



2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title: Creative handicraft workshops

Destination, Country: Ljubljana, Slovenia

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In the category: Destination Management Environment & Climate Thriving Communities
 Nature & Scenery Culture & Tradition Business & Marketing

The Story in a picture:

Caption: Workshop Open Wheel, artisan: Eve Peterson Lenassi, photographer: Primož Lukežič



Summary:

Ljubljana Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Culture of the Municipality of Ljubljana and the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum and five Ljubljana artisans has created a series of eight boutique tourism experiences centered around traditional handicrafts and craftsmanship in Ljubljana. These experiences, such as Repair Your Umbrella, Printing for a Day, Weaving from A to Z, and various pottery and goldsmith workshops, aim to revive old crafts, promote the preservation of cultural heritage, and engage young people in traditional crafts. By catering to the desires of contemporary travelers seeking unique experiences and connections with local cultures, these initiatives significantly enhance Ljubljana's tourism offerings while providing both local and international visitors with a valuable opportunity to explore and appreciate the rich knowledge, creativity, and heritage of the city's local artisans.



Good Practice Story:

Destination description

Brief background of the destination.

Ljubljana, the charming capital city of Slovenia and European green Capital 2016, is a destination that seamlessly blends natural beauty, rich history, and a thriving cultural scene. With its commitment to sustainability and green living, Ljubljana has earned its reputation as a heaven for both nature lovers and art enthusiasts alike. From its vibrant city center to its breathtaking surroundings, Ljubljana offers a unique and unforgettable experience for every traveler.

Ljubljana is a city with a youthful, sparkling spirit, permeated by a relaxed and lively atmosphere, a city with a green soul, an exciting mix of different cultural traditions, one of Europe's top new culinary destinations, the perfect conference and congress city, and well known for its unforgettable events and venues. It's no wonder, then, that Ljubljana has become increasingly popular in recent years – it was selected by travellers from all over the world as number one on the list of European Best Destinations 2022 and European Best City Break in 2023, and is already one of the world's leading destinations in sustainable development.

The vision for the future development of tourism in the city is bold: by 2027, Ljubljana will be the world's leading and most creative urban destination for sustainable lifestyle.

Issues faced

Problems/issues solved with the Good Practice Story.

Ljubljana Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Culture of the Municipality of Ljubljana, has spearheaded the concept of creative tourism by focusing on the rich heritage of handicrafts and craftsmanship in Ljubljana. Working in conjunction with the Municipality of Ljubljana and the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, we have prepared a list of craftsmen and artisans who can be found in historical sources, based on historical discussions and treatments of the topic.

Initially, the list encompassed around eighty professions, many of which have vanished over time or are no longer practiced within Ljubljana or its central areas. After thorough evaluation of the surviving craftsmen and craftswomen, we compiled a condensed catalog featuring approximately twenty professions. These include goldsmiths, silversmiths, butchers, shoemakers, furriers, tailors, potters, bakers, cake-makers, cooks, hatters, weavers, leatherworkers, boat-makers, glassmakers, glassblowers, harness-makers, watchmakers, bookbinders, brewers, millers, inn-keepers, and wine-sellers.

The list serves as a bridge between historical insights and the evolving landscape of crafts and handicrafts in Ljubljana, as well as offers a contemporary perspective by identifying potentially active stakeholders in this field. Through this initiative, we aim to foster a vibrant and sustainable creative tourism experience, showcasing the cultural heritage of Ljubljana while supporting local artisans and preserving traditional craftsmanship.

Methods, steps, and tools applied

Solutions implemented to address the sustainability problems or issues.

Our methodology for the development of creative tourism in the field of handicrafts in Ljubljana was comprehensive and systematic.

The key steps involved were as follows:

1. Research and Expert Consultation: We conducted thorough research and collaborated with respected experts in creative tourism development to conduct a precise field survey. Their valuable

insights and expertise played a crucial role in shaping our approach and establishing a strong foundation for our work.

2. **Field Survey:** We visited selected handicraft workshops to gain practical insights and firsthand knowledge. During on-site visits, we observed the artisans' work processes, had meaningful discussions, and conducted in-depth interviews to gather essential data. This information was then carefully analyzed and synthesized.

3. **Thematic Analysis:** We conducted a thorough thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the artisans' narratives. This helped us gain meaningful insights, understand the challenges and opportunities in the craft industry, and make informed decisions for our future actions.

4. **Target Group Identification:** We carefully analyzed the collected data to identify specific groups of visitors who would be most interested in the creative tourism experiences. This segmentation ensured that our tourism products were customized to match the unique interests and preferences of each group.

5. **Establishing Communication and Collaboration:** Recognizing the importance of fostering strong relationships with the artisans and craftspeople, we established effective channels of communication. This facilitated ongoing collaboration, knowledge exchange, and a sense of shared purpose among the stakeholders involved.

6. **Designing Tourism Products:** Using the knowledge gained from our research and discussions with artisans, we created conceptual designs for tourism products. These designs showcased the unique craftsmanship of the artisans, combining historical significance with modern appeal, and aimed to provide captivating experiences for visitors.

Key success factors

Critical elements that led to successfully solving the issues.

Key Success Factors:

1. **Integration of Creative Industries in Tourism:** By incorporating creative industries into the tourism sector, we enhance our competitiveness in the market.

2. **Innovative and Regenerative Cultural Tourism:** Offering innovative, regenerative and experiential experiences in cultural tourism serves as a valuable complement, attracting visitors seeking unique and engaging encounters.

3. **Expansion of Points of Interest:** Creating, activating, and promoting additional areas of interest beyond the city center broadens the appeal for tourists, encouraging exploration beyond traditional tourist hubs.

4. **Harmonious Coexistence of Locals and Visitors:** Ensuring a harmonious coexistence between local residents and visitors fosters a positive atmosphere and contributes to the overall satisfaction of both parties.

5. **Improved Quality of Life for Residents:** Enhancing the quality of life for the residents through sustainable and regenerative tourism initiatives positively impacts the overall community well-being.

6. **Increased Length of Stay:** By providing compelling experiences and diversifying the tourist offerings, we aim to prolong the duration of tourists' stays, resulting in greater economic benefits for the destination.

7. **Pursuit of Quality Objectives:** Focusing on qualitative objectives, such as ensuring satisfaction among local residents and visitors, and diversifying the tourist offerings outside the urban core, contributes to the long-term success of the strategy.

8. **Development of Short City Break Offerings:** Continuously innovating the tourist offerings and providing year-round attractions strengthens the appeal of the destination for short city breaks.

9. Enhanced Destination Competitiveness: By consistently improving the destination's competitiveness, we strive to attract a larger share of tourists and position ourselves favorably within the tourism industry.

Lessons learned

Challenges faced while implementing the Good Practice and their solutions.

The lesson learned from this project is that engaging local artisans in the development of tourism experiences can be a successful strategy for promoting cultural preservation, enriching the tourism offerings, and fostering connections between visitors and the local community. By supporting and showcasing traditional crafts, the project contributed to the preservation of cultural heritage and identity, both locally and nationally.

We also encountered some challenges along the way, including:

1. Limited Awareness and Understanding of Creative Tourism: That is why we have spent a lot of time visiting local craftsmen individually to raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities of creative tourism, emphasizing its potential for cultural preservation and especially economic growth.
2. Balancing Authenticity and Marketing Performance (commercial success) of the tourism product. Because of this challenge the project team collaborated closely with the artisans. By involving the artisans in the design process, their concerns and preferences were taken into account. This approach ensured that the tourism products maintained a genuine representation of the artisans' craftsmanship while still appealing to the expectations and interests of visitors.
3. Capacity building for ensuring consistent quality and experience due to differences in craft skills and resources. Related to this challenge the project team invested in capacity building initiatives to improve the skills and knowledge of the artisans involved. Among others, several study tours were organised for both Tourism Ljubljana staff and other tourism stakeholders in the destination (mainly travel agencies or tour operators), who gave their opinions for improvement and upgrading.
4. Effectively marketing and promoting the boutique experiences to the target groups of visitors posed a challenge, considering the niche nature of the products. During the project we have developed promotion strategy, focusing on targeted online and offline channels.

Achievements and Results

Direct and indirect results of the Good Practice.

The achievements and results of the project include the creation of new boutique and regenerative experiences, preservation of cultural and craft heritage, development of the tourism offer, active visitor engagement, multi-lingual inclusivity, promotion of sustainable lifestyles, and potential for youth engagement and skill development. These outcomes contribute to the sustainability, cultural preservation, and experiential appeal of tourism in Ljubljana.

Main results are:

1. Creation of new boutique experiences: Tourism Ljubljana, in collaboration with five Ljubljana artisans, has developed eight new boutique experiences focusing on traditional craft professions. These experiences provide an opportunity for small groups of participants to learn about the crafts, try their hand as artisans, and actively participate in the production of finished products.
2. Preservation of cultural and craft heritage: The new experiences raise awareness among the local population about the importance of preserving cultural and craft heritage. By showcasing old handicrafts such as umbrella-making, printing, weaving, pottery, and goldsmithing, the project contributes to the preservation and presentation of these traditional crafts, which are significant parts of the local and national cultural heritage.

3. Development of sustainable and regenerative tourism offer: The collaboration between Tourism Ljubljana, Department of Culture of the Municipality of Ljubljana, Slovenian Ethnographic Museum and local artisans has enriched Ljubljana's tourism offer. The introduction of these new boutique experiences aligns with the Ljubljana Tourism Strategy, which aims to position the city as the world's leading and most creative urban destination for sustainable lifestyles. The experiences cater to the needs of new generations of visitors who seek unique experiences, knowledge, and connections with the local population.

4. Engagement of visitors through active participation: The project aims to offer visitors a unique and special experience by encouraging active participation and hands-on involvement. Participants in the boutique experiences have the opportunity to repair umbrellas, print posters, weave textiles, create pottery, and work with precious metals. By actively engaging visitors, the project enhances their understanding and appreciation of the crafts and the destination.

5. Multi-lingual and inclusive experiences: The new boutique experiences are designed to be accessible to both local and foreign visitors. They are available in multiple languages, including Slovenian, English, German, Croatian, Italian, French, and Spanish. This inclusivity allows a diverse range of visitors to engage with and learn about the local craft traditions, fostering cultural exchange and understanding.

6. Promotion of sustainable lifestyles and creative tourism: The project promotes sustainable lifestyles by emphasizing the value of traditional crafts and their role in sustainable tourism. Creative tourism is highlighted as having great potential in achieving the vision of Ljubljana as a leading creative urban destination. By incorporating creative elements into the experiences, the project attracts visitors who are interested in exploring sustainable lifestyles and connecting with local culture and heritage.

7. Potential for youth engagement and skill development: The project has the wider potential to involve young people in the practice of old traditional crafts. By showcasing these crafts and providing opportunities for active participation, the project encourages young individuals to learn and develop skills in traditional craftsmanship. This engagement contributes to the transmission of knowledge and skills to future generations, ensuring the continuity of these crafts.

Tips for other destinations

Your suggestions or recommendations for other destinations facing the same issues or implementing similar solutions

Here are some suggestions and recommendations:

1. Collaborate with local artisans to develop new boutique experiences focused on traditional crafts.
2. Raise awareness about the importance of preserving cultural and craft heritage among the local population and visitors.
3. Enrich the tourism offer sustainably by providing unique experiences aligned with sustainable lifestyles.
4. Encourage active visitor participation through hands-on involvement in craft activities.
5. Promote sustainable lifestyles and highlight the value of traditional crafts in achieving this goal.
6. Engage youth in traditional crafts through workshops and training programs.
7. Be bold and brave.

Recognitions and Additional references

Recognitions and awards the Good Practice received and supporting evidence.

The Creative Handicraft Workshops tourism product is a relatively new product that has not yet get any recognitions or award. In any case with our new, regenerative good practice, we will apply for more calls for proposals.

More information about the project you can find here:

Creative Handicraft Workshops in Ljubljana promotional video, created by Bright Visuals:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hwv-7frhW8>

Creative Handicraft Workshops in Ljubljana on Tourism Ljubljana website:

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/explore/things-to-do/art-and-culture/article/creative-handicraft-workshops/>

A PRINTMAKER FOR A DAY

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/a-printmaker-for-a-day/>

PRINT YOUR OWN POSTER IN AN OLD PRINT SHOP

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/print-your-own-poster-in-an-old-print-shop/>

WEAVING FROM A TO Z

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/weaving-from-a-to-z/>

MEND YOUR UMBRELLA

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/mend-your-umbrella/>

OPEN WHEEL

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/open-wheel/>

A GAME FOR TWO

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/a-game-for-two/>

A PRIVATE "GOLDEN FLEECE" EXPERIENCE

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/a-private-golden-fleece-experience/>

THE POWER OF A RING

<https://www.visitljubljana.com/en/visitors/plan-your-visit/tours-and-trips/the-power-of-a-ring/>