



WORKSHOP REPORT OF WORKSHOP SERIES 1

How to preserve natural, cultural and architectural heritage while entering a modern age (including dealing with mass tourism)? (1/2)



Contract No AGRI-2019-409 supported by the European Union contributed to the results presented in this document. The opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the Contracting Authority's official position

TITLE OF WORKSHOP: How to preserve natural, cultural and architectural heritage while entering a modern age (including dealing with mass tourism)? (1/2)

Facilitator: Tom Jones, ERCA

Rapporteur: Kirsten Birke-Lund, National Expert DK

Notetaker: Emese Ocsko, E40 Group

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE SESSION

This session covered the theme of preserving architectural, culture and natural heritage in a 'smart way'. Two inspiring examples triggered the discussion. During the presentations the importance of "central buildings" (architectural heritage) and the nature trails (natural heritage) were emphasised, and the linkages of these to the local culture. The role of visionary leaders is often crucial. Activities related to heritage always need to engage the local people (including temporary residents) as well as 'externals' (e.g. tourists through local markets, cultural activities, etc.). Engaging young people is a particular difficult, as well as tourism activities can often create challenges (i.e. how to deal with seasonality and attract the people with the right interest and attitude). The key message that emerged from the session is that "rural heritage is smart when it is rooted in the community, intergenerational and sustainable".

PRESENTATIONS

Laura Cantarella (Viso a Viso) Ostana, Italy: [Preserving architectural heritage through vision and persistence](#)

Laura talked about how they preserved the cultural and architectural heritage in Ostana. During the past years Ostana managed to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the buildings through an architectural renovation, at the same time providing services to the inhabitants, including developing cultural projects. The new cultural & community centre attracts both locals and visitors. Beside the spaces to hold cultural events (such as a large auditorium), it includes a cafeteria, co-working space, library for community use. Laura stressed that a community cooperative - in which citizens are both producers and consumers - can help avoid the risk of initiatives falling under the control of one entity. This requires visionary leaders but the role of the central building is also crucial in Ostana. The cross-structure of the interior building generates cultural activities which were also decisive in the development of the community.

Rigas Zafeiriou, Kytherian Foundation for Culture & Development-Kythera, Greece: [Developing Kythera Island as a Sustainable Destination for the Conservation of Natural & Cultural Heritage](#)

Rigas presented how Kythera has been developed as a sustainable destination (building on the natural and cultural heritage). Kythera has been recognised through tourism awards both for its sustainable approach and as an adventure destination. Rigas talked about the key components of the process including the restoration of traditional green infrastructure. Green infrastructure restoration concerned among others trails, canyons and micro-damns. Kythera Hiking is the first network of hiking trails in Greece with a separate brand, website and QR codes. Another important component is adaptive management and collaborative networks. This is

based on nature-culture conservation, including an assessment of the linkages between them. Kythera's tourism has been developed in a sustainable way. It is also connected to agricultural production (local products) through a cultivation of olive trees and related certification. Finally Rigas emphasised the importance of community impact.

FINDINGS ON CHALLENGES



How important the emotional relations to the place are? For instance for someone who was born there. Can these relations be sustained? How far people coming from “the outside” can emotionally connect to a place?

Engaging people is the key, but it is very challenging. The question is what the ideal number to engage is (from 5 inhabitants up to ...?). Depends on the size of the community. Local knowledge for storytelling (e.g. in both Kythera and in Ostana – such as the “Human Library”) is important to preserve local culture and traditions. How to host new people is a key question – most areas would like to focus is on those interested in culture.

Temporary residents should also be engaged (in one example they are involved in taking care of local woods), so that they build a better connection to the culture and spirit of the place.

Tourism can be a challenge due to its seasonality and potential “exploitation of natural resources”. Balance is important. For instance, in one area the key challenge has been that motorcycles don't respect the rules. In the summer there is a parking problem in many rural areas (links to mobility issues). Tourism puts extreme pressure on the infrastructure during summer and the water supply system.

“First our own people must enjoy new activities then the tourists.”

Koray Kaya (Turkey, participant)

Transit areas, where people are “just driving through” face particular challenges. Local attractions, such as a local market can help people to “stop”.

Engaging young people is challenging. How can you solve the problem of young people „getting bored” of old things?

Accessing EU funding (e.g. infrastructure for buildings) is not easy (e.g. buildings are often “half-completed”). It can be demonstrated through a single pilot (EU project) that things work and often after that the local politicians are easier to be convinced.

“Most of the people want to host new people interested in culture.”

Victor Nagy (Hungary, participant)

FINDINGS ON SOLUTIONS

A series of relevant examples discussed included:

- Family meetings & story-telling. Children playing with grandparents (key).
- „Dark Festival” (hiking with light)
- Getting „green” with a Common Fridge (with the help of the Municipality)

- Rebuilding local buildings in Portugal. “Village of Portugal” rewards – opening local market (from *Jorge Miranda, Portugal*)
- Eco-tourism initiative (*Bogdan Bucur*) to overcome tourism overflow.
- To address traffic congestion during summer peak tourism period (*Ostana, Italy*): Hypervisibility (requests to tourists to park their cars further down and not to drive to the top).
- Cultural activities to offer. New activities planned (e.g. from spring to autumn), extended season– *Rigas Zafeiriou (Kythera, Greece)*
- To send little news during the year also helps (*Tom Jones, Wales*)



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, NEXT STEPS

Local ownership is important. At the same time, sometimes, there is need for ‘catalysts’ from outside. Identity and “knowing your place” are often at the heart.

Involvement & development of people is important. See the needs (also of the future inhabitants). Share responsibility (including engagement of old and young people)

Through the “**Vision**”, you can go from ‘5 towards 100’ engaged people

What kind of tourists to attract? Sustainability is important (building on local resources food/ forests)

Identifying funding remains a challenge.

“Rural heritage is SMART when it is: integrational, sustainable and based in the community.”

HOW TO **PRESERVE NATURAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE** WHILE ENTERING A MODERN AGE (INCLUDING DEALING WITH MASS TOURISM)?



Rural heritage is smart when it is well-based in community...
intergenerational and sustainable.



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