



The 5 Senses Open-Air Museum

Experiential, transformative and sustainable tourism enhancing local cultural heritage



(IT)

SCIACCA



38,989



Cultural heritage
for sustainable development
Governance and financing



Challenge

Sciacca is a town located on the South-Western coast of Sicily. It was hit by an economic, social and cultural crisis starting 30 years ago which culminated with the town thermal spa closing, causing a drop in local incomes.

Tourism trends in the area were characterised by short visits, with overnight stays declining each year.



Solution

The 5 Senses Open-air Museum of Sciacca was created in 2019 as a bottom-up tourism innovation project. Locals and artisans are protagonists and work together to feature the city's cultural heritage - art, crafts, history, gastronomy and landscapes - into unforgettable, immersive, cultural tourism experiences. The city becomes an open-air living museum for visitors to experience with their five senses.

Three thousand years of history, cultures, and traditions are made accessible in a responsible way by:

- enhancing existing buildings and sites;
- enhancing locals' knowledge and sharing meaningful stories through experimental, transformative, and emotional tourism;
- reducing use of plastic and resources;
- building community competencies and skills, empowering individuals to transform local resources, and generating sustainable and long-lasting economic well-being.



How ?

1

The project started as a participatory workshop involving representatives from businesses, cultural associations and locals to assess how their cultural assets could be enhanced. They wanted to generate valuable tourist products and services focused on an authentic cultural experience and local identity making Sciacca an attractive destination.

2

The 5 Senses Open Air Museum association was created, and 50 memorandums of understanding directly engaging local stakeholders and artisans were signed with cultural and philanthropic associations, trade entities and public institutions. It received the official Sicilian Regional recognition as an eco-museum.

3

A participatory governance model was created through the community cooperative Identità e Bellezza.

4

50 experiences were created. Restaurants and accommodation facilities improved thanks to the "care of hospitality" specifications. A network of info-points was created involving shops, artisans and locals. Cultural heritage sites reopened and are managed by volunteers acting as "custodians of shared heritage".

5

A website promotes and sells experiences, accommodations, meals and local products. A "community home" was set up and is used as the front office, as a co-working space and as a home for all project partners.

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Budget/Financing

€ 150,000

- The budget of the initiative was €150,000, excluding the staff cost as the project relied on volunteers.
- The budget comes from private grants (21%) and public funds (79% including national and regional funds). For each project element a proposal was submitted, which then was evaluated and awarded.



Management

The cooperative governance is ensured by three management levels:

- The board of directors with transversal skills. They define strategies and objectives, and they plan time, budget, and resources.
- The board of managers, composed by young people with specific skills. They coordinate resources and teams for the implementation of strategies and objectives.
- The supervisory board, which is an ethics committee with a representative of each category and association present in the city.

Numerous stakeholders are involved, including: 125 cooperative associates, 47 tourism businesses, 40 associations, 27 accommodation facilities, 15 restaurateurs, 14 artisans, 10 neighbourhood associations, 10 schools, 10 institutions, 7 museums.

The project's heart and true strength is the community. Locals participate with their own resources and take responsibility for project tasks.



Transferability

Many places are ready to enhance the value of their local historical, artistic, and cultural heritage. This project offers an innovative method ready to scale-up. To develop a similar initiative local administrations should:

- choose a neutral party as the leading actor, someone without political ties or strong conflicts of interests, in order to engage as many people as possible;
- display confidence and competences;
- ensure to deliver on its promises and the objectives set, even if they are small, whilst celebrating each achievement.



Impact

- Community members from all sectors developed a sense of ownership of local cultural heritage. They worked together to protect and promote it, establishing a more cohesive and healthy community.
- Social and economic value was generated following the re-opening of heritage sites. Community members created audio-guides narrating their history. In one year, the Vapourous Caves of Mount Kronio hosted more than 10,000 tourists with visits managed only by volunteers.
- Accommodations are adopting sustainable solutions and slow tourism experiences are increasing.
- The new cultural experiences generate new direct income for artisans and cooperatives, with revenues increasing by 30% for shops located in the regenerated neighbourhood. Sciacca has also become a destination for digital nomads and has joined the Community of Interest of the Be.CULTOUR EU-funded project, sharing challenges and solutions on circular cultural tourism strategies with other 25 regional ecosystems.



Antonino Carlino



Links

Website: www.sciacca5sensi.it/en

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sciaccacittadei5sensi

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sciacca5sensi/?hl=it



Contact

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