Empowering small rural communities through heritage tourism

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Cultural heritage tourism

Rural depopulation

1,322 million (+7%)
(UNWTO Tourism Barometer 2018)
Cultural heritage tourism

- Community members differentiation
- Search for experiencing first-hand places and traditions
- Promotion of intercultural dialogue and peace

- Seasonality avoidance
- Start-ups & employment growth
- Residents’ self-esteem increase
- Regional economical and sustainable development
Cultural heritage tourism

Overtourism

WE DON'T WANT TOURIST IN OUR BUILDINGS!
THIS IS NOT A BEACH RESORT
Cultural heritage tourism

“Tourism is too important a resource to be left to the tourism professionals”

(Bob McNulty, President of Partners for Livable Communities)

- Residents’ dissatisfaction
- Profit export
Heritage tourism & small rural communities
(Flanders, Belgium)
Cultural heritage tourism in Spain

International arrivals based on cultural motivations (in millions)

Source: Register of Cultural Statistics of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 2018
Cultural heritage tourism in Spain

International tourist expenditure (in billion €)

Source: Register of Cultural Statistics of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 2018
Cultural heritage tourism in Spain

- Recession-proof
- Stable market niche
- Valuable source of economic development
The Spanish Case

Garray, Spain
The Spanish Case

Numantia
The Spanish Case

Historic recreation
The Spanish Case: Outcomes

Evolution in inhabitant numbers

Spanish Municipal Register of Inhabitants, 2018
The Spanish Case: Outcomes

Number of companies before 2003

Number of companies after 2003

- Restaurants
- Leisure
- Hotels
- Animal foods
- Food processing
- Dietary products
The Spanish Case: Outcomes

- Social cohesion
- Pride of their roots
The Spanish Case: Outcomes

- Preservation of:
  - the archaeological site
  - the local and historic craft
  - the traditions

- Reverse trend: Migration to the village
Conclusion

- Overtourism opens a wide gate to experiential tourism
- The European Year of Cultural Heritage should lead to the implementation of adequate cultural tourism policies
Conclusion

- Valuable incoming money:
  - Higher expenditure
  - More stable income
  - Employment
  - Taxes

Unseasonality
Conclusion

- Residents’ direct involvement:
  - Self-esteem growth
  - Economic support
  - Preservation of traditional lifestyles
  - Preservation of historic roots through generations
Conclusion

- Compliance with the SDGs
- Promoter of peace and understanding
- **The dormant danger of overtourism in these newly discovered small communities should never be ignored**
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Thank you

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