

FOUNDATIONAL INQUIRIES IN CREATIVE TOURISM ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

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A JOINT PROJECT OF

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE
ARTS CENTRE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	3
Authors & Acknowledgements	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
Introduction	6
About Creative Coast	7
Project Objectives	11
RESEARCH PROCESS AND OUTCOMES	12
Global Research	13
Market Scan	16
Methodology	16
Community Consultation	18
A 'Made-Here' Definition	22
Recommended Next Steps	25
APPENDIX 1: GLOBAL RESEARCH	27
APPENDIX 2: CREATIVE SECTOR ANALYSIS	31
APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION	33
APPENDIX 4: ADVISORY CIRCLE MEMBERS BIOS	35
APPENDIX 5: CONTRIBUTOR BIOS	36

AUTHORS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional lands of the a, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Coast Salish peoples. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities, honouring their land and sovereignty rights, and pledge to walk alongside the First Peoples of so-called Vancouver Island with gratitude and respect.

Hych'ka Siem, Kleco Kleco, Gilakas'la, Thank you.

Karen A Bannister (she/her) was born on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe people, treaty territory of Fort William First Nation. She is a settler of Finnish and Irish descent. With a background in theatre from Queen's University, Karen completed a post-graduate certificate in Arts Administration. She holds a Master's degree in Studies in Comparative Literature & Art from Brock University and has authored books and research papers on arts-health intersections, with a particular interest in memoir and illness. Throughout her career, Karen has held various positions within the arts and tourism sectors, including roles with the Shaw Festival Theatre, Canadian Stage Company, Crimson Coast Dance, and The Old School House Arts Centre. Karen served as Director of Marketing and later as VP of Operations at Tourism Vancouver Island (now 4VI). An ardent advocate for the economic and social benefits of arts engagement, Karen currently works as a Project Manager with Creative Coast.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vancouver Island, with its vibrant creative workforce and thriving tourism industry, presents a unique opportunity to explore the convergence of the creative and tourism sectors. Designed by Creative Coast and funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, this project serves as the initial exploration into this intersection—with the goals of defining Creative Tourism for the Vancouver Island Region¹, identifying existing and emerging Creative Tourism products, and making recommendations to support the development of future Creative Tourism opportunities.

Creative Tourism, recognized globally as a sustainable approach to tourism development, offers destinations like Vancouver Island a pathway to adapt and innovate amidst challenges such as the global climate crisis and market saturation. By providing tourists with enriching experiences while minimizing environmental impacts, Creative Tourism becomes a crucial tool for destination management, emphasizing investment in local communities and creative entrepreneurs.

The project's methodology involved community consultation through an Advisory Circle, broader industry engagement with key stakeholders, and academic research. Insights from these sources highlighted the potential of Creative Tourism to support economic growth, cultural preservation, and social well-being on Vancouver Island.

Key discussions centered around the need for economic practices that enrich local communities, strategies to avoid overtourism while promoting year-round stability, and the importance of holistic experience design. Participants emphasized inclusivity, diversity, and the empowerment of underrepresented groups, advocating for equitable representation and support within the creative and tourism industries.

This report situates local engagement within a comprehensive global analysis of existing research and case studies towards a dynamic definition of Creative Tourism on Vancouver Island, and identifies next steps in building out Creative Tourism products. Tangible outcomes of the report include: a community-centred/localized definition of Creative Tourism, key themes and ideas to inform future planning and contribute to global scholarship, as well as specific recommendations to the tourism and creative sectors for next steps. Participants expressed a desire for continued dialogue and collaboration beyond the project timeline.

¹ The Vancouver Island Region comprises Vancouver Island and the surrounding Rural Islands in the Salish Sea. When this report uses the term "Vancouver Island" it is intended to be inclusive of the Rural Islands.

INTRODUCTION

Vancouver Island's natural beauty—its rugged coastlines, temperate climate, and expansive forests—renders it a highly desirable destination for both residents and visitors alike. Spanning 32,100 square kilometers, it stands as the largest island on North America's West Coast, comparable in size to Taiwan or roughly half the area of Ireland. The Island's geographic expanse includes 20 surrounding rural islands, together contributing to a rich regional tapestry of landscapes and cultures. Since time immemorial, Vancouver Island has been home to 53 First Nations.

Vancouver Island's current population exceeds 800,000, with over half concentrated in the bustling Greater Victoria Area. Yet, beyond urban centres like Victoria and Nanaimo, rural communities define much of Island life.

Economically, Vancouver Island pivots around key sectors such as forestry, fishing, and tourism, serving as primary drivers of regional employment. However, amidst this economic framework lies an underleveraged segment: the arts community (hereinafter referred to as the Creative Sector) and its contributions to the Creative Economy. The Creative Economy, one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, includes the creation, production, and distribution of cultural, artistic, and innovative goods and services.² Vancouver Island and the surrounding rural islands boast an impressive density of artists, comprising at least 4% of the labour force, notably four times the national proportion of employment³. Despite this abundance, the integration of the Creative Sector and Creative Economy into economic development strategies remains underexplored.

Within the broader narrative of Vancouver Island's economic and social development, the Creative Sector exists as an underutilized asset—a sector ripe for exploration and integration into strategic planning, promising both economic dividends and community and cultural resilience. A logical opportunity for optimizing this potential presents itself within Vancouver Island's tourism industry.

Tourism, mirroring global trends, is evolving in response to the multifaceted challenges shaping our current era. Over the past decade, certain destinations (globally and locally) have witnessed unsustainable levels of tourism growth, leading to terms like 'overtourism' entering the lexicon. Globally, researchers now quantify the environmental footprint of tourism, with a 2018 study revealing that travel between 2009 and 2013 contributed approximately 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions.⁴

2 UNESCO. (last updated 2023). "Cutting Edge | The Creative Economy: Moving in from the Sidelines."

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-creative-economy-moving-sidelines>

3 Creative Coast. (2021). All Islands Impact Study. <https://www.creativecoast.ca/impact>

4 Lenzen, M., Sun, YY., Faturay, F., et al. The carbon footprint of global tourism. *Nature Climate Change* 8, 522-528 (2018). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0141-x>

In 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, providing a shared blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability. This agenda outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), crucial for addressing various global challenges, emphasizing the interconnectedness of efforts to address poverty, inequality, health, education, economic growth, climate change, and environmental preservation.⁵

When tourism transcends mere profit-seeking objectives, it becomes a catalyst for positive social and economic change within communities. This ethos of destination management as a 'force for good' epitomizes the approach embraced by 4VI (formerly Tourism Vancouver Island), further positioning it as an ideal collaborator for exploring Creative Tourism. The Creative Sector holds immense transformative potential to improve equality and social good within communities.

Artists and artisans, often referred to as 'creative entrepreneurs,' play a crucial role in shaping communities' living culture and place identity. Healthy communities thrive on a vibrant Creative Sector and cultural engagement opportunities, fostering inclusivity, social equality, and individual empathy. Creativity forms the bedrock of innovative thinking that propels our world forward. In a competitive tourism landscape, a unique place identity serves as a standout feature, attracting conscientious travellers, contributing to geographical dispersion, and increasing visitor yield while maintaining sustainable visitor volume.

Access to the revenue potential of the tourism industry can enable more creative entrepreneurs to build viable livelihoods from their talent and skills. Despite their abundance in the Vancouver Island Region, many creative entrepreneurs continue to live below the poverty line or work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

This project aims to identify and explore cross-sectoral partnership opportunities between the creative and tourism sectors, focusing on collaborative initiatives that can mutually benefit both sectors.

ABOUT CREATIVE COAST

Initiated in 2019 as a working group comprised of arts councils across the Vancouver Island/Rural Islands Region, Creative Coast has evolved into an experimental space where diverse voices come together to conduct ground-breaking research, pilot regional solutions to filling systemic gaps in support and service to creative entrepreneurs, and soften siloes between the arts, tourism, and business sectors.

We exist to amplify our region's incredible creative talent and catalyze possibilities. Our foremost goal is to enhance the health, well-being, and financial security of artists, addressing systemic issues through systems thinking, models of care and community, and technology.

⁵ United Nations. (no date). "The 17 goals." <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

We believe creative economic development represents a just pathway to economic inclusion, and prioritize structurally underserved creative populations, including IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ folx, women, and youth.

In the past five years we have developed strong relationships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous creative and economic communities, and made great strides to connect the disconnected - the IBPOC, 2SLGBTQ+ and rural/remote creative populations underserved by existing arts and business development infrastructure.

Our collaborators include the Region's 30 settler-focused arts councils and two Indigenous arts and culture hubs, as well as a number of representatives from local and national arts, tourism and economic development organizations. We also work with academic institutions such as Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and Vancouver Island University.

Since 2022, The Old School House Arts Centre has functioned as the host organization for Creative Coast's coordination and implementation, including administering \$1.5 million in grant-funded projects. In 2024, Creative Coast will incorporate as a non-profit organization.

CASE STUDY: PORTUGAL'S CREATOUR PROJECT

Situation

In recent years, tourism has grown in Portugal and it is now a key economic driver. However, this growth is heavily concentrated in major cities like Lisbon and Porto, as well as in popular coastal regions like the Algarve. Concerns about over tourism and the homogenization of tourism experiences are emerging internationally. Domestically, there's a pressing need to find sustainable development options for smaller, remote communities. Turismo Portugal, the national tourism agency, aims to divert tourists from overcrowded areas to other regions. This presents an opportunity for smaller communities to attract visitors by offering unique experiences tailored to niche markets, while prioritizing the well-being of local residents and ensuring local control and benefits.

Solution

CREATOUR is a multidisciplinary research-and-application project aimed at developing creative tourism in small cities and rural areas of Portugal. Running from 2016 to 2020, it involved five research centers and 40 pilot organizations. The project promoted creative tourism as a sustainable, small-scale activity, blending local culture with interactive experiences. It focused on capacity-building, training, and marketing to support local development. By fostering collaborations among artisans, entrepreneurs, and local communities, CREATOUR aimed to revitalize cultural heritage, enhance community engagement, and offer authentic, immersive tourism experiences. The project's findings highlight the feasibility and potential of creative tourism for cultural and economic growth in smaller locales.

Strategic Priorities

CREATOUR prioritizes capacity-building, training, and networking to support local creative tourism development in smaller places. Its overarching strategies aim to enhance community engagement, cultural sustainability, and local economic growth, while promoting innovative, place-based tourism models. As a research-and-application project, CREATOUR's strategic priorities include fostering research-practice collaboration, developing spaces for knowledge exchange, and enabling practitioners to act as co-researchers. The project emphasizes the development / application side, requiring researchers to focus on implementation alongside practitioners. CREATOUR also aims to build sustainable partnerships between public and private stakeholders, diversify tourism offers, and leverage new technologies for contemporary creative experiences.

What Worked

Community Engagement:

CREATOUR successfully engaged local communities, empowering them to lead the design and implementation of creative tourism initiatives. Its bottom-up approach fostered strong local ownership and ensured that tourism offers were authentic and reflective of local culture. Community engagement also facilitated the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage, enhancing the social and cultural fabric of the participating regions.

Knowledge exchange and collaboration:

The project created effective platforms for knowledge exchange and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and local stakeholders. Regular IdeaLabs and annual conferences provided opportunities for sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and co-creating solutions. This collaborative environment contributed to the development of innovative, place-based tourism models and strengthened the networks necessary for sustainable creative tourism.

What Was Challenging

Sustainability of Initiatives:

Despite initial successes, some creative tourism initiatives faced challenges in achieving long-term sustainability. Limited financial resources, inadequate business models, and insufficient ongoing support hindered the ability of some projects to maintain operations beyond the project's duration. Ensuring sustainable funding and robust business planning is crucial for the continued success of such initiatives.

Marketing and Visibility:

The project encountered difficulties in effectively marketing and promoting creative tourism offers to a broader audience. Limited marketing resources and expertise among local participants resulted in lower visibility and reach, particularly to international tourists. Enhanced marketing strategies, including digital marketing and partnerships with established tourism networks, are needed to improve the visibility and attractiveness of creative tourism destinations.

Lessons We Can Take

Grounded + non-extractive

Creative Tourism presents an opportunity to realize social benefits that reach beyond revenue sources for those entrepreneurs or organizations offering creative tourism experiences.

The project coordinator underscored the importance of this in writing "CREATOUR pilots are encouraged to think about multi-dimensional community benefits relating to their activities, and to build this into the core of their business planning (rather than merely consider it as an "add-on" later on)."⁶

Creative tourism should be deeply rooted in the unique cultural and geographic contexts of each locale. CREATOUR's success was partly due to its emphasis on place-based approaches that leverage local history, traditions, and cultural assets. This approach not only preserves and revitalizes local heritage but also provides visitors with authentic, immersive experiences. Tourism activities designed around local specificities can differentiate destinations and attract visitors seeking genuine, meaningful interactions.

Relational + co-created

CREATOUR pilots were proposed by entrepreneurs and organizations within the communities, emphasizing a bottom-up approach to experience development. The project researchers identified the extent of support required to address business start-up issues and the importance of networking for visibility, knowledge sharing and capacity development.⁷ The extent of support required was cited by project organizers as an element not fully anticipated in the initial project plan.

Networked + for the good of communities

Establishing and maintaining collaborative networks is essential for creative tourism development, particularly in rural and small city contexts. CREATOUR highlighted the value of fostering connections among local organizations, artisans, and tourism stakeholders. These networks facilitate knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and collective marketing efforts, enhancing the visibility and viability of creative tourism initiatives. Effective networks also support the development of a community of practice, fostering ongoing collaboration and innovation.

Creative tourism can significantly contribute to local sustainable development by integrating cultural, social, and economic benefits. CREATOUR illustrated that small-scale, community-engaged tourism activities can stimulate local economies, enhance cultural sustainability, and improve community well-being. By fostering bottom-up, culturally sensitive development,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Duxbury, N. (2021). Catalyzing Creative Tourism in Small Cities and Rural Areas in Portugal: The CREATOUR Approach (pp. 27-59). In K. Scherf (Ed.), *Creative Tourism in Smaller Communities: Place, Culture, and Local Representation*. University of Calgary Press.

creative tourism initiatives can create lasting positive impacts, supporting the broader goals of regional sustainability and resilience. This holistic approach requires ongoing support and strategic policy frameworks to thrive.

Supported + communities of care

CREATOUR demonstrated the importance of dedicated capacity-building, training, and mentorship for the successful development of creative tourism initiatives. Empowering local artisans and entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge is crucial for sustaining tourism activities. Capacity-building efforts should focus on business sustainability models and creative project management, ensuring that local participants can independently develop, implement, maintain, and evolve tourism offers that reflect their cultural heritage and local specificities.

Key resource for this case study: *CREATOUR: Catalyzing creative tourism in small cities and rural areas*. Nancy Duxbury and Silvia Silva. The book is available as a free PDF in Portuguese here: <https://monographs.uc.pt/iuc/catalog/book/273>

An English translation of the Introduction chapter, “Boosting creative tourism in small towns and rural areas of Portugal: the research-action approach of the CREATOUR project” is available here: https://creatour.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/livro-creatour_Introducao-EN-21x27-Digital.pdf

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Vancouver Island stands in a distinctive position to investigate the generative intersection of the creative and tourism sectors. Boasting a creative workforce comprising at least 4% of the region’s population⁸ and a thriving tourism industry, it embodies a dual persona as both a creative hub and a globally recognized destination.

This project, Foundational Inquiries in Creative Tourism on Vancouver Island, marks the initial foray into interconnecting these sectors in a symbiotic weave. The project convened advisors to delve into the realms of what is known, what currently exists, and what possibilities lie ahead. This project report situates local engagement within a comprehensive global analysis of existing research and case studies towards a shared definition of Creative Tourism on Vancouver Island and the identification of next steps in building out Creative Tourism products.

The subject of Creative Tourism has garnered global research attention and is acknowledged as a sustainable approach to tourism development. It addresses the imperative for destinations to adapt and innovate amidst the challenges posed by the global climate crisis and the need for differentiation in a saturated market. By fulfilling tourists’ aspirations for richer and more meaningful experiences while minimizing environmental and infrastructural impacts, Creative Tourism emerges as a vital solution for destination management. It recognizes the significance of creative entrepreneurs in shaping the identity of a place and advocates for tourism to fulfill its critical obligation to invest in local communities.

⁸ Creative Coast. (2021). All Islands Impact Study. <https://www.creativecoast.ca/impact>

Creative Tourism supports a vibrant visitor economy through place identity; immersive, meaningful and authentically local activities and souvenirs; and reduced economic leakage when a marketplace allows tourism operators to procure products locally from creative entrepreneurs. The benefits of Creative Tourism include:

- Creative experiences that appeal to high yield environmentally conscious travellers, who represent a target market of interest to sustainably-minded destinations.⁹
- Creative experiences that contribute to a unique identity and brand for destinations.
- A vibrant creative economy that attracts more creative talent. In turn, this yields improved quality of life for all residents who benefit from access to creative activities and infrastructure in their community.
- Increase of knowledge and skill development facilitated by cross-sectoral contact between the Tourism and Creative Sectors.¹⁰
- Marketplace opportunity for creative entrepreneurs to generate new revenue opportunities from the visitor economy.

Overall, it is hoped the project can kickstart initiatives to foster vibrant sustainable Creative Tourism initiatives on Vancouver Island.

RESEARCH PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

Information and ideas were gathered from three sources:

- Global Research through a scan of literature on the topic of Creative Tourism and the development of a series of case studies;
- Market Scan of a small number of readily discoverable businesses and organizations offering creative experiences for tourists on Vancouver Island; and
- Community Consultation through the formation of an Advisory Circle and through broader Industry Consultation with the Regional and Provincial Destination Management Organization.

Details on the methods involved in each of these steps are outlined below.

Following this initial work, Creative Coast's core team met over three occasions to discuss and summarize consultation and research findings.

9 Tan, S.-K., Kung, S.-F., & Luh, D.-B. (2013). A model of 'creative experience' in creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 153–174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.12.002>

10 Richards, G. (2018). Tourism, An underestimated driving force for the Creative Economy. *Revista Turismo em Análise*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/issn.1984-4867.v29i3p387-395>

Global Research

Methodology

A grant from the Cultural Human Resources Council of Canada allowed Creative Coast to hire a Research Assistant, Halley Gavey, a student at Vancouver Island University. Halley conducted a literature review

Findings

Creative Tourism has emerged as a response to the shifting preferences in travel spurred by the rise of the experience economy. Pine & Gilmore introduced the concept of the experience economy, suggesting that people increasingly prioritize memorable experiences over traditional services.¹¹ This shift has made mass tourism less desirable, with travellers seeking authentic, engaging, and unique experiences that foster a deeper connection with destinations and their cultures.¹² Traditional cultural tourism often focuses on tangible aspects like monuments and museums, but Creative Tourism aims to share the intangible aspects such as local traditions, customs, and cuisine.¹³

As initially defined by Richards & Raymond, Creative Tourism offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in destination-specific courses and learning experiences.¹⁴ However, there is a wide-spread recognition that Creative Tourism should embrace the uniqueness of each destination, with the community playing a central role in its development and decision-making.¹⁵ Examples of Creative Tourism experiences include craft workshops, fine arts workshops, hands-on gastronomy (e.g., farm-to-table tours, culinary workshops), and participatory creative festivals, among others.

Guo et al. identify six components of Creative Tourism: innovation, co-creation, interaction, personalization, sustainability, and exploration.¹⁶ Co-creation is particularly emphasized in two ways. First, it allows consumers to actively participate in and shape their experiences, making them unique and irreproducible. Second, this bottom-up and participatory approach involves local and regional stakeholders, fostering collaboration and the development of destination-specific Creative Tourism experiences. By engaging both visitors and stakeholders in the co-creation process, Creative Tourism can unlock the full potential of unique, sustainable, and memorable experiences.

Creative Tourism offers numerous benefits, especially for rural communities and small cities. It contributes to sustainable development goals, differentiates destinations, combats seasonality,

11 Pine B.J., Gilmore J.H. (1998). Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review* July-August. <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

12 Skift. *The Rise of Experiential Travel*. (2014). <https://skift.com/insight/the-rise-of-experiential-travel/>

13 Ilincic, M., Benefits of Creative Tourism—The Tourist Perspective. (2014). https://www.academia.edu/10102778/Benefits_of_Creative_Tourism_The_Tourist_Perspective

14 As cited in: Richards, G. (2020). Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (85), Article 102922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922>

15 Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al. (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

16 Guo, R., Kou, I.T., Jiang, Q. (2023). Unlocking the creative potential: A case study of Luoyang City's Creative Tourism development. *Sustainability*, 15(20). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152014710>

and promotes longer stays.¹⁷ Additionally, it can lead to the dispersion of tourists, spreading revenue and creating jobs in less-travelled regions. Furthermore, Creative Tourism provides economic opportunities for struggling local artisans and preserves and can inject new energy and attention to local practices and local traditions, fostering community empowerment and social cohesion.

Despite its benefits, Creative Tourism also presents challenges. If not executed properly, it can lead to gentrification, commodification of culture, and loss of community uniqueness.¹⁸ Therefore, it is essential to consider all stakeholders and develop Creative Tourism from a bottom-up approach that prioritizes the needs and values of the community. By addressing these considerations, Creative Tourism has the potential to contribute to sustainable development economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally while providing authentic and meaningful experiences for tourists.

A complete summary of the Global Research findings is included as Appendix 1.

CASE STUDY- PORTUGAL'S CERDEIRA VILLAGE

Situation

Cerdeira is a small historic village of schist houses in the Lousã mountains of Portugal which was built by farmers 300 years ago.¹⁹ Schist houses are a trademark of the region due to the abundance of schist rock. Sadly, this village was abandoned in the 70's due to lack of employment opportunities.²⁰ This meant that the rich culture and traditions of the village were also left behind and forgotten.

Solution

In 2000, a group of people decided to recover some of the houses in the abandoned village using local techniques with local supplies.²¹ They successfully revived 10 houses without changing their original architecture. Additionally, they reached out to artisans to design unique items specifically for each house inspired by the village and the Lousã mountains.²² As a way to continue to bring life back into this village and share its culture, they turned to creative tourism. Today, Cerdeira is known as the "home of creativity" offering artist residencies, traditional creative workshops, creative experiences, and retreats.²³ Other infrastructure has been built/ re-built to support these functions such as shared studios, a library, a gallery, a hostel, café, gardens, and a community oven.²⁴ The village also hosts an annual festival called "Elementos

17 Richards, G. (2019). Creative tourism: Opportunities for smaller places? *Tourism & Management Studies*, 15(SI), 7-10. <https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2019.15SI01>; Duarte, E. A., Marujo, N., & Simões, J. M. (2022). Creative Tourism as a promoter of the sustainable development goals - Central Alentejo. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 329-341 Páginas. <https://doi.org/10.34624/RTD.V39I0.27283>; Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al. (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>; Akdemir, H., Sousa De São José, J. M., & Gonçalves, M. A. P. R. (2023). Social inclusion of older artisans through creative tourism. *Anatolia*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2023.2299447>; Pine B.J., Gilmore J.H., Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review* July-August, (1998). <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

18 Ferreira-Seoane, Llorca-Ponce, & Rius-Sorolla. (2023). Measuring the sustainability of the orange economy. *Sustainability*, 14(6). DOI:10.3390/su14063400; Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al. (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

19 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. "About Us." Accessed March 14, 2024. <https://www.cerdeirahomeforcreativity.com/art-village#what-is-cerdeira>

20 Res Artis. "Cerdeira - Home For Creativity." Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://resartis.org/listings/cerdeira-village-art-craft/>

21 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. "About Us."

22 Res Artis. "Cerdeira - Home For Creativity."

23 Green Stays. "Cerdeira - Home For Creativity." Accessed March 22, 2024.

24 Silvia Ombellini. "Cerdeira, Portugal: The New Life of Small Villages in the Hinterland." Accessed March 14, 2024. <https://ecobnb.com/blog/2019/03/cerdeira-portugal/>

à Solta” meaning arts meet nature. The streets of the village turn into a gallery of work from artists from around the world, there are also interactive exhibits, shows, and workshops.²⁵

Strategic Priorities

The fundamental priorities of Cerdiera are ecological sustainability and social responsibility. They value local products and resources, manage waste, and use arts and culture as a form of connection with the local community.²⁶ As a result, Cerdeira has received the European Eco-Label certification as well as the Green Key certification for ecological excellence.²⁷ The original purpose behind bringing this village back to life was to preserve the history, traditions, and culture of the area. This includes repopulating the village with people to share the intangible cultural aspects, and providing job opportunities for local residents. Considering all of this, regenerative tourism seems to be the priority. This goes beyond sustainability to a way of revitalizing the community and culture. Cerdeira also focuses on providing a space for escapism, inspiration, and to transport back to simpler times. To contribute to this they have chosen not to install tvs in the accommodations and not to overdesign the village.²⁸

What Worked

There are now 27 unique schist villages in Portugal that have been recovered by locals as sustainable tourism destinations.²⁹ All of which were revitalized using traditional techniques and with the same strategic priorities as Cerdeira. Although, each village has differentiated its tourism products based on what makes it special. Through offering houses as accommodation, Cerdeira promotes longer stays in the village. In fact, there are times when they require a 3 night booking minimum to encourage longer stays.³⁰ This results in more economic benefit for the community.

Lessons We Can Take

Grounded + non-extractive

Cerdeira exemplifies how creative tourism can regenerate rural economies. The village’s transformation from abandonment to a tourism destination demonstrates the potential for other rural areas. Visitors experience local culture through traditional buildings, thoughtfully designed interiors, and minimal modern technology. Interactions with locals enrich the immersive experience, showcasing the village’s heritage and providing income for residents.

Relational + co-created

Local involvement in rebuilding the village using traditional methods fostered co-creation. The creative experiences offered to visitors also promote co-creation through artistic activities. This collaborative approach ensures that the development remains rooted in local culture while

25 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. “Elementos à Solta – Art Meets Nature.” Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://www.cerdeirahomeforcreativity.com/elementos-a-solta-festival>

26 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. “About Us.”

27 Green Stays. “Cerdeira – Home For Creativity.”

<https://greenstays.pt/hot%C3%A9is/cerdeira-home-for-creativity/?lang=en>

28 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. “About Us.”

29 Center of Portugal. “Schist Villages.” Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://centerofportugal.com/destination/schist-villages>

30 Cerdeira Home For Creativity. “Accommodation.” Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://www.cerdeirahomeforcreativity.com/accommodation>

inviting innovation and modern perspectives and art work.

Networked + for the good of communities:

Cerdeira emphasizes fostering connections and building relationships within the broader community and with external partners. By integrating local artisans, tourists, and a broader creative tourism network, Cerdeira ensures that economic growth benefits the entire community while preserving its cultural heritage.

Supported + communities of care:

The village provides a supportive environment for artists and creatives, aligning them with tailored business development resources based on their growth stages. Strategic incubation and promotion help more creatives develop their projects, supported by a Community of Care model that emphasizes individual growth within a nurturing community framework.

Market Scan

Methodology

At the outset of this project, a brief market scan was conducted to assess the current range of Creative Tourism offerings on Vancouver Island. It was assumed the scan would return a significant number and variety, given the density of tourism businesses and artists/creative entrepreneurs in the region³¹. Further, it was imagined this scan would form the foundation of a catalogue or database of Creative Tourism products.

Criteria for this scan focused on two main ways tourism businesses and artists might intersect:

1. Creative entrepreneurs who market products or experiences to tourists;
2. Tourism businesses who offer creative products or experiences to tourists (Examples include tour guides showcasing artists' studios, hotels selling local art in their lobby, or stores that feature local artisans).

This brief endeavour revealed over 40 products potentially providing creative experiences to visitors. However, the exercise also shed light on several significant challenges, which led us to pause this scan and defer the further development and sharing of a database of products as a recommendation beyond this report. Through this curtailed process, valuable insights into the challenges present in the marketplace were gained.

Findings

This cataloging exercise required us to assume the role of curators, evaluating each potential entry for suitability. In hindsight, since our definition of 'Creative Tourism' was still being developed through a process of co-creation, it was premature to assume this curatorial role. We realized that our framework for identifying who qualifies as an artist and what constitutes a

³¹ According to a 2017 Regional Profile by Destination British Columbia, Vancouver Island boasts 3,045 tourism businesses. Creative Coast's research estimates around 35,000 artists reside in the region, a number that likely reaches 55,000 when considering the broader creative industries.

product was too narrow. Additionally, traditional notions of 'readiness' and 'marketability' within the tourism industry often fail to accommodate the diverse and dynamic nature of creative work. These terms should be re-examined to ensure they do not impose restrictive barriers on artists who may not fit conventional business models but still offer valuable cultural and artistic contributions.

Our findings suggest the need to expand our understanding and definitions to better align with the realities and potentials of creative entrepreneurs. We must question and possibly redefine what 'market readiness' means in the context of Creative Tourism. Instead of applying rigid criteria, we should focus on creating flexible and inclusive frameworks that recognize the unique processes and outputs of artists. This approach would allow for more authentic and varied cultural experiences, bridging the gap between market demand and the diverse supply of creative offerings, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and representative creative tourism sector.

SIDEBAR: CO-CREATION AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Our concept of co-creation in cross-sectoral work is informed by our collective past and current work, roles, and social identities. In the case of tourism and art, some of us hold dual-identities as tourism professionals and artists/cultural workers. All of us work within the modalities of systems change, gender theory, anti-oppressive research frameworks, and democratic knowledge production. These are theories that allow us to examine with curiosity the coming-together of different perspectives and the way intent, context, language, and environment mold outcomes of purposive dynamic collaboration.

We believe that artists approach production of artistic work with an intent to create. In our past and current work providing entrepreneur support to artists this means the language and modalities of business are not familiar, comfortable (or even desired) labels. In some cases this barrier can be overcome with practical education. More and more, however, we believe there is a crucial need to shift language. It is not (just) to achieve greater inclusion. Rather, the language and modalities of neoliberal capitalism are sites of violence for many structurally oppressed communities. If we are to achieve an inclusive dialogue, we need to see knowledge production itself as a site of co-creation and not assume shared understanding before collaboration begins.

The tourism industry is like many codified sectors. It comes with its own concept of "tourism product" (most often evaluated by how much of a businesses' total revenue comes from visitors), and "market readiness" (a tangible scale of preparedness and accessibility a business must achieve), and this can be limiting for many artists, many of whom are actively looking to exit systems of power that ask them to shape-shift to check boxes. While we appreciate the practicality of being reliably located, open for business, and with an experience that can easily be defined (and therefore promoted), these are in fact ingredients that require substantial financial, social, mental, and skill input to build and deliver. These then become barriers to entry. Space to create (and therefore welcome people to be pedestrians, participants, and purchasers) was raised as a significant barrier during our Advisory discussions. Our interest, therefore, is in finding the solutions in this tangle that is not simply "the wall is built and you must climb it."

While databases, apps, websites, and marketing campaigns like artist studio tours are helpful they will only ever amplify those who can already show up, or more accurately show up within a select and narrow criteria.³²

What is problematic about this? Beyond perpetuating exclusionary communities and economies, this limited approach is unlikely to provide visitors with the authentic, local, artistic experiences they seek. In the gap between market demand and supply, disingenuous products often emerge (see cultural appropriation sidebar). At best, this tarnishes the destination's identity; at worst, it inflicts further capitalist violence on structurally marginalized communities (in Canada, this primarily affects Indigenous artists). Additionally, we have observed a dilution of the definition of 'art' in the effort to generate sufficient content.

We advocate for a co-creative process where participants set aside their expectations, criteria, and even pre-existing knowledge, keeping them only in the background where they can still be accessed if needed. For this project and those it hopefully breeds, we ask(ed) tourism professionals to engage without predefined definitions or readiness scales, and for artists to bring their imagination for economic participation without preconceived barriers. This approach prepares the ground for genuine possibilities, allowing for shared knowledge to be developed collaboratively. When disconnects arise, it is hoped that this nurturing space can generate an electric pathway to suture a connection.

In summary, a Market Scan in this project felt almost contradictory to our co-creation approach, not only that we were putting the cart before the horse, but also undermining the very nature of the inquiry.

Community Consultation

Methodology

As a pivotal aspect of the project, an Advisory Group comprising five industry experts and stakeholders was convened to adapt global definitions of Creative Tourism to the unique context of Vancouver Island. Participants were identified by the Project Leads in consultation with 4VI. Efforts were made to assemble a diverse circle of individuals (by geography, identity, and professional roles/experiences).

The Advisory Circle members were:

- Assetou Coulibaly, Project Manager at Accent Inns & Founder and Curator at Chiwara Co
- Calum Matthews, VP Sustainability & Strategy at 4VI
- Jason Griffin, Owner at Tour Salt Spring
- John Hughes, Executive Director at Craigdarroch Castle
- Megan Whonnock, Co-Founder at Aunty Collective

³² Note the potential powerful role of intermediaries - as a bridge between what the practicalities the system may always require and the artist community. Intermediaries include tour guides, shop keepers, and hospitality businesses that contract artists to provide workshops or provide "pop-up space."

Bios for each Advisory Circle member are enclosed in Appendix 4.

The Project Leads met with each Advisory Circle Member one-on-one. The conversations were transcribed.

The Advisory Circle then assembled twice, each meeting lasting approximately 90 minutes, for group discussions. Also in attendance were Creative Coast team members Erica Mattson and Illana Hester. These conversations were also transcribed.

The Project Leads also met with Anthony Everett and Calum Matthews of 4VI to broadly discuss the tourism industry on Vancouver Island, and to define key questions for the Advisory Circle one-on-one meetings and group discussions. The Project Leads met again with Calum Matthews after the group discussions and research was complete to review and test a summary of findings.

The Project Leads also met with representatives of Destination British Columbia, who provided initial contributions to the concept of Creative Tourism.

Findings

Through a series of one-on-one and group meetings held between January and March 2024, Advisory Circle participants engaged in profound dialogue and reflection, despite their diverse perspectives. Their overarching objective was to foster a vibrant and sustainable Creative Tourism industry on the island.

Individual discussions provided a deep exploration of sector-specific nuances and challenges. Tourism advisors highlighted concerns regarding seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers and advocated for sustainable practices to ensure long-term economic viability while maintaining community integrity.

Representatives from the Creative Sector emphasized the urgent need to support local artists and creators, particularly Indigenous, rural/remote, and BPOC arts communities facing significant barriers.

Subsequent group meetings aimed to synthesize these diverse perspectives into a cohesive direction. Participants focused on crafting a 'made-here' definition of Creative Tourism aligned with Vancouver Island's values and cultural identity. They explored how tourism could serve as a catalyst for positive community development, emphasizing cultural preservation and social wellness. Additionally, they identified obstacles such as market readiness and visibility for creatives.

Emerging themes from these discussions included the importance of economic practices that enrich local communities, a balanced approach to avoid overtourism while promoting year-round economic stability, and the creation of 'communities of care' prioritizing holistic growth. Furthermore, comprehensive experience design integrating creative encounters throughout the

visitor journey and strategic incubation and promotion to assist more creatives in entering the tourism space were highlighted.

Participants emphasized the need for inclusivity and diversity, advocating for broader representation and equal opportunities within both industries. They deliberated on success metrics and expressed a commitment to maintaining networks and developing an action plan to operationalize goals and strategies. Ongoing dialogue and robust relationships were deemed essential for sustaining collaborative efforts towards realizing the vision of a thriving Creative Tourism industry on Vancouver Island.

SIDEBAR: COMMUNITIES OF CARE AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Communities of care are deeply invested in:

- The equitable representation and support of underrepresented groups, such as Indigenous artists and women of color.
- Economic practices that do not exploit but rather enrich the local community and its members.
- Empowerment through providing the necessary resources, support networks, and platforms for creatives to thrive without compromising their artistic integrity or cultural values.
- Strategies that align with the idea of a well-being economy, where the success of a tourism initiative is also measured by its positive impact on the local community's quality of life.
- Advocating for a shift away from purely profit-driven goals to a more compassionate and holistic model that considers the long-term health and vitality of the community, ensuring that the growth and changes brought about by tourism and creative activities genuinely benefit all members of the community.

SIDEBAR: INDIGENOUS ART, AUTHENTICITY AND CULTURAL THEFT

Travelers often cherish keepsakes as mementos of their journeys. According to data from Destination BC, retail spending in 2021 accounted for 24% of total tourism revenues, amounting to \$3 billion.³³ The demand for souvenirs presents local artisans with opportunities to generate income from the visitor market, given travellers' preference for authentic products that embody the essence of the places they visit. However, the souvenir industry grapples with significant challenges, notably regarding sustainability and cultural appropriation.

The 2022 Canadian documentary, "The Pretendians," sheds light on these issues, exposing a concerning trend of Indigenous art being misrepresented in tourist shops. Despite the allure of authenticity, a considerable portion of the Indigenous art sold turns out to be counterfeit. Investigative journalist Francesca Fionda, writing for The Discourse, delved into the souvenir market in Vancouver's Gastown district, a renowned tourism hub.³⁴ Her findings revealed that only 25% of the stores exclusively offered authentic items, while the majority—62.5%—featured

³³ Destination BC. 2021 Value of Tourism. (2021)

https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2023/02/2021-Value-of-Tourism-Snapshot_FINAL.pdf

³⁴ The Discourse. *Fake Indigenous Art is a Real Problem in Vancouver Stores*. (2019).

<https://thediscourse.ca/urban-nation/fake-art-investigatio>

both genuine and counterfeit goods side by side.³⁵

Journalist Riley Yesno underscores the harmful impact of this phenomenon, as individuals profit from the exploitation of Indigenous culture and products.³⁶ In her article series for The Discourse, Fionda interviews Indigenous artists, such as Shain Jackson, a Coast Salish artist who operates Spirit Works Limited. Through Jackson's perspective, Fionda conveys the deeper significance of cultural appropriation in souvenirs, as Indigenous art serves as a conduit for transmitting traditions and history across generations. Alysa Procida, executive director of the Inuit Art Foundation, underscores the importance of Indigenous communities retaining control over their cultural symbols, asserting that it is crucial for sovereignty and reconciliation efforts.³⁷

To learn more about cultural appropriation, including actions you can take: <https://www.reclaimindigenousarts.com/home>

CASE STUDY: LAPLAND FINLAND'S AUTHENTICITY APPROACH

In Lapland, Finland, indigenous-led creative tourism workshops have been effectively addressing the issue of inauthentic, mass-produced souvenirs by ensuring that items are certifiably authentic and locally made. These efforts are particularly focused on promoting Sámi culture through genuine artisanal products.

Key Initiatives:

Certification of Authenticity: The Sámi Duodji label is used to certify authentic Sámi handicrafts. This label guarantees that the products are made by Sámi artisans using traditional methods, ensuring that tourists purchase genuine and culturally significant items. This certification helps distinguish authentic local crafts from mass-produced imitations, promoting responsible tourism and supporting local artisans (Visit Finnish Lapland).

Sámi Cultural Centre Sajos: Located in Inari, the Sámi Cultural Centre Sajos offers a comprehensive look at traditional Sámi handicrafts. It provides visitors with opportunities to engage directly with Sámi artisans and learn about their craft traditions. This hands-on experience not only educates tourists but also supports the local economy by ensuring that the products sold are authentically made in Lapland (AFAR, Lapland North).

Ethical Guidelines and Sustainable Practices: The Finnish Sámi Parliament has established ethical guidelines for responsible tourism that are socially, culturally, ecologically, and economically sustainable. These guidelines aim to preserve Sámi culture and ensure that tourism activities benefit the local community while maintaining cultural integrity. This includes promoting locally made products and avoiding the commodification of Sámi culture (AFAR, Our Lapland).

By participating in these certified workshops and purchasing labeled products, tourists

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ CBC. *Fake Indigenous Art is the Tip of the Iceberg of Cultural Appropriation*. (2022). <https://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/the-passionate-eye/fake-indigenous-art-is-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-of-cultural-appropriation-1.6606937>

³⁷ The Discourse. *Fake Indigenous Art is a Real Problem in Vancouver Stores*. (2019). <https://thediscourse.ca/urban-nation/fake-art-investigation>

contribute to the preservation of Sámi culture and support sustainable economic practices in Lapland. These initiatives help ensure that the cultural heritage of the Sámi people is respected and that their traditional crafts are recognized and valued.

A 'MADE-HERE' DEFINITION

Our project aimed to establish a definition of Creative Tourism tailored to the unique context of Vancouver Island, informed by the needs and desires of its residents. Combining the themes that emerged from the Advisory Committee and the key ideas from Global Research, we arrive at the following working definition:

Creative Tourism offers immersive, authentic, and generative experiences where travellers actively participate in cultural and creative activities that are reflective of the unique identity of the destination and its residents. Creative Tourism on Vancouver Island advances four essential values:

1. **Grounded:** Creative Tourism uses a 'ground-up' approach to product and experience development, acknowledging and taking inspiration from the unique characteristics of each community. Every Creative Tourism experience is a manifestation of the local environment and its inhabitants. This defines an economic development practice that does not exploit and is non-extractive, but rather enriches the local community and its members.
2. **Relational:** In Creative Tourism, intentional 'under-designing' allows for a collaborative process of co-creation, where both creators and participants contribute to shaping the experience's outcomes. This deepens the connection between visitors and residents and increases visitors' appreciation of the places they visit.
3. **Networked:** In Creative Tourism, the emphasis lies on fostering connections and building relationships among all those involved in products and experiences. This entails respecting diverse approaches to collaboration and nurturing these connections over time. It emphasizes a Community of Care model that focuses on creating systems that not only sustain economic growth but are also 'for the good of the community' in ways that nurture and preserve social, cultural, and environmental health.
4. **Supported:** Creative Tourism products are cultivated within a supportive environment that aligns artists with tailored business development resources based on their individual stage of growth. This includes strategic incubation and promotion to assist more creatives to enter the tourism space. Here, the Community of Care model applies at the level of the individual.

Initiatives will be successful when there are:

1. Increases in the number of creatives that are earning revenue from participating in the Visitor Economy. (Measured via self-reported surveys and asset mapping exercises).
2. Increases in the number of underserved/disconnected creatives accessing services and

support throughout the region. (Measured by diversity of participants in programmes and by self-reported surveys).

3. Increases in awareness of creatives among visitors / Increased awareness of Vancouver Island as the region that's home to many creatives, and a remarkable place for visitors to come and have creative experiences. (Measured by destination perception studies).
4. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders on the definition, proposed solutions, and barriers to address. (Measured by number of meetings).
5. Increase in the number of stakeholders connecting across the Creative and Tourism sectors. (Measured by number of collaborations that result from efforts).

CASE STUDY: NEWFOUNDLAND'S FOGO ISLAND

Fogo Island, Newfoundland and Labrador - Canada

Situation

Fogo Island is a 300 square kilometer island off the northeast coast of Newfoundland. It is one of Canada's oldest communities, settled 400 years ago as a cod-fishing town. The island was a non-capital-accumulating society and was largely disconnected from the outside world for centuries.³⁸ For 350 years, Fogo Island revolved around cod fishing, until the industrialization of fisheries in the late 60's. Factory ships arrived in the North Atlantic and fished cod to the brink of ecological extinction. This meant that the entire community's way of life and their knowledge became useless. At this time, the Government of Newfoundland forced resettlement of all the small communities around the coast of Newfoundland. Fogo Island was the only community that didn't resettle due to a film program called "Challenge for Change" that gave a new light to the island.³⁹

Solution

The island ended up adapting to other species of fish and showed resilience to the changing times. Zita Cobb, an eighth-generation Fogo Islander established the Fogo Island Inn as a way to build an economy for the island. The inn presented the opportunity to leverage social business and design for cultural and economic revitalization. It also provided "relevance in the contemporary world" for the island.⁴⁰ It was designed with the culture of the island in mind, the idea that nothing should be put in a community that doesn't have to do with the community itself. The building was carefully thought out to feel modern but remind us of the history and traditions of the area. Additionally, it was made by Fogo Islanders. Every item inside the inn from the blankets to the chairs to the light fixtures were made on Fogo Island with the island and its past in mind. For example, a chair was designed for the inn which displays similarities to the island's old fishing boats, a nod to the ways of knowing on the island. The restaurant in the Inn serves only food found on the island. Every item including the juice served with breakfast is carefully considered. 100% of operating surpluses from the Inn are reinvested into the community.⁴¹

38 Fogo Island Inn. "Ancestors." <https://fogoislandinn.ca/our-island/ancestors/>

39 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Challenge_for_Change

40 Fogo Island Inn. "Small Places" <https://fogoislandinn.ca/our-island/small-places/>

41 Fogo Island Inn. "Small Places" <https://fogoislandinn.ca/our-island/small-places/>

Fogo Island Inn is not the only thing that has been developed on the island for economic and cultural sustainability. Other initiatives include studios, artist residency programmes, a furniture store, an art gallery, and a boatbuilding program which preserves traditional boat-making knowledge. They also implemented a programme which takes the idea of nutrition facts that we see on food items, but instead provides economic information for every item sold. At the moment of purchase the customer is able to see exactly where their money is going, and what percent is going to Fogo Island.

Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities focused on optimizing community benefit and respecting the specificity of place. Initiatives aimed to build a resilient economic future for Fogo Island and serve as a model for other rural communities.⁴²

What Worked

The Inn currently has 300 workers who are Fogo Islanders, therefore it is successfully providing job opportunities and sharing new skills with locals. Fogo Island has shown resilience through holding onto tradition while also learning new skills.

What Was Challenging

It took around 7 years to decide what to build that would provide benefit for the community, matched the community values, and that Fogo Islanders of all generations would support. Ultimately, an inn was decided due to the locals' incredible hospitality and kind nature.⁴³ Another challenge was convincing people that this idea would work, specifically government bodies whom they were trying to receive funds from to complete this initiative. The government believed the idea for the inn was "not normal, practical, reasonable, or rational."

Lessons We Can Take

Grounded + non-extractive

Fogo Island Inn and other initiatives were designed to be non-extractive, ensuring locals had a voice in decision-making. The inn's capacity was limited to 29 rooms based on community input to avoid overwhelming the island. This approach kept the volume of tourists manageable, maintaining the island's integrity and environmental health.

Relational + co-created

The inn's design and construction involved co-creation between locals and international designers, ensuring the final product was culturally rooted yet modern. Every item in the inn, from furniture to food, reflected local culture and history, providing guests with an authentic experience while preserving the island's heritage.

Networked + for the good of communities:

Fogo Island's initiatives emphasized fostering connections and building relationships within the community and with external partners. The Community of Care model focused on creating

⁴² Fogo Island Inn. "About Us" <https://fogoislandinn.ca/about-us/>

⁴³ Fogo Island Inn. "Fogo Island Hospitality" <https://fogoislandinn.ca/our-island/fogo-island-hospitality/>

systems that nurture and preserve social, cultural, and environmental health, and ensuring economic growth benefited the community.

Supported + communities of care:

The supportive environment on Fogo Island aligned artists with tailored business development resources, helping them grow at their own pace. Strategic incubation and promotion assisted more creatives in entering the tourism space, supported by a Community of Care model that emphasized individual growth within a nurturing community framework.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The project's objective was to establish a distinct definition of Creative Tourism tailored to Vancouver Island while gaining global and local insights into the opportunities and prerequisites for maximizing the advantages of Creative Tourism development. This initiative sought to benefit the creative entrepreneurs and tourism operators interested in leveraging their unique value proposition in a competitive and crowded travel marketplace, as well as visitors craving immersive, authentic, and transformative experiences deeply rooted in the identity of Vancouver Island communities and their residents.

A clear consensus among Advisory Circle members was the need for actionable outcomes from discussions, leading to tangible next steps. Here are recommended next steps:

- Review and refine the proposed definition of Creative Tourism in collaboration with local stakeholders, ensuring alignment with the current tourism and community plans. Conduct workshops and focus groups with residents, artists, entrepreneurs, and tourism professionals to gather feedback and insights on the definition and its applicability to the region.
- Purchase Audience Data from a research provider to enable a better understanding of tourists interested in Creative Tourism products, to inform product development (e.g. features of products that will appeal) and marketing campaigns.
- Complete a comprehensive asset mapping exercise, utilizing a recognized framework to identify strengths and opportunities within the community's Creative Sector. This process involves identifying existing products, potential products, supportive networks, and opportunities.
- Conduct a comprehensive survey of Creative Entrepreneurs to understand desire to participate in the Tourism Economy and skills or resources required to enable their participation.
- Design a Market Readiness Scale specific to Creative Tourism. Customizing a Market Readiness scale to suit the language and needs of creative entrepreneurs would facilitate bridging the gap between the tourism industry and the Creative Sector, empowering creative entrepreneurs to meet the requirements of the tourism industry more effectively.
- Continue generative conversations about experience development and Creative Tourism

promotions by establishing a Creative Tourism Network that meets regularly to discuss opportunities.

- Create networking opportunities to connect Creative Entrepreneurs and Tourism professionals. Examples might include mixers, Knowledge Sessions, or trade events where local good procurement opportunities can be presented to Tourism Owners/Operators.
- Initiate a network of interested Creative Tourism Curators: Individuals who might serve as “middle people” between the Artist and the Visitor. Examples: Tour Guides providing tours of Artist Studios.
- Connect Community and Cultural Planners with Destination Management organizations in each community to review together Community Plans and Tourism Plans for the hope of identifying shared initiatives.
- Design and implement a Creative Tourism product incubation program that pairs Creative Entrepreneurs with necessary support (including financial resources, mentorship, access to technology, business experts) and partners to test Creative Tourism product ideas.
- Address space issues for local creatives by piloting mobile and pop-up maker spaces that can become tourist attractions to watch artists at work, participate in workshops, and buy unique products. Vacant storefronts in communities can be repurposed for short-term tenancy that supports the creative community, while creating additional tourism assets.
- Host “Working with Tourism” virtual workshops for Creative Entrepreneurs who are curious about opportunities to promote themselves to visitors, or to explore opportunities with tourism partners.
- Develop a “Promoting Arts & Culture in Your Community” to offer ideas to Destination Management Organizations as to how to best support and promote arts & culture offerings in their community. Look for new ways to promote creative experiences to tourists that go beyond “trails and directories.”
- Address issues of cultural appropriation in items sold to tourists through policy research and advocacy.
- Write a Best Practices guide for ensuring that experiences and products marketed to visitors respect and honour cultural integrity, avoiding exploitation or appropriation, particularly concerning Canada’s Indigenous peoples.
- Implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact and effectiveness of Creative Tourism initiatives on Vancouver Island.
- Gather feedback from residents, visitors, and stakeholders to continuously refine and improve Creative Tourism experiences, ensuring they remain authentic, engaging, and beneficial to all involved parties.
- Share this model of community-based tourism development for the benefit of other destinations around the world. Build out a model of care and network weaving that can inform community development more broadly.

SIDEBAR: Creative BC’s 9 ENABLING FACTORS

Creative BC is an economic development agency that provides program funding and support

to the creative industries in British Columbia, which are book publishing, interactive and digital media, magazine publishing, motion picture, music and sound recording, and multi-creative industry services.

Through their research Creative BC has identified nine enabling factors that positively impact value contribution for the creative industries. These include training and development, networks and institutions, access to markets, technology adoption, access to funding, facilitative regulation, justice, equity, decolonization, diversity and inclusion, and other favourable business conditions.

As inputs, enabling factors can contribute to greater value output, as measured by the creative sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product, direct economic output, and job creation. Activities that support a strong creative sector create new businesses, increase revenue from existing businesses, attract investment, create opportunities for equity-denied people, and increase jobs and skilled workers.

Creative BC notes on their website (creativebc.com/sector/research-reports/ciera/):

"Particularly at this pivotal time in securing the industries' capacity to endure, recover and thrive, Creative BC sees these factors as a framework to inform strategic planning efforts, including the definition of priorities, goals, strategies and metrics—by Creative BC, government, industry and other stakeholders going forward."

APPENDIX 1: GLOBAL RESEARCH

Emergence of Creative Tourism

Creative Tourism emerged as a way to reinvent cultural tourism through the rise of the experience economy. The experience economy, as introduced by Pine & Gilmore, suggests that we are straying from a service economy as people begin to prioritize spending on memorable experiences instead of traditional services.⁴⁴ With the trend of the experience economy, mass tourism has become undesirable. Instead tourists want authentic, engaging, and unique travel experiences to forge a deeper connection with the destination and its culture.⁴⁵ People no longer want to check off the same bucket list sites as everyone else; instead, they crave getting under the skin of the destination and interacting with locals. Cultural tourism does not provide that immersive experience as it largely focuses on tangible aspects of a destination's culture, like monuments and museums.⁴⁶ Therefore, Creative Tourism emerged as a way to share the intangible aspects like the people, traditions, customs, and cuisine.

Creative Tourism was first defined by Richards & Raymond as "tourism which offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses

⁴⁴ Pine B.J., Gilmore J.H., Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review* July-August, (1998).

<https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

⁴⁵ Skift. *The Rise of Experiential Travel*. (2014). <https://skift.com/insight/the-rise-of-experiential-travel/>

⁴⁶ Ilincic, M., Benefits of Creative Tourism—The Tourist Perspective. (2014).

https://www.academia.edu/10102778/Benefits_of_Creative_Tourism_The_Tourist_Perspective

and learning experiences which are the characteristic of the destination where they are undertaken"⁴⁷. Since then, there have been numerous different definitions released from around the world. Baixinho et al. argue that there may not need to be a one size fits all definition as the core of Creative Tourism is embracing what makes each destination unique⁴⁸. In addition, each destination has their own amenities, capabilities, limitations, and stakeholders that need to be considered when designing creative tourism within a destination.⁴⁹ The local community should be at the centre of Creative Tourism development and decision-making, with the focus placed on traditions and culture specific to the area. Some examples of Creative Tourism include craft workshops, fine arts workshops, photography, graphic design, performing arts, hands-on gastronomy/cooking, ancestral tradition workshops, fashion, participatory creative festivals, artist and creative residencies, and other experiences embracing the destination in a creative way.⁵⁰ Creative Tourism can also mean simply integrating the creative and tourism industries together.

Components

In their 2023 report, Guo et al. identify six components to creative tourism: innovation, co-creation, interaction, personalization, sustainability, and exploration.⁵¹ Co-creation is an important component of Creative Tourism which is supported by many researchers from different perspectives.⁵² It allows for the consumer to also be the producer of their experience and the value they receive through interactions and participation, making these experiences irreproducible.⁵³ Richards explains that Creative Tourism underdesigns experiences to allow for co-creation to occur, in contrast with mass tourism which tends to overdesign tourism products.⁵⁴ Co-creation must also occur through the development processes of creative tourism, involving all stakeholders and using a bottom-up approach.

Benefits

There are many benefits to creative tourism, specifically for rural communities and small cities to make use of their knowledge and rich history to leverage a sustainable development tool.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ As cited in: Richards, G. (2020). Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (85), Article 102922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922>

⁴⁸ Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al. (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Bakas, F., & Duxbury, N. (2018). A model of sustainable rural development through creative tourism: CREATOUR project. *Anais Brasileiros de Estudos Turísticos*, 74–84. <https://doi.org/10.34019/2238-2925.2018.v8.13869>; Priambodo, MP., Abbas, M. H.I., & Prastiwi, L.F. (2023). Optimizing the Socio-Economic Welfare Aspect of Communities in Rural Tourism Areas by Developing the Potencies of Indigenous Creative Economy. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 444, 03013. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202344403013>

⁵¹ Guo, R., Kou, I.T., Jiang, Q. (2023). Unlocking the creative potential: A case study of Luoyang City's Creative Tourism Development. *Sustainability*, 15(20). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152014710>

⁵² Bakas, F., & Duxbury, N. (2018). A model of sustainable rural development through creative tourism: CREATOUR project. *Anais Brasileiros de Estudos Turísticos*, 74–84. <https://doi.org/10.34019/2238-2925.2018.v8.13869>; Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M.J. (2021). Co-Creative Tourism experiences – a conceptual framework and its application to food & wine tourism *Tourism Recreation Research*, 48(5), 668–692. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.viu.ca/10.1080/02508281.2021.1948719>; Richards, G. (2020). Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (85), Article 102922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922>; Tan, S.-K., Kung, S.-F., & Luh, D.-B. (2013). A model of 'creative experience' in creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 153–174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.12.002>; Ilincic, M., Benefits of Creative Tourism—The Tourist Perspective. (2014). https://www.academia.edu/10102778/Benefits_of_Creative_Tourism_The_Tourist_Perspective

⁵³ Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M.J. (2021). Co-Creative Tourism experiences – a conceptual framework and its application to food & wine tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 48(5), 668–692. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.viu.ca/10.1080/02508281.2021.1948719>

⁵⁴ Richards, G. (2020). Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, (85), Article 102922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102922>

⁵⁵ Richards, G. (2019). Creative tourism: Opportunities for smaller places? *Tourism & Management Studies*, 15(SI), 7–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tms.2019.05.001>

This allows destinations to thrive economically while remaining respectful towards local culture and the environment. It helps to differentiate offerings in a destination rather than the serial reproduction of mass tourism, increasing competitiveness.⁵⁶ As Creative Tourism emphasizes what makes a destination unique, every Creative Tourism experience is specific to the area. It also satisfies the demand for experiential tourism through the rise of the experience economy.⁵⁷ Seasonality is a vast issue for most tourism destinations, this form of tourism combats seasonality through new products that are also available in the off-season.⁵⁸ Additionally, it promotes longer stays in a destination whether it be for a multi-day workshop, the urge for a deeper connection with the place, or to experience more creative experiences.⁵⁹ Moreover, less travelled regions use Creative Tourism to maximize their potential therefore fostering the dispersion of tourists, diluting the impacts of high visitor traffic, spreading revenue around the area, and creating jobs. In this way, Creative Tourism allows a destination to receive more value from a smaller number of tourists.

The creative economy contributes 6.1% to global gross domestic product in Canada and is projected to continue growing (The Policy Circle, 2024). Despite this, local artisans and creatives struggle to make a liveable income. On Vancouver Island, 77% of artists must supplement their arts income as the average revenue is \$18,000 annually.⁶⁰ Creative Tourism provides an opportunity for struggling local artisans to get closer to economic stability. Through sharing the destination's history and intangible cultural heritage, Creative Tourism preserves local traditions and can inject new energy into their practice.⁶¹ This also creates community empowerment, social cohesion, and increases sense of place. Creative Tourism offering can be intentionally designed to be inclusive by involving individuals who would not typically benefit from tourism flows, contributing to a decrease in social division.⁶² Human capital being the main resource for Creative Tourism means that it is a resilient and sustainable form of tourism.⁶³ Duarte et al. claims that it has the opportunity to contribute to all 17 sustainable development goals, meaning it is sustainable economically, environmentally, and socially.⁶⁴ Moreover, some researchers argue that Creative Tourism can go further than sustainability, to be regenerative for rural communities.⁶⁵

Creative Tourism experiences are authentic, memorable, and meaningful for tourists, and can lead to transformation or personal development.⁶⁶ In a study researching the key benefits

[org/10.18089/tms.2019.155101](https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2019.155101)

56 Akdemir, H., Sousa De São José, J. M., & Gonçalves, M. A. P. R. (2023). Social inclusion of older artisans through creative tourism. *Anatolia*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2023.2299447>

57 Pine B.J., Gilmore J.H., Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review* July–August, (1998). <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

58 Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al., (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

59 Ibid.

60 Creative Coast. (2021). All Islands Impact Study. <https://www.creativecoast.ca/impact>

61 Akdemir, H., Sousa De São José, J. M., & Gonçalves, M. A. P. R. (2023). Social inclusion of older artisans through creative tourism. *Anatolia*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2023.2299447>

62 Ibid

63 Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al., (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

64 Duarte, E. A., Marujo, N., & Simões, J. M. (2022). Creative Tourism as a promoter of the sustainable development goals – Central Alentejo. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 329–341 Páginas. <https://doi.org/10.34624/RTD.V39I0.27283>

65 Duxbury, N., Bakas, F. E., Vinagre De Castro, T., & Silva, S. (2020). Creative Tourism Development Models towards Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism. *Sustainability*, 13(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010002>; Mikulio, K., & Jelusic, A. (2021). *Unlocking The Potential of Creative Tourism to Support Tourism Competitiveness*. Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency.

66 Ilincic, M. (2014). Benefits of Creative Tourism—The Tourist Perspective. https://www.academia.edu/10102778/Benefits_of_Creative

perceived by the tourists of a creative cooking workshop, the future sharing of experiences was an important affective benefit.⁶⁷ Rather than returning home with just souvenirs or photos, the travellers shared what they had learnt on their trip by cooking the meal from the workshop for their friends and family. This increased memorability which increases the intention to revisit a destination and place attachment.⁶⁸

Creative Tourist Attributes

Creative tourists currently tend to be those who identify as women in the 20-40 age range, and classify themselves as single.⁶⁹ In a study by Remoaldo et al. that interviewed creative tourists in Portugal, 60.4% were women.⁷⁰ These tourists also tend to have a higher education level and monthly income.⁷¹ Tan et al. classify creative tourists into five different traveller types: novelty seekers, knowledge and skills learners, aware of travel partners growth (wanting the family to learn), aware of green issues, and relax and leisure.⁷² This helps to divide creative tourists psychographically rather than just looking at demographics. It is important to note that there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the attributes of creative tourists in North America.

Considerations

With any form of tourism, there are some potential problems that can arise if it is not executed properly. There is the potential for gentrification and related dynamics to displace the very people that Creative Tourism was supposed to benefit.⁷³ If all stakeholders are not considered when designing Creative Tourism experiences, it can lead to commodification of culture.⁷⁴

Creative Tourism must always be unique to the destination, and developed from a bottom-up approach. Richards explains the danger of following other destination's models of Creative Tourism and that creativity should be seen as a way to maximize a destination's potential.⁷⁵

Like all tourism strategies, Creative Tourism needs to be built with resident sentiment known, understood, and accounted for. In summary, the risks of building Creative Tourism may include:

Tourism_The_Tourist_Perspective; Pine B.J., Gilmore J.H. (1998). Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review* July-August. <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>

67 Ilincic, M. (2014). Benefits of Creative Tourism—The Tourist Perspective. https://www.academia.edu/10102778/Benefits_of_Creative_Tourism_The_Tourist_Perspective

68 Ali, F., Ryu, K., & Hussain, K. (2015). Influence of Experiences on Memories, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions: A Study of Creative Tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33(1), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1038418>

69 Remoaldo, P., Ghanian, M., Alves, J. (2020). Exploring the Experience of Creative Tourism in the Northern Region of Portugal—A Gender Perspective. *Sustainability*, 12(24):10408. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410408>

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Tan, S.-K., Kung, S.-F., & Luh, D.-B. (2013). A model of 'creative experience' in creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 153–174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.12.002>

73 Ferreira-Seoane, Llorca-Ponce, & Rius-Sorolla. (2023). Measuring the sustainability of the orange economy. *Sustainability*, 14(6). DOI:10.3390/su14063400

74 Baixinho, A., Santos, C., Couto, G. et al. (2020). Creative Tourism on Islands: A Review of the Literature. *Sustainability* 12(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su122410313>

75 Richards, G. (2019). Creative tourism: Opportunities for smaller places? *Tourism & Management Studies*, 15(SI), 7–10. <https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2019.15SI01>

- Commodification leading to exploitation
- Building density and/or exclusivity that restricts inclusive access
- Gentrification that increases cost of living in communities
- Losing the very uniqueness of a community

APPENDIX 2: CREATIVE SECTOR ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

The value chain for creative experiences and products typically involves the stages of ideation, testing, production, dissemination, and exhibition or distribution.⁷⁶ To enhance the success of creative entrepreneurs, supportive interventions can be implemented at each stage of this value chain. These interventions can be categorized into two main areas: increasing available opportunities, which fosters marketplace development, and enhancing the capabilities of individual creative entrepreneurs, promoting their business acumen development. In other words, interventions may focus on improving the overall environment or empowering the individual.

Creative Coast research identifies significant challenges faced by numerous Vancouver Island artists and creative workers:

- Limited infrastructure hampers artistic production and exposure
- Rural/remote and Indigenous/BPOC creatives face barriers to acquiring necessary business development and tech skills, exacerbating economic exclusion and the digital divide
- Business development services aren't tailored to the diverse needs of artists and entrepreneurs in the region

Marketplace Development

The arts marketplace operates across diverse tiers, spanning primary and secondary sales. Primary sales involve artists or creators directly selling goods or services, while secondary sales encompass creative products or experiences facilitated by intermediaries like curators, tour guides, dealers, shopkeepers, or distributors.

To foster marketplace development, several strategies can be considered:

1. Facilitating procurement processes for hospitality businesses to acquire creative goods, such as by implementing a Procurement Catalogue and associated systems.
2. Facilitating networking opportunities between artists and tourism/hospitality operators to encourage collaboration and partnership exploration.

⁷⁶ Horng, S.C., Chang, A.H., Chen, K.Y. (2016). The Business Model and Value Chain of Cultural and Creative Industry. In: Plangger, K. (eds) *Thriving in a New World Economy. Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24148-7_63; European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2017). *Mapping the creative value chains – A study on the economy of culture in the digital age – Final report*. Hoelck, K., Engin, E., Airaghi, E. et al. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/868748>.

3. Building connections with tour guides, curators, and dealers to enrich secondary sales markets, potentially by crafting specialized programmes that involve current curators and integrate them into the tourism sector.
4. Supporting the creation of innovative distribution models that streamline the connection between artists and potential buyers, leveraging visitor interest in acquiring travel mementos.
5. Developing marketing strategies (pricing and positioning) that support available creative experiences.

Business Acumen Development

Unlike many other entrepreneurs, artists often embark on their creative endeavours without initially aiming to sell their products. As Ruth Bridgstock observes, entrepreneurs in other fields are typically drawn by the excitement of starting a new venture or developing innovative products. In contrast, artists often find themselves pushed into entrepreneurship out of necessity, with little inherent interest in business ownership or commercial pursuits.⁷⁷

Furthermore, traditional views of entrepreneurship, rooted in conventional economic principles, may deter many artists from recognizing themselves as entrepreneurs. Consequently, accessing comprehensive business support services becomes challenging for them.⁷⁸ Our experience in administering artist support programmes also suggests that individuals from marginalized communities face additional barriers to accessing these services. Programmes that prioritize outreach and foster trust are particularly beneficial for such communities.

To enhance the capabilities of creative entrepreneurs to specifically participate in the tourism sector, several strategies can be considered:

1. Market Readiness refers to the readiness of a product or service to be introduced to consumers. Destination British Columbia has established “Market Ready Standards” specifically for tourism businesses. These standards aim to support tourism-related businesses in enhancing the quality and professionalism of their operations progressively. They are categorized into three tiers: visitor-ready, market-ready, and export-ready.⁷⁹ A Market Readiness scale tailored to the language and needs of creative entrepreneurs would help bridge the gap between the tourism industry and the Creative Sector, allowing creative entrepreneurs to better understand and meet the requirements of the tourism industry.
2. Tailored, high-touch support programmes excel in addressing the needs of entrepreneurs while efficiently providing real-time assistance. From 2020 to 2022, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 4VI developed and implemented the Tourism Resiliency Program. This initiative aimed to offer tourism businesses personalized, one-on-one guidance to navigate the pandemic’s impact and enhance their overall business capabilities for

⁷⁷ As cited in: Fielding, S., Malli, N. *A Portrait of Creative Entrepreneurship and the Creative Economy in Canada*. The Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship. 2020. <https://brookfieldinstitute.ca/a-portrait-of-creative-entrepreneurship-and-the-creative-economy-in-canada/>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Destination British Columbia. (2018). Market Ready Standards. https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2018/08/Market_Ready_Standards.pdf

successful recovery. The programme's effectiveness stemmed from its agile methodology, continuously adjusting to evolving business requirements and ensuring relevance and responsiveness throughout.⁸⁰ Creative Coast adopted this model to implement two artist support programmes: ArtCoach and Digital Creation Hub. The effectiveness of this tested model hinges on extensive outreach and the cultivation of trusting relationships over time. To ensure unhindered access to the programmes, organizers must address various barriers, including cost, transportation, access to digital infrastructure, cultural sensitivity, communication and awareness.

3. Community-based development is essential for sustainable tourism models, as it ensures that destination development aligns with the needs of the local community. According to the study conducted by Perfect Link Consulting Group Thailand, community-based tourism is described as an "integrative and inclusive approach."⁸¹ This approach prioritizes a comprehensive understanding of the entire tourism system through thorough evaluative research and extensive dialogues among all stakeholders. The overarching goal is to derive tourism development objectives from and integrate them into the broader shared visions and aspirations of the community. Community-based tourism enables local residents to fully benefit from the economic advantages of tourism while empowering them to make key decisions regarding their home. This incentivizes local communities to effectively manage the economic growth and mitigate socio-cultural and environmental impacts resulting from tourism activities. This approach not only empowers locals but also ensures that tourism experiences are authentically rooted in the identity of the community.

APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A key component of this project involved convening an Advisory Group of five industry experts and stakeholders. The Advisory Group's primary objective was to localize global definitions of Creative Tourism to fit opportunities in the Vancouver Island region. A series of one-on-one and group meetings took place between January and March 2024.

These gatherings were rich in dialogue and reflection. Despite representing vastly different perspectives, participants were remarkably united in the shared goal of fostering a vibrant, sustainable Creative Tourism Industry.

The one-on-one discussions allowed for a deep dive into the respective sectors' nuances and challenges. Tourism advisors brought to light the concerns of seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers and the pressing need for sustainable practices that ensured long-term economic viability without sacrificing community integrity. Representatives from the Creative Sector highlighted a dire need to support local artists and creators, especially for Indigenous, rural/remote and BPOC arts communities, all of whom face significant barriers due to a lack of infrastructure and economic opportunities. These conversations underscored the importance of representation, advocating for platforms that not only included but celebrated the contributions of communities often sidelined in mainstream tourism narratives.

80 4VI. (2023) 2022–2023 Impact Report. <https://forvi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/4VI-2023-ImpactReport.pdf>

81 United Nations Development Program. (2022). Community-Based Tourism Social Innovation Playbook. UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand. <https://www.undp.org/thailand/publications/community-based-tourism-social-innovation-playbook>

Subsequent group meetings aimed to weave together these individual perspectives into a unified direction. A focal point was the creation of a 'made-here' definition of Creative Tourism that resonated with the values and cultural identity of Vancouver Island. Participants discussed how tourism could potentially act as a catalyst for positive community development, emphasizing cultural preservation and social wellness. They also examined the impediments to achieving such integration, with market readiness and visibility for creatives being identified as significant hurdles.

Emerging themes from the discussions included:

- Economic practices that do not exploit but rather enrich the local community and its members. There was an emphasis on developing the creative economy to support underserved communities and facilitate creative entrepreneurship.
- A balanced approach that avoids overtourism while promoting year-round economic stability. Advisors discussed the idea of creating experiences for an ideal visitor profile, who would respect and enhance the local culture and economy.
- The importance of building 'communities of care' that prioritize the well-being and holistic growth of its members. This model focuses on creating systems that not only sustain economic growth but also ensure that the community's social, cultural, and environmental health is nurtured and preserved.
- Comprehensive experience design that integrates creative encounters throughout the visitor journey. This includes considering all touchpoints, such as hotels and other accommodations, as opportunities for creative expression and visitor engagement.
- Strategic incubation and promotion to assist more creatives to enter the tourism space. Suggestions included coaching and financial assistance to help design and deliver interactive, visitor-centric experiences.

Furthermore, there was a consensus on the need to expand the notion of market readiness to reflect the realities of the Creative Sector. Traditional definitions, often skewed towards commercialization, did not fully encompass the needs of creatives who sought to preserve the integrity of their artistic expressions while also making them accessible to a broader audience. There was a push for incubator programmes to assist creatives in developing experiences that not only appealed to visitors but also fostered local cultural engagement.

The discussions acknowledged the critical need for inclusivity and diversity, championing broader representation and equal opportunities within both the creative and tourism industries. Success metrics were deliberated, with the goal of establishing measurable outcomes that reflect the Creative Tourism vision. Suggestions included broader representation in both the creative and tourism industries, increased economic benefits for creatives, heightened visibility of the creative community, and stronger partnerships between creatives and tourism operators.

The group expressed a strong interest in maintaining the networks formed during these meetings and in working towards an action plan that would operationalize the identified goals and strategies. Participants agreed that ongoing dialogue and the building of robust relationships were foundational to any sustainable collaborative effort.

APPENDIX 4: ADVISORY CIRCLE MEMBERS BIOS

Assetou Coulibaly

Assetou Coulibaly is a Project Manager at Accent Inns Inc, implementing systems, improving processes, and launching major projects. Assetou comes from a background in DEI and intersectional work through NGOs. Currently, she's focused on educating on the importance of decolonizing sustainability and growing a conscientious social enterprise named **CHIWARA CO** that bridges the gap between events (Black Women Connect), products, education and advocacy. Assetou joins the project from the unceded territory of the Lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

Calum Matthews

Calum Matthews is Vice President of Sustainability & Strategy at **4VI**, formerly known as Tourism Vancouver Island. In his role, he leads a team responsible for the organization's sustainable development programs and supports a range of clients with strategic planning and engagement. Calum joined the tourism industry more than 10 years ago in a front-line service role. What started as a great summer job quickly grew into a passion and an exceptional career. Calum joins the project from the unceded territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Jason Griffin

A veteran of BC's tourism industry and an artist, Jason lives with his family on Salt Spring Island and operates **Tour Salt Spring**. A Sustainable Tourism certified company, Tour Salt Spring specializes in providing visitors with guided tours of Salt Spring Island, including into local artist studios. Salt Spring Island is located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people.

John Hughes

John is the Executive Director of **Craigdarroch Castle**, a national historic site that tells the fascinating story of the Dunsmuir family, who built the castle as their home in 1887. John has over thirty years of business management experience and brings expertise in arts & culture management, as well as operating a tourism attraction, to this project. John joins the project from the unceded territory of the Lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

Megan Whonnock

Megan is an experienced business administrator, an artist and co-founder of the **Aunty Collective**. The Aunty Collective is an arts, culture and learning hub for Indigenous artists and creatives that prioritizes creating space and supporting the agency of Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+, women, and youth, and working to develop accessible opportunities for Indigenous artists of all mediums to take up space, learn and share knowledge, create, and nurture the future generations to come. Megan joins the project from the unceded territory of 'Namgis First Nation.

APPENDIX 5: CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Erica Mattson

Erica Mattson has over 20 years of experience helping governments, cultural institutions, non-profits, funders, philanthropists, and purpose-driven organizations create transformative change for people and communities. A practicing visual artist and parent of two school-aged kids, Erica runs an independent creative consultancy. She serves as a strategic advisor and coach to leaders in the social impact and cultural sectors, and co-produces innovative research, systems change, sector development, and curatorial projects in collaboration with artistic, academic, and institutional partners. Erica lives with gratitude on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

Illana Hester

Illana Hester (she/her) is an experienced administrator, and change leader, working for the past sixteen years in international culture and visual arts. She is now serving as the Executive Director of The Old School House Arts Centre located on the unceded territories of the Qualicum First Nations, where she moved after over 13 years in the NYC contemporary art market. She is also the co-chair of a lab project that connects the island arts ecosystem, creativecoast.ca. She is an artist career coach and helps mentor artists to their professional best.

