



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Creative Cities Network



Towards Sustainable Strategies for Creative Tourism

Discussion Report of the
Planning Meeting for 2008 International
Conference on Creative Tourism
Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S.A.
October 25-27, 2006

Decision and action items

- The network will begin convening themed annual meetings:
 - September 2007 – “Creativity and Gastronomy,” Popayan
 - Autumn 2008 – “Creativity and Tourism,” (International Conference) Santa Fe
 - 2009 (to be determined)
- Efforts will be made to secure a global business sponsor
- Creative Cities Network Website will be further developed
- Media and PR will be pursued for Creative Cities Network activities and events
- A Contact Matrix (“Address Book”) will be developed
- Recognition Awards for creative policies will be developed
- The Network will present at the Global Conference on Tourism in Popoyan, Colombia in December 2007

Meeting Summary

A gathering of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network was convened in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Representatives from six of the nine Creative Cities participated in the meeting, which was organized by the City of Santa Fe, Creative Santa Fe, and Recursos. Toby Herzlich facilitated the discussions, of which this report is a summary.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Develop the network of creative cities
- Define “Creative Tourism”
- Begin planning for an International Conference on Creative Tourism, to be held in 2008 in Santa Fe

Who are we as Creative Cities?

Following opening remarks and a keynote speech by Hayes Lewis, from the IAIA Center for Lifelong Learning, the group began discussions to get to know each other and start thinking together about their role as creative cities. They participated in a “conversation café,” a rotating small group conversation, focused on three questions:

- What does being a “Creative City” mean to you and your community?
- Tell us stories about being a creative city
- What is your city currently doing that helps tourists interface with artists and other creative practitioners?

A summary discussion brought out several key points. Delegates felt that creativity is central to the character of their cities, one remarking that “it is part of our DNA.” Their survival as a city depends on maximizing this creativity and constantly innovating.

Delegates felt that it is important that the local community is involved and bought in to the idea of creative tourism. In order for the tourist to feel a part of the city, the community must know and be proud of what they have, and be willing to cultivate local enterprises that share the experience.

Definition of ‘Creative Tourism’

Delegates discussed the meaning of “creative tourism,” emphasizing that it includes more access to culture or history (“less museums, more squares”), involves doing something experientially, and an authentic engagement in the real cultural life of the city.

“Creative Tourism” is considered to be a new generation of tourism. One participant described his perspective that the first generation was “beach tourism,” in which people come to a place for relaxation and leisure; the second was “cultural tourism,” oriented toward museums and cultural tours. “Creative Tourism” involves more interaction, in which the visitor has an educational, emotional, social, and participative interaction with the place, its living culture, and the people who live there. They feel like a citizen. This third generation requires that managers also evolve, recognizing the creativity within their city as a resource, and providing new opportunities to meet the evolving interests of tourists.

While creative tourism must be linked to culture, the particular cultural expressions will be unique to each place. For example, the group discussed low-rider cars as being a cultural expression of northern New Mexico, and tango dancing as being particular to Buenos Aires.

After significant conversation, the group adopted Santa Fe's working definition of creative tourism:

“Creative tourism is travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture.”

Enhancing the economy through creative tourism

A presentation was made by Tom Aageson about the economic impacts of cultural industries in Santa Fe. Afterward, the group discussed ways that they see to enhance their own economies through creative tourism.

Some of the ideas were:

- Develop and create more homegrown creative people and unique products
- Generate new jobs in the creative tourism sector
- Guides
- Transportation jobs
- Local craftspeople
- Hosts
- Community economic development and infrastructure development
- Strengthen policies that support development of creative tourism.

There are responsibilities for both the public and private sectors. The public sector must create an enabling environment, through tax incentives, access to loans and finance, and training. The private sector is responsible for their own self-promotion, articulating the intangibles, and networking themselves around shared problems.

- Focus on quality. Do not increase demand by lowering the price.
- Public sector authorities can coordinate what exists in the city and build synergy between public and private initiatives. Promote quality and excellence. Coordinate with a city-wide calendar.
- Use creative tourism to attract people interested in urban renovation
- Buenos Aires will develop more interactive opportunities around music, dance, food, design
- Bologna organized an opera tour to Japan, then the following year sold tickets in Tokyo for their own season in Bologna, attracting Japanese tourists who already had developed a relationship with the city.

Creating a vision for the network: What is possible, as individual cities and collectively, through our collaboration?

The group developed ideas and then grouped them into a shared vision.

In 10 years, we envision...

- Exchanges among cities of expertise, cultural treasures, and best practices
- Packaging and joint promotion of authentic local products and creative offerings
- A growing network of creative cities, efficiently managed and coordinated
- Annual network meetings, rotating among cities, with a thematic focus and creative industry sponsors
- Cities are building local creative industries and developing local creative history curricula
- Our work results in innovative local solutions for poverty, environmental sustainability, and other difficult global issues

What can we put in place in the next 2-3 years to advance creative tourism and out network?

Focusing on specific, tangible outcomes, the delegates agreed to six 2-3 year objectives and next steps:

1. Annual meetings of the Creative Cities Network

Each meeting will have a thematic focus (“creativity and...”) and will be linked to existing events in sponsoring cities. The meetings are an opportunity for exchange among the creative cities network members, including a broader range of people from each city (entrepreneurs, administrators, media, artists) who are involved in the specific thematic creative industry.

2007: May 14-15 in Paris, in coordination with the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity forum. Technical meeting for the Creative Cities Network, focusing on establishing structural elements and coordination strategy (recommendations from this meeting’s assignments regarding the contact matrix, recognition program, and enhanced website)

September, 2007 in Popayan, Colombia. A two-day Creative Cities Network meeting in coordination with the Gastronomy Congress. Cities will send their own chefs and others with interests related to Gastronomy. (Will be further researched by Guillermo and confirmed within one month)

2008: Autumn in Santa Fe, International Conference on Creative Tourism.

2009: Select topic and location at May 2007 meeting

Seek out sponsorship at a global scale with three-year support. Appeal to business leaders, such as Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Atlantic.

2. Contact Matrix Structure (“address book”)

In order to facilitate communication and exchange among the Creative Cities Network, a structure will be developed that identifies a key liaison along with ten additional people to serve as a core group. People of all creative disciplines will be designated for each city, with contact information that can easily be updated. Candidate cities will also be considered.

3. Recognition Awards to Showcase Creative Policies

A peer review process will be established in which the Creative Cities Network recognizes cities, both within and outside of the network, who are developing innovative policies for economic development and social benefit (the example used was a program that uses flamenco dancing for prisoner rehabilitation). The recognition program will be linked with the annual meetings. This program will take several years to get fully in place, and will start by recognizing and showcasing existing awards.

4. Network Website

An enhanced website will be developed that links to each city’s website, but sets a bigger context. The website will explore such questions as “What is creativity? What is a creative city?”. It will include an overall calendar, a marketplace in which products can be sold, and information about meetings, recognitions awards, and other Creative Cities Network activities.

5. Media and PR

Activities and accomplishments of the Creative Cities Network should be highlighted as much as possible through media stories and PR. This task involves developing stories and messaging around creative cities events, influencing both the cultural press and the business press.

6. Leadership and Coordination

The network will have a light structure for coordination, with key liaisons in each city as well as a group of about 10 who are core members of the network in each city, representing a range of creative industries. Communication will happen via a web connection, email, blogs, and UNESCO. More structured leadership will be organized around events or activities, with 3-5 operational leaders in one city for a specific event hosted by that city.

International Conference on Creative Tourism

Delegates brainstormed ideas for the 2008 International Conference on Creative Tourism, which will be held in Santa Fe and organized by the Santa Fe representatives. The following are ideas to serve as a starting place for conference design:

Objective and purpose: What is “creative tourism?” ...and why does it make sense?

- Examples of success
- Benefits to the local communities
- Good practices

“Discover a new frontier of tourism...Creative Cities Network”

Guidelines

DO:

- Make it experiential – both with local Santa Fe offerings and examples imported from other places. Showcase experiences.
- Include provocative speakers that open up new frontiers of thinking
- Emphasize innovation. Each participant should leave with new ideas and new ways of thinking
- Concentrate on creative tourism in these creative cities, and bring in additional expertise from the outside.
- Maximize interactivity. Have a plenary of 2-3 speakers each day, with lots of time for smaller group interactions
- Create different tracks for different levels of expertise
- Offer optional creative activities in the evenings
- Balance and link strategic/academic talks with real cases – include both large and small case study examples to illustrate different aspects of the same idea
- Focus and align program elements with conference topic
- Consider the language issues – people should be able to express themselves in their own language

DON'T:

- Have talking heads, redundant and boring, with no substance
- Overload with speakers and too much sitting
- Confuse people with last-minute changes to the schedule
- Over-emphasize too many local examples
- Encourage side negotiations
- Have too many participants or invite the wrong people
- Trap people in the hotel and not allow them to get outside

Who should be there?

A core group from each of 20-30 UNESCO Creative Cities, all coming together and working together. Delegations from each city would include public and private sector representatives:

- Administrators
- Tourism industry organizations
- Tour operators and other entrepreneurs
- Academics
- Media

These people will have homework to do – research around the industry, information-gathering around their own creative resources, etc. This core group will present experiences, practices, papers, ideas

- General public – Santa Fe citizens should have access to some general sessions
- Tourism professionals and media from around the world, to learn and make presentations
- Others invited to help expand the understanding and practice of creative tourism, and to expose the broader world to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network
- Each group has a different color of badge

Agenda Development:

- One year prior – Santa Fe articulates the main theme of the Conference (present in Colombia, Sept 2007), which will be the focus of plenary sessions
- Six months ahead – cities propose speed networking sessions, which are posted on the website for people to register
- Three months ahead – proposals are selected based on registration interest
- During the conference, convene a mini-caucus for the Creative Cities delegates from each city.

Needs:

- Data to appeal to different levels (tour operators, city administrators, academics). Involve the World Tourism Organization.
- Commission market research study and present findings at the conference.
- Each city must do its own homework – identify 2-3 creative tourism entrepreneurs and bring together the local community around creative tourism. Have a planning session like this meeting to engage the community and determine which local offerings to highlight at the international conference.

Funding Issues:

- Costs include putting on the conference and travel expenses. Can cities raise their own travel budgets?
- Can Santa Fe arrange hotel sponsorships?
- Charge a fee for the conference, but not for the “red badges” (Creative Cities delegates). Secure scholarships for local creative entrepreneurs
- Secure a combination of revenue sources: local and state funding; registration fees, business sponsors (contributors to support the program, booth exhibitors, tech sponsors)

Reflection and evaluation of the meeting

What worked?

- Good facilitation helped us grow our connection with each other and our understanding
- Discovering the connections among our network
- Moving around and seeing different parts of the community
- Engaged conversation
- Professional local planning team
- Good connections with local sponsors
- Cooking class

What could be improved next time?

- Clarify expectations around food – let people know “this reception is your dinner”
- Provide an opportunity for delegates to have a quiet dinner together early in the program