

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HERITAGE TOURISM: LONG-TERM THINKING FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

LESSONS FROM RWANDA, BRAZIL AND BARBADOS

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GLOSSARY

Cultural heritage	Humanly created sites (e.g. archaeological monuments, buildings, townscapes, artefacts). Global examples include the Taj Mahal (India), Stonehenge (UK), Great Wall of China (China). These are recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites (cultural) and number 897 globally.
Diaspora	EUDiF defines diaspora as “emigrants and descendants of emigrants who actively maintain links with their country of origin/heritage and are willing to contribute to its development”.
Digital Heritage	The means of managing and interpreting heritage through digital applications and media, e.g. multimedia websites, podcasts, virtual reality etc.
Heritage	The process of interpreting and presenting the past in and for the present. In basic terms, heritage is something we want to value and keep for future generations, a set of cultural ideals and artefacts that say something about who we are (identity) and what we deem to be historically significant.
Heritage Tourism	Heritage tourism focuses on engagements with historic buildings, gardens, parks, and galleries, rather than on beaches or other purely leisure activities. It would belong under the wider umbrella concept of cultural tourism.
Intangible Heritage	Heritage which exists in the form of memory or cultural practice, e.g. dance traditions, storytelling, cuisine, rituals. The term essentially defines heritage that is not physically present, but which may or may not have material culture correlates. UNESCO has created a list of protected global intangible heritage; there are 629 expressions of intangible heritage in 139 countries.
Mixed heritage	UNESCO World Heritage Sites that contain important cultural remains, but are also distinctive natural sites in their own right. Global examples include Ayers Rock/Uluru (Australia), a distinctive geomorphological landscape form with a number of important indigenous Australian archaeological sites embedded within. There are 39 of these types of World Heritage Sites globally.
Natural heritage	UNESCO World Heritage Sites that exhibit special natural and biodiverse characteristics, or visually impactful landscapes. Global examples include the Grand Canyon (USA), the Camargue in France. These are recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites (natural) and number 218.
UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS)	Defined by the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, this is the highest international level of special heritage recognition. As of July 2021 (the most recent statistics available), there are a total of 1,154 World Heritage Sites (cultural, natural and mixed) in 167 states. A full list in the case study countries can be found in Annex 3.
Youth	The EU defines youth as those from 13 to 29 (‘An EU Strategy for Youth, COM(2009) 200) although since we include an African case-study, based on the African Union’s definition, we broaden this up to 35 (African Youth Charter, 2006).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diaspora youth have a unique stake in the heritage conservation, development and preservation efforts of their countries of origin. Offering richly evocative points of contact with the past, heritage is critical to diaspora youth for reaffirming a sense of belonging, building identity and catalysing psychological and social empowerment. Properly supported, engaging diaspora youth with their heritage also offers great potential for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship across several economic sectors.

The **European Union Global Diaspora Facility** (EUDiF), together with the support of researchers at the University of Winchester (UK), undertook a case study-based research project examining the connections between diaspora youth identity and the development of the heritage tourism sector in Barbados, Brazil and Rwanda. The purpose was to provide guidance to the EU and relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on the role that entrepreneurship can play in attracting, establishing and nurturing long-term bonds between diaspora members and their countries of origin. This case study is one of five research projects analysing how governments can engage with their diaspora on different topics.

This project sits at the crossroads of diaspora engagement, youth and job creation, all key EU priorities for sustainable development. **The 2022 European Year of Youth** seeks to accelerate support for youth knowledge, skills, and competences acquisition for personal and professional development. Anchored in the New European Consensus on Development, EUDiF assists governments of countries of origin to engage and collaborate more effectively with diaspora organisations and the EU to realise the development potential of diasporas. Supporting a range of stakeholders to develop opportunities within the heritage tourism sector, with a focus on the engagement of diaspora youth, can significantly contribute to both of these objectives and activities.

The private sector is the engine of growth in the diaspora heritage tourism sector. While much is already known about diaspora tourism, how diaspora youth experience, organise and connect with cultural heritage requires more understanding. Covid-19 had underlined the need to find new ways of stimulating tourism recovery and developing innovative ways for the heritage sector to reach new audiences. Tapping into the evolving needs, interests and preferred modes of organizing amongst diaspora youth can play a critical role.



Key message 1: Developing youth entrepreneurship in the heritage sector must involve innovating and developing heritage products that address diaspora youth's different interests, needs and ways of accessing heritage, whilst protecting local knowledge holders

Entrepreneurship and innovation in the heritage tourism space begins with understanding the types of heritage that diaspora youth want to access and how. Diaspora youth's complex identities, shaped by family backgrounds and experiences of migration and displacement, guide motivations for participating in cultural heritage tourism. But they also want to find new stories, histories and knowledge about and from their countries of origin. These can often be found in everyday ways of life, cultures and customs beyond tourist sites. This reflects increasing synergies between heritage and culture in the tourism sector. Facilitating these linkages should be a key priority to support the development of heritage products that appeal to diaspora youth.

Innovative digital and non-digital practices of sharing and accessing heritage is widening the availability of cultural knowledge for diaspora youth. As a result of collaborations with museums, NGOs, the creative sector and academia, diaspora youth audiences are increasingly able to access heritage beyond touristic practices. Primarily based on intangible heritage, there is consensus that efforts to unlock cultural heritage should protect the sensitivities of local knowledge holders. Funding, training and equipping creatives and educators who are active in this space will ensure efforts to make cultural heritage more available simultaneously enact commitments to community protection.



RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ Governments and embassies of countries of origin

- Facilitate and promote closer integration between heritage tourism and creative economies, targeted at increasing roles for creative entrepreneurs.
- Support creative and tourism entrepreneurs to develop bespoke heritage experiences that are digitally future-proofed.
- Support business intelligence activities on the needs and interests of diaspora youth tourists for the benefit of tourism agencies and development boards.

▶ Diaspora youth groups and organizations

- Organise conferences, consultations and webinars for diaspora youth working in the creative and heritage sectors to discuss needs, share ideas and projects and facilitate collaboration with government representatives of the museums and creative sectors.

▶ Museums and heritage professionals

- Unlock heritage collections, stories, memories, knowledge and archives for the benefit of youth innovators.
- Ensure heritage has clear relevance to diaspora youth interests such as experiences, food and dance.
- Promote, share and amplify the heritage work being done by diaspora youth and creative practitioners, to strengthen existing relationships between museums in countries of origin and diaspora youth communities/organisations.

▶ Universities

- Translate academic research into the public domain for the benefit of youth heritage entrepreneurs.

▶ **The European Union**

- Fund initiatives/programmes that facilitate closer collaborations between museums, academia and civil society organisations to support youth heritage entrepreneurs in heritage product innovation.



Key message 2: Enhancing the enabling environment for cultural heritage entrepreneurship should take account of the varying needs of diaspora and non-diaspora youth entrepreneurs operating in the sector

Supporting youth entrepreneurs requires a commitment to greater recognition of the different ways young people tap into the touristic and creative entrepreneurial opportunities presented by diaspora interest in heritage. Tour agencies, creative practitioners, and small-scale collaborations and enterprises are all part of the heritage ecosystem. Both diaspora and non-diaspora youth entrepreneurs face similar challenges around access to information, training and investment, and making use of collaborations. Whilst there are several examples of good practices addressing these issues, supporting entrepreneurship in cultural heritage begins with recognition of the work they do and the challenges they face.



RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ **Governments and embassies of countries of origin**

- Build diaspora youth market linkages to increase heritage tourism visits.
- Develop an adequate legal/policy framework linked to entrepreneurship and heritage tourism
- Create structures that support entrepreneurial collaborations for diaspora youth.
- Provide more information and business support for diaspora youth in building heritage and tourism enterprises.
- Involve diaspora youth networks in heritage tourism fairs to encourage diaspora youth attendance.
- Publicise existing forms of support offered by embassies, other government bodies and diaspora organisations.

▶ **Diaspora youth groups and associations**

- Support diaspora youth entrepreneurs in the heritage tourism sector
- Participate in webinars and events organised by governments.
- Create diaspora youth entrepreneurial networks, events, forums and training opportunities built around navigating the entrepreneurial environment of home countries.

▶ **The European Union**

- Publicise relevant funding schemes linked to digitalisation and diaspora heritage tourism entrepreneurship.



Key message 3: Assist diaspora youth to maintain positive, rich cultural connections with a country of origin by valuing their cultural heritage expressions

Diaspora youth engagement with heritage as entrepreneurs and consumers also requires foundational work to preserve, value and promote cultural heritage in countries of residence as an essential way that diaspora youth develop a sense of belonging and identity in their communities. Diaspora youth groups, in collaboration with Ministries of Foreign Affairs/diaspora institutions and embassies across Europe have a key role to play in offering rich opportunities for youth to engage with the cultural traditions, languages and heritages from their countries of origin. The EU and its member states can support this work by recognising and finding ways to value and protect such cultural heritage through funding opportunities and collaborations to include and showcase diverse cultural backgrounds, expressions and histories in education spaces, museums and galleries in European cities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

► Governments and embassies of countries of origin

- Make administrative formalities for diaspora youth travel easier.
- Empower diaspora youth to promote cultural heritage more widely by creating diaspora youth ambassador and visit schemes.
- Provide tailored experiences for diaspora youth, having identified specific interests, needs and activities.
- Support youth heritage activities, enterprises and initiatives by offering small grants for cultural heritage initiatives and identifying partnership and funding opportunities with local museums and academia.

► Diaspora youth groups and organisation

- Advocate for youth-relevant content in the work of diaspora cultural associations by joining youth fora and working groups, and creating youth specific cultural heritage discussion forums within or outside of existing associations.
- Reach out to relevant actors in countries of origin (such as governments), to support the recognition of the potential of youth as actors of heritage tourism

► The European Union and Member states

- Create specific cultural diversity funding streams in cultural heritage grant programmes.
- Support the professional development of museums and the creative sector in member states so as to increase representations of diaspora culture and diversity of cultural expressions.



Key message 4: Co-design diaspora engagement policies and programmes with diaspora youth to go beyond cultural provision and enhance the economic development of the heritage sector

Current government policies and initiatives in heritage, entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement play a crucial role in fostering innovation in the heritage tourism sector and equipping youth in diaspora and countries of origin to develop their ideas. An essential component in achieving more diaspora youth engagement with cultural heritage entrepreneurship is including and recognising needs at policy-making levels. For governments to implement changes in the way they work with and tap into diaspora youth, it will be essential to consult diaspora youth and create mechanisms to continuously design policies and programmes with their input and collaboration across relevant government departments and sectors. This would move diaspora youth policy beyond the provision of cultural programming and encourage diaspora youth to take an active role in the development of the cultural heritage sector.



RECOMMENDATIONS

► Governments and embassies of countries of origin

- Recognise in policy the value of intangible heritage in order to frame and provide impetus for entrepreneurs to develop heritage products in the sector.
- Identify and invite members of diaspora youth groups to be part of thematic heritage tourism working groups or hubs, and seek to provide their input on policy development.
- Ensure diaspora youth have an active role to play in making a contribution to their home countries by increasing representation of diaspora youth in various diaspora policy making fora.

► Diaspora youth groups and organisations

- Identify and encourage participation of existing creative and tourism entrepreneurs in policy working groups and fora.

► The European Union and Member states

- Continue to support policy dialogue through platforms such as AU-EU Youth Summits and fund the creation of similar hubs, working groups and fora in other regions of the world and at national level.



DIGITAL TOOLS ARE CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING ALL OF THE ABOVE

From offering space to curate virtual exhibitions, to facilitating access to tourism opportunities and information, and marketing heritage tourism to diaspora youth audiences, digital innovations support the work of several stakeholders. Digital tools also create an enabling environment for the growing creative digital pursuits and opportunities around heritage, therefore contributing to the foundational work of building diaspora youth identity connections to their countries of origin.