A person wearing a yellow jacket and a red hat is walking away from the camera on a narrow suspension bridge. The bridge is made of wooden planks and has metal mesh railings on both sides. The bridge spans a deep, dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The lighting is soft and slightly hazy, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The overall scene is serene and adventurous.

**White Paper: Best Strategies for Upcoming Creative
Tourism Developments**

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INTRODUCTION

Society currently resides in the era of the experience economy. The global push to incorporate more sustainable industries over resource-based economies has caused the Tourism sector to boom. The move away from these resource-based economies and towards more sustainable developments, mainly in tourism, promotes long-term financial sustainability and less dependency on limited physical resources. As the Government of British Columbia (2019) states they work closely to the creative sector, “promoting the value of creativity, encouraging cooperation, and driving innovation, productivity and entrepreneurship” which is “attracting new investment and creating new jobs for British Columbians”, we aim to bring these priorities into alignment with BC’s tourism strategy through the development of creative tourism.

The purpose of this white paper is to identify and analyze the four best strategies for developing creative tourism in smaller communities. These strategies will be the main areas of investment for in the forthcoming BC Tourism Strategy, *Gaining the Edge*, for 2020-2030.

The most effective creative strategies, found through both qualitative and quantitative research, from five international locations will be compared to develop the strategies best suitable for application in BC. These locations are: Portugal, Croatia, Cape Town, Montenegro, and Taiwan.

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING CREATIVE TOURISM

1. Defining Creative Tourism

Richards and Raymond (2000) define 'creative tourism' as "tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristics of the holiday destination where they are undertaken". This form of tourism allows communities, cities, and provinces to define themselves in a unique and memorable way. It is more sustainable for economies than resource-based sectors as creative tourism is intangible, infinite, and evolving rather than finite and static.

2. Applying Creative Tourism to BC

Destination British Columbia (DBC) is an organization that is in place to support BC's tourism sector, that offers destination development planning assistance. According to the DBC website (2019), this "destination development is the strategic planning and advancement of defined areas to support the evolution of desirable destinations for travellers, with a sole focus on the supply side of tourism, by providing compelling experiences, quality infrastructure, and remarkable services to entice repeat visitation". There is a logical connection between creative tourism's offering of learning experiences and destination developments focus on providing compelling experience. What is more compelling than an opportunity to learn?

The development of creative tourism furthers the opportunity to work "together with local, regional, and provincial agencies, Indigenous communities" (Destination British Columbia, 2019) and other strong cultural communities to allow these groups to showcase their uniqueness. This brings more recognition to our province's creative groups, and in turn helps to actualize BC's identity as "a world-class tourism destination which offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, and exceed expectations" (Destination British Columbia, 2019).

KEY FINDINGS

Research from five international locations indicates these creative tourism strategies are most effective: food, workshops, crafts/pottery, architecture/landscape, and festivals and events. These five categories will be explored in their international contexts and their application to BC will be analyzed.

Food



Across the five locations analyzed, food was the most common creative strategy used.

In Montenegro, traditional Catalan dishes are presented in authentic local settings to highlight the regions gastronomy. Tourists are invited to participate in grape harvests, wine making, or finding lodging in vineyards where they can ‘live the life’ of a local wine grower (Ratković, R., Pjerotić, L., & Radak, M. Š., 2017).

A tourism project in Portugal based their initial strategies on “food innovation, sustainable landscapes and gardening, tourist activities focusing on ecotourism, rural tourism and educational activities” (Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017).

While a local festival was happening, Portuguese “restaurants outside the official venue of the event follow the theme celebrated, providing local Portuguese and Mediterranean gastronomy menus, and decorating their establishments according

to the theme of the event.... the event allows the formation of a different destination image based in the variation of the cultural and touristic supply, several experiences created which leads to both tourists and locals own cultural self reflection” (Carvalho, R., Ferreira, A. M., & Figueira, L. M., 2016).

Cape Town observed that food is an emerging creative experience-based tourism in their region. These experiences are tours that focus on engagement with the local population. One of these specialized areas is local food (Booyens, I., & Rogerson, C., 2015).

In a Croatian survey, “about 40% of the respondents confirmed including certain temporary forms of creative offer in their cultural offer (often stressing that the offer is not tailored for tourists only, but also the local population), mostly: creative workshops:... cooking classes ... educational programs: tasting local cuisine ... preparation of authentic dishes...” (Stipanović, C., & Rudan, E, 2014).

Additionally, importance was placed on the role of the local population as a way of growth for the destination’s creative small enterprises, responding to the demands of the creative tourism market which include creating authentic dishes or showing local food-gathering practices like fishing (Stipanović, C., & Rudan, E, 2014).

With BC's prime coastal location, cultural diversity and rich Indigenous culture, food is already celebrated in many diverse ways. Further investing into this area will allow a development of creative tourism that is centered around local cuisine.

Workshops



Workshops play a key role in creative tourism. They connect to Richard & Raymond's (2000) key component of "active participation in courses and learning experiences".

A survey taken in Taiwan shows that "there was a significantly positive relationship between creative experiences and memorability. It was also found that the respondents who had higher memorability of the participated activity were more likely to visit the place again" (Hung, W.-L., Lee, Y.-J., & Huang, P.-H., 2016). International destinations have been utilizing this strategy to fuel their tourism industries.

In Portugal, a program has been developed that allows tourists to actively participate in local culture, traditions, and daily activities in Loulé. These activities are generally workshops, or other themed educational services surrounding food and art, including making dried fruit-based confectionary

(Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017).

This strategy proves effective time again, as illustrated by another Portuguese festival: "according to the people inquired, workshops are the true creative components present in the Festival Idem. It was identified by all respondents the will of every stakeholders involved in the organization of the event, to develop creative spaces where participants and develop their creative skills..." (Carvalho, R., Ferreira, A. M., & Figueira, L. M., 2016). Through analysis of local media (websites, newspapers, promotional material etc.) researchers found that 'workshops' was one of the most repeated terms in the context of regional cultural events, illustrating what a lasting impact these activities can hold (Carvalho, R., Ferreira, A. M., & Figueira, L. M., 2016).

This hands-on strategy holds sound across different continents, with research conducted in Cape Town showing that "about 40% of the respondents confirmed including certain temporary forms of creative offer in their cultural offer (often stressing that the offer is not tailored for tourists only, but also the local population)..." with the creative-classified workshops including art, ceramics, visual arts, folklore, etc. (Stipanović, C., & Rudan, E, 2014).

Workshops can be held to conduct hands-on learning for most of the other creative tourism strategies, such as: how to cook traditional dishes or sculpting Canadian pottery. It is the most adaptable strategy of

the five explored and has the greatest potential for success.

Crafts/ Pottery



Local crafts such as pottery were another prominent cultural tourism sector across the five international locations.

In Portugal, there is a project where professionals work on the innovation of handicrafts, specifically around their valuation, identification, interpretation, and rehabilitation. They aim to restore the cultural and commercial status of their local crafts (Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017).

Ceramics were also featured in Yingee, Taiwan. They have taken the industry beyond just manufacturing and into the service industry with the incorporation of factory tours, studios, and souvenir stores which has increased the number of tourists in town. The number of businesses in Yingee who are offering services like this are increasing, and they offer tourists the hands-on opportunity to make pottery in activities like wheel-throwing, mosaics, and pottery painting (Hung, W.-L., Lee, Y.-J., & Huang, P.-H., 2016).

Additional research in India has shown that “77% tourists agree to the statement that tourism and culture are closely linked. Whopping 84% tourists have preferred to

participate in creative tourism in Himachal learning the handicrafts ... This close involvement with natives would prove beneficial for the destination’s economy and this will also inculcate a sense of pride and achievement among the locals for their culture and heritage (both tangible and intangible). It may also lead to preserving natives’ handicrafts, culture and customs” (Chugh, S. R., 2018)

These handicrafts can be used to illustrate the unique forms of BC crafts while bringing more money into local economies.

Architecture/landscape



Using architecture as a form of creative tourism is seen in older communities around the globe. For younger or more rural cities, showcasing natural landmarks and landscapes are increasingly becoming a part of tourism strategies.

Studies in Montenegro found that tourism professionals are using creative industries, those being industries who use culture in a functional way, including “...architecture and design, then graphic design, fashion design and advertising” (Ratković, R., Pjerotić, L., & Radak, M. Š., 2017). Other motives for travel and cultural tourism objects include monasteries, churches, mosques; sacred landmarks; looking back to ancient times; and world of Montenegrin

peasants (Ratković, R., Pjerotić, L., & Radak, M. Š., 2017).

In a more rural area of Portugal, the natural landscape is toured in addition to man-made architecture. This includes caves, barns, and greenhouses that can be utilized in innovative ways, effectively avoiding the need to spend more money on construction of new infrastructure like accommodation or restaurants. In addition to their functionality, these landmarks peak visitors' interest. This preserves local uniqueness and culture while making room for a new income source without a large infrastructure investment (Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017).

As BC is younger than most of these destinations, the rural approach to architecture/landscape tourism best aligns with BC's branding of 'Beautiful British Columbia'. BC is known as the 'final frontier' due to the amounts of untouched wilderness present, and this can be further integrated into its tourism strategy.

Festivals and Events



Festivals and events are a broad, open-ended category of creative tourism. Big coastal cities to small northern towns can adapt their own festival or event to help define their unique identity.

An example of an event in Algarve, Portugal is their monthly local market. The market allows the community to expose their crafts and sell their products. These markets are themed to guide its programming activities, such as the produce on sale, the current season, and the interests of merchants or visitors. They can be lectures, workshops, or leisure activities. These features have made the market more visible and have brought more activity into the region (Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017).

In another part of the Algarve region, they hold a walking festival. This event occurs annually and aims to protect the value of local cultural and natural heritage. Festival activities include hiking, workshops, nature trails, food tasting, and crafts among others, as well as interactions with local seniors who are experts in these categories (Cunha Lima, F. B., & Flores e Silva, Y., 2017). These events have helped bring a unique sense of identity to their region and brought their communities closer to themselves and tourists alike.

A different Portuguese region utilizes this strategy in a different way. When cultural events take place, the entire surrounding area also participates. Restaurants outside the official event boundaries will follow the theme of the event by putting up corresponding decorations and providing menus inspired by local gastronomy and decorating (Carvalho, R., Ferreira, A. M., & Figueira, L. M., 2016). Those who participated in the events argued that the event "allows the formation of a different destination image based in the variation of the cultural and touristic supply, several experiences created which leads to both

tourists and locals own cultural self reflection” (Carvalho, R., Ferreira, A. M., & Figueira, L. M., 2016).

On the other side of the world, creative tourism is driven by events in Cape Town. These events are used for destination and place marketing, with contemporary art festivals and events being key to urban economic development in relation to creative city promotion (Booyens, I., & Rogerson, C., 2015). Because of how useful

this strategy is, researchers state that these creative strategies need to be further integrated in Cape Town’s tourism products, especially to align arts/culture events with the larger tourism offerings (Booyens, I., & Rogerson, C., 2015).

As BC is divided into six diverse, unique tourism regions, there is great opportunity to specialize events for each region, driving tourists to explore the province further.

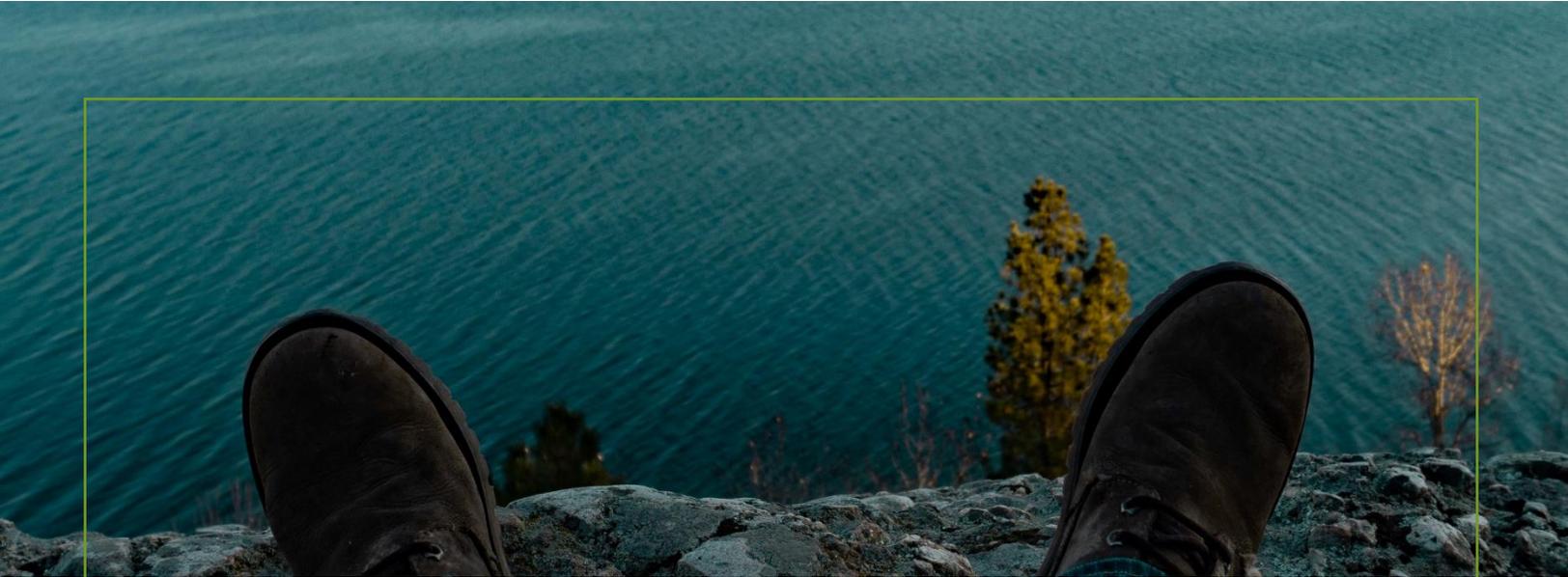
DATA ANALYSIS



Five locations and five creative tourism strategies were analyzed. The utilization of these strategies is as follows:

- Four of five locations used *Food*
- Five of five locations used *Workshops*
- Two of five locations used *Crafts/pottery*
- Two of five locations used *Architecture/landscape*
- Three of five locations used *Festivals and Events*

Based on this data, *Workshops* are the most widely used creative tourism strategy.



CONCLUSION

Creative tourism is perhaps the most sustainable industry able to be supported and effectively utilized in our province. While the above cases set the tone for effective development in this field, it is important to remember that it is the uniqueness of the creative activities which make the experiences particularly memorable (Hung, W.-L., Lee, Y.-J., & Huang, P.-H., 2016).

These five strategies all have their own potential benefits and challenges. Each of BC's tourism regions can explore and adapt these strategies, though some individual strategies may be a better fit within their own niche tourism plans. Though strategies can be specialized and adapted, there should be similarities across the regions. The best course of action to present a unified plan is to set a creative tourism framework that connects each respected segment and region to one another. This framework should be developed as guidelines rather than hard-set rules. Each BC tourism region should be encouraged to make adaptations that best let their communities shine.

Local First Nations bands should be consulted and worked with in a partnership to showcase the great creativity that comes from their communities. A study conducted in India shows that "69% of tourists would like to participate in creative tourism for acquiring new skills and to establish a strong bond with the natives. It is clear from the above statement that tourists are appreciative of the fact that by indulging more with locals, they would be able to connect with the destination visited and the natives' in a stronger and more significant manner. Tourism actually thrives on culture" (Chugh, S. R. (2018).

As workshops are the most effective and widely used strategy, they should be kept at top of mind when further developing the new tourism plan. While looking globally to see examples of creative tourism can provide great perspective, BC should adapt these strategies to become its own, allowing British Columbia to be identified and developed as the bold, beautiful, and unique area it is.

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