the creation of awareness-raising actions, seminars, training, gastronomic demonstrations, demonstrations of architecture more closely linked to architecture and tourism, etc. Promote visits to the <i>Casas Gandaresas</i> , which are interpretation centres".

4.3. Tourism as a developer of intangible cultural heritage

Tourism is considered important for the revitalisation of Gândara identity and culture (Ramos et al., 2021; Ramos & Malta, 2023). The association between culture and tourism was highlighted and the promotional role that tourism can play in the territories of Vagos, Mira, and Cantanhede for the revitalisation of their intangible cultural heritage was considered essential. The elders' knowledge of this identity is valuable and there is a need to invest

in storytelling to attract the attention of communities and tourists. Tourism promotes the region and plays a vital role in heritage conservation, as the interest and support of tourists can help maintain traditional cultural practices and foster the preservation of Gândara's identity and culture. However, should be integrated once the product has been consolidated, with specific packages for different segments and tourist routes that enhance the *Casas Gandaresas*.

The main contributions of each interview are identified in table 8.

Table 8 | In-depth interviews (Tourism node)

I-1	"After the inauguration of the <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> , a large number of events have been held here. This space has become an interpretation centre. The community gathers here for the events. When people come here they feel like a community and almost like a 'family', because they have a common past. People started to take a greater interest in Gândara culture and customs, recognising their value. Not just the adobe, but everything that involves Gândara's traditions and identity".
I-2	"There are people from abroad who come to our territory because they like it. It would be important to recognise the <i>Casas Gandaresas</i> . Older people have very valuable knowledge about the Gandarês identity and way of life. There is an opportunity here (...) Investing in storytelling is a good initiative, in my opinion... telling the story of how things happened. It's a multidisciplinary approach to draw attention to the communities".
I-3	"For tourists it has value, and the communities don't realise the value they have, in the <i>Casa Gandaresa</i> and their culture and identity (...) the communities start to value things like this".
I-4	"Tourism plays an important role in the revitalisation and promotion of the territories, yes... without a doubt. Information must be generated to make the territory available to tourists, but initially for the communities, who are currently unaware of the territory, in cultural and heritage terms".
I-5	"Tourism can be beneficial if it helps to promote and revitalise heritage... I would say as an engine or tool, BUT: as long as it does not destroy it. There should always be cultural support for training and information at the architectural level".
I-12	"I do consider that tourism has a very important role here, possibly in a second phase, after the product is consolidated in the first phase (...) it could play a role in revitalising and, above all, promoting these territories, together with the existing tourist offer. I think that specific packages should be created according to the different market segments (...). It would be very interesting, even for the knowledge of the communities, the existence of routes of <i>Casas Gandaresas</i> to visit their important elements".

5. Conclusion

The local community has a key role in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through tourism, especially in the context of the Gandaresa Women. Local communities and relevant entities can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage through tourism - to the preservation and promotion of knowledge transmission, as they have in-depth knowledge of local traditions, customs, gastronomy, stories, etc (Kim et al., 2019; Massing, 2018). By sharing this knowledge with tourists and visitors, they contribute to the preservation and dissemination of traditional cultural practices in Gândara region. The results indicate the evident importance that these women had and still have in the transmission of traditions and knowledge that were passed down from generation to generation. Raising awareness within the communities and encouraging a deeper understanding of their culture is essential, given that tourism plays an active role in preserving this heritage. The local

community seems to consider that the interaction between tourism activity and the revitalisation of this heritage is good for the territory and the preservation of traditions (Figueiredo, 2014; Kim et al., 2019; Lenzerini, 2011). Tourists' interest in local traditions and culture can be the "stimulus" for the community to continue to value and pass on these practices to younger generations. It is essential to make the community aware of the importance of their own culture and heritage because the more they perceive the interest and appreciation of their traditions through tourists, the more it contributes to developing a sense of pride and responsibility (Chiweshe & Mutopo, 2019, Mattos, 2018).

Access to information is one of the limitations. It was a challenge to gain access to relevant cultural sources, as well as to a more extensive literature review on these issues. We understand that ensuring the participation of the local community is crucial to gain an understanding of cultural perceptions and practices. However, achieving full

representation can be difficult, especially in small or traditional communities. For future research, it is important to conduct studies similar to this one. It is important to understand the role of women in other cultures and territories and their role in transmitting knowledge and traditions.

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