



Project on

TOURISM and PEACE

Final Report

February 2012 – December 2014

Executive Summary

The Project “Tourism and Peace”, an Initiative by the World Tourism Organization and the University of Klagenfurt and its Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education” was carried out from 2012 until 2014. It resulted in the publication of the *‘International Handbook on Tourism and Peace’* and a study on *‘Tourism in the Alps-Adriatic Region and its role in peace-building’*. A network of experts was built during all stages of the project, which was essential for the design of the International Handbook and beyond. Thanks to the support of the Austrian government, the handbook was presented at the UN in New York, UNESCO in Paris and at the International Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg. Upon invitation of the Colombian tourism sector, it was also presented in Bogotá, Colombia and at Conciliation Resources, an NGO in London that works in post-conflict regions. Several presentations were held on a local and regional level.

In addition, several project proposals on various aspects of “Tourism and Peace” were created, among which the most significant one is ‘Doing Tourism While Advancing Peace and Development’, focusing on the role of the private sector in post-conflict contexts. Furthermore, cooperation efforts were made with tourism schools in Austria and Germany and included thesis supervision regarding “Tourism and Peace”. Several peer reviews of articles on tourism and peace were carried out for international tourism and/or peace journals.

The outstanding result of the project is the Handbook that proves to be a valuable milestone in the “Tourism and Peace” discourse. It has brought some new insights and knowledge into this very complex field. It is understood that much more research has to be carried out in order to understand the whole spectrum of its interconnectedness. In times of economic uncertainty and increasing conflicts, the flourishing tourism sector should understand and exploit its potential in peace-building efforts. Unfortunately, the project faced serious limitations due to a lack of funds. Consequently, some research ideas could not be carried out. Research undertakings in the future are encouraged to do so.

Introduction

The Project “Tourism and Peace’ was based on an agreement between the UNWTO and the University of Klagenfurt, especially its Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education. The agreement began in February 2012 and ended on 31st December 2014. It was officially supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. Cordula Wohlmuther coordinated the project throughout its duration. For this purpose, she took an unpaid special leave from her position in the UNWTO. This leave ended in December 2014. Werner Wintersteiner, Director of the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education of the University, was the Scientific Director of the Project. In addition, the project was advised by the experts at the Peace Centre, in particular Bettina Gruber and Claudia Brunner, who have expertise in various peace- related fields. Thanks to their regular input and discussions on a variety of ‘tourism and peace-related’ aspects additional findings and considerations enriched the project significantly. 12 volunteers, mostly students from the University supported at various stages the project. They were involved in the implementation of the project and the making of the Handbook and the Alps- Adriatic Study. For their volunteer work they received valuable insight in peace- research and peace and tourism. In addition, they received a certificate from the Peace Centre for their engagement as well as Letter of Recommendations.

The main goal of the project was to help build the theoretical and empirical foundations for a better understanding of how and under which conditions tourism can contribute to peace. It thus aimed to determine how to use tourism as a means to development and prosperity, as well as peace, human rights and intercultural understanding. Furthermore, it intended to provide relevant tools for tourism development that promotes and sustains peace between and within nations. Through this, tourism stakeholders and case study subjects alike shall benefit from the new understandings gained from the project.

Activities

The initial steps included identifying and contacting potential cooperation partners and experts in the field as well as elaborating a comprehensive work plan for research activities. An overview on existing knowledge and information was created in the first stages of literature research on tourism and peace. The most recent knowledge was then compiled and critically analysed.

The general Concept Note of ‘Tourism and Peace’ was divided into four key components: (1) Role of the Private Sector, (2) Tourism Education as Peace Education, (3) Tourism in the Alps-Adriatic-Region and its role in peace-building, and (4) Peace Tourism – Intercultural Dialogue and Tourist Education. All four components were put into concept notes and possibilities for allocation of funds were looked into. (see attached Matrix)

As a result, two fully-fledged research proposals were created, the first one being “**Doing Tourism While Advancing Peace and Development: Guidelines for conflict-sensitive business practices in tourism**”, which was done jointly with the German consulting company *COMPASS*, the NGO *International Alert* and *Swisspeace*. This was followed by

discussions regarding communication and fundraising strategies that particularly aimed at influential international bodies, as much as on national, regional and local establishments. Nevertheless, despite these efforts the project remained unfunded.

The second fully-fledged proposal was on **“Tourism in the Alps-Adriatic Region and its role in peace-building”**. For this purpose, applications for funding were submitted to various local and regional bodies, including the University of Klagenfurt and the Kärntner Sparkasse, both of which provided some of the needed funding. The Alps-Adriatic region (in its narrow sense) comprises the province Carinthia of Austria, the Italian autonomous region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the state of Slovenia. For the study, several interviews with Austrian, Italian and Slovenian experts were conducted regarding tourism in the region in general and the so-called *Peace Trails* in Slovenia, Carinthia and Italy in particular. The answers were interpreted according to a theoretical concept drawing from the experiences and previous studies of the Peace Centre.

In addition, a *marketing strategy* for the overall project on ‘Tourism and Peace’ was developed and encompassed press releases and the distribution of leaflets in German, English, Spanish and French. The Project was also presented during the *“Lange Nacht der Forschung”* (Long Night of Research) at the University of Klagenfurt in 2012, and at the Alps-Adriatic Conference in Villach in 2012, which helped to reach a broader audience and awaken more interest.

Furthermore, a university course on ‘Tourism and Peace’ was held at the University of Klagenfurt in autumn 2014, in which the main concepts were introduced in lectures for undergraduate students. This course was part of the Peace Studies programme that the Peace Centre offers students from various disciplines.

International Handbook on Tourism and Peace

The most relevant result of the project was the *“International Handbook on Tourism and Peace”*. For this purpose, a call for paper was elaborated and potential authors were identified after receiving and discussing their abstracts. This was followed by a final selection of papers that were to be included in the handbook and further fundraising activities at local donors such as banks, government, private entities and university-related institutions. Once all final papers were submitted, the proof-reading and editing process began for a timely finalisation of the handbook. The book was printed by the local publishing house *Drava* in January 2014 and was subsequently presented on several occasions including the International Centre of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg (April, 2014), the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UNESCO in Paris (May, 2014), a side event at the UN General Assembly in New York (June, 2014), the *“International Seminar on Tourism and Peace”* in Bogotá (June, 2014), and the NGO *Conciliation Resources* in London (July, 2014). These events proved highly valuable for the dissemination of newly gained knowledge that is compiled in the book. Thanks to the financial support from various institutions, such as the University of Klagenfurt and the UNWTO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the determined effort of twelve volunteers from the university, the publication of the book was made possible. Based on the Open Access policy of the University of Klagenfurt, the book is freely accessible at <http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/frieden/inhalt/1028.htm>.

Tourism in the Alps-Adriatic Region and its role in peace-building

The case study “*Tourism in the Alps-Adriatic Region and its role in peace-building*” was able to shed light on a region that receives attention by the Peace Centre on a variety of peace-related issues, such as peace education and memory politics. The purpose of the study was to look into the role of tourism in the region that comprises the Austrian province Carinthia, the Italian region Friuli Venezia Giulia and the state of Slovenia. In the region, three cultures meet – the Roman, the Slavic and the German one. This region has experienced the most violent phases of the 20st Century: it suffered during World War I by being the location of the front line between the Austrian-Hungarian and Italian troops and from its consequences when new states were created and new borderlines were drawn. World War II was characterized by an extremely violent war against all Slavic population by the Nazis and the resistance of Italian and Yugoslav (Tito) partisans. After World War II, the region was divided in the Western and NATO state Italy, the Western, but neutral Austria and the communist, but non-aligned Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav State collapsed in 1991, leading to a violent civil war. The Alps-Adriatic region as well was affected by this conflict. Only when all three ‘parts’ became part of the European Union and the borders opened up, the opportunity to create a ‘culture of peace’ arose. Transnational activities to deal with the past, in order to reach reconciliation and to create a common future emerged, step by step.

Based on this specific history, the case study paid special attention to the *peace trails* that exist in all three ‘parts’ of the transnational region – an important element for any politics of memory and reconciliation. Relevant insights and conclusions of this study were published in the International Handbook on Tourism and Peace. A separate study with detailed information and insights, obtained through interviews with local experts and private enterprises in Slovenia, Carinthia and Italy, was accomplished in 2014 and will be published in 2015. The study has contributed to closing a knowledge gap by showcasing the role that tourism can play in such specific ‘post-conflict’ contexts.

Outcome and Impact

- **PRACTICAL OUTCOME:** Two publications (International Handbook and the study on Tourism in the Alps- Adriatic Region and its role in peace-building)
Project Proposals on: i) Tourism Education as Peace Education and ii) Doing Tourism While Advancing Peace and Development: Guidelines for conflict- sensitive business practices in tourism.
- **THEORETICAL OUTCOME:** The project was the impulse to combine the concept of a “culture of peace”, one focus of the Peace Centre’s work, with current concepts of “peaceable” tourism. This led to the creation of the new concept of “**peace-sensitive tourism**” defined as tourism that is sustainable, responsible, ethical and all-inclusive (all stakeholders involved in decision-making and local specifics taken into account). Building on this framework, tourism can serve as an instrument to build and maintain peace.
- **INTERNATIONAL IMPACT:** The newly gained findings in the Handbook contributed to Colombia’s new Tourism Strategy 2014-18, which is called “Tourism as an

instrument in building peace in Colombia". The case study "Communitarian Ecotourism in the Colombian Darién and Urabá Region: An Opportunity for Peace-Building", which is presented in the Handbook, has proven to be an important foundation for making this region a pilot destination for peace-sensitive tourism.

- Various presentations at local, regional and global events led to an increased awareness about 'Tourism and Peace'.
- New cooperation with international experts and institutions was built.
- International acknowledgement of the gained expertise. This was proven by being invited for peer- reviews of various articles in expert journals on various occasions.

Conclusions

The project 'Tourism and Peace' has managed to identify and mobilise key experts in the field of Tourism and Peace and, by doing so, has been able to fully exploit new network opportunities. The "*International Handbook on Tourism and Peace*" has helped to unify and clarify existing expert knowledge in the field and has enabled readers to draw new conclusions. However, 'Tourism and Peace' is a relatively new concept and a great amount of information is still missing. This suggests that more research needs to be undertaken to establish an even more comprehensive knowledge base and to diminish the substantial gaps between theory and practice. A stronger dialogue, based on continuous knowledge exchange between all stakeholders, shall be encouraged. This would ensure that theoretical concepts regarding tourism and peace could be fully understood and responsibly applied to conflict-ridden locations and societies.

The biggest problem, however, seems to be a lack of financial means, even if the concept attracts wide interest. Nevertheless, a continuation and strengthening of 'Tourism and Peace', be it within the UNWTO or within Klagenfurt University, is strongly desirable. This project still has great potential to be further developed, yet due to the fact that the Coordinator will return to the UNWTO, it will be momentarily discontinued at the Peace Centre.