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**Workshop on:**

***Optimizing Community Benefits***

***in and around***

***Culture-based World Heritage Sites (WHSs)***

The case of Acre, Israel

The University of Haifa, Israel – *Center for Tourism, Pilgrimage & Recreation Research (CTPRR)*

## **Workshop Report**

WHS – The old city of Acre



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## Executive Summary:

1. In 2003, the Old City of Acre was inscribed as a World Heritage Property by UNESCO. Despite its cultural and historical importance, the efforts to transform Acre into a leading heritage site faced many difficulties. One characteristic of this failure is the lack of adequate participation of the local community in the processes and efforts to develop tourism.
2. The purpose of the workshop reported here was to use the case of the Old City of Acre as a cultural tourism laboratory in order to detect and analyze the complex array of factors that shapes the interrelations between a World Heritage Site which forms a cultural tourism attraction and the immediate community hosting it.
3. The large number of communities located in or around tourism sites calls for alternative sustainable solutions to the lack of community participation. The key elements of this alternative approach include: the assumption that each community is different; successful tourism planning, development and management which must be based on a “bottom up” approach; a socio-cultural feasibility study as a prerequisite; and all solutions must take into account the local Limits for Acceptable Change (LAC).
4. The workshop was conducted using the of Nominal Group Technique methodology (NGT) and the Normative Socio-Cultural Value Stretch Model. Members of the UNESCO-UNITWIN network on “Culture, Tourism & Development” participated in this workshop as a team of experts..

### Gap Analysis

Using the Value Stretch Model, three major gaps were identified:

5. The “*tolerance gap*” which portrays the major differences between the team of experts’ minimal requirements and their observation of the current situation.



Currently, Acre's tourism is operating below its tolerance level, creating a negative tolerance gap.

6. The “*reconciliation gap*” between the experts’ observation of the current situation and their expectations regarding the way in which community-based tourism will be operating in the future. The reconciliation gap emerging from the NGT workshop reflects the experts’ understanding that the poor performance of Acre as a cultural tourism site is a result of major management flaws and lack of local leadership that need to be addressed in the future.
7. The “*value stretch gap*” between the experts’ minimal requirements and their expectations level. In Acre, this gap is wide and emerges as a result of the team’s view that most of the attributes set for the *tolerance level* are still to be achieved in the future.

### **Value Stretch Results and Management Recommendations to the Old City of Acre**

The Value Stretch results can be grouped into five major management recommendations regarding the old city of Acre:

8. **Recognition and Acceptance** - Currently, the people of Old Acre feel excluded from the tourism development process. Their interests should be voiced and taken into account in any future discourse and decision-making processes related to tourism development.
9. **Cooperation, Communication and Dialog** - Currently, there is a problem of communication and collaboration between Acre’s different stakeholders. It is recommended to form a cooperative mechanism of all stakeholders to identify mutual interests.
10. **Economic Inclusion** - Currently, the level of community integration in the tourism system is minimal. Promoting community integration will ensure that tourism

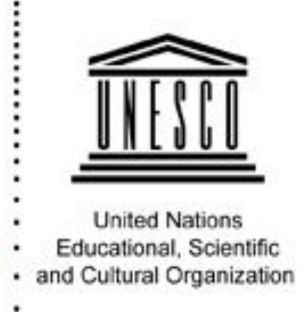


revenues will directly benefit the people of Acre and improve their standard of living.

11. **Education and Awareness** - The local community in Old Acre has very limited awareness of the city's heritage and of its cultural and historical importance. This can be amended by establishing a local tourism education center with appropriate pedagogical strategy.
12. **Tourism Product Management and Maintenance** - The level of maintenance in Old Acre is lacking; to promote tourism, the maintenance, tourism services and itineraries and overall management should be immediately improved.

### Recommendations to UNESCO

13. Positively integrating the local community within tourism planning and development will:
  - Support the achievement of all standards and benchmarks that have been set as part of the WHSs inscription
  - Reduce conflicts between stakeholders
  - Enhance sustainability, especially in cultural tourism destinations where the community itself is part of the cultural, historical and/or heritage attraction.
14. Therefore, it is highly recommended that as part of the nomination and evaluation of applications for WH inscription, UNESCO will categorically demand that as a prerequisite, a socio-cultural LAC evaluation be conducted.
15. Such evaluation will facilitate community-based tourism solutions which will benefit the locals economically, culturally and in terms of their quality of life and heritage awareness, as well as improve the quality of the tourist product.

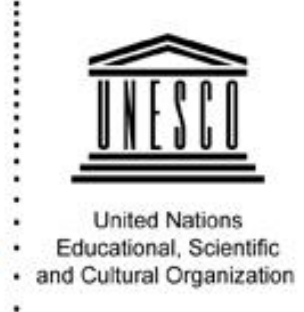


## Introduction and Workshop Aims

The Old City of Acre represents a vertical of many historical strata. Each historical period left its imprint on its tangible and intangible heritage. In recognition of its cultural and historical importance, Acre was inscribed in 2003 as a World Heritage Property (WHP) by UNESCO. Efforts by local stakeholders and the government of Israel to transform Acre into one of the leading heritage sites in Israel faced many difficulties. Such efforts took place before and after UNESCO's inscription.

However, Acre is still waiting for its tourism breakthrough. This failure to capitalize on UNESCO's inscription is a result of a wide range of constraints, circumstances, policies (at local and national levels), negative attitudes by various stakeholders and the fragile geopolitical situation in the Middle East. One of the characteristics of this failure is a lack of adequate participation of the local community in the processes and efforts to develop tourism. Furthermore, the local community has not really experienced any substantial direct and/or indirect benefits which have improved its standard of living and quality of life.

The purpose of the workshop reported here was to use the case of the Old City of Acre as a cultural tourism laboratory in order to detect and analyze the complex array of factors that shapes the interrelations between a World Heritage Site which forms a cultural tourism attraction and the immediate community hosting it. Another purpose, based on the above, was to recommend courses of action and to set out optional solutions on how to better integrate the local community into the evolving heritage tourism system. This improved integration is aimed at producing improved community participation and partnership in the planning, development and operation of this WHP.



## The Old City of Acre as a World Heritage Site –

### An Overview

In recent years the archaeological, historical and touristic site of Acre has been the subject of national and international conservation and intensive touristic development.

The nomination of Acre as a World Heritage Property in 2001 was the result of a long procedure that concentrated strictly on the preservation of the built heritage in the city.

This approach began under the British Mandate administration during which a new Masterplan for Acre was drawn up in 1946. According to this plan, tourism was regarded as the main key for future development of the city. It is since then that the local residents have been regarded as a part of the city's touristic potential, a kind of 'setting' for the intensive tourist development.

The heritage values of the city were identified in the new Masterplan of the city in 1993 and again during the nomination process of Acre as World Heritage in 2001. Acre is an exceptional historic port-town that preserves substantial remains of its Medieval Crusader buildings which date back to the 12th and 13th centuries. These lie beneath the existing fortified Ottoman city constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is due to this that the values identified during the nomination procedure relate to the built heritage of Acre and





include Aesthetic, Historic and Scientific values. Unlike any other site in Israel, these Ottoman buildings are officially protected by the Israeli Antiquities Law.

The nomination of Acre as a world heritage site has brought international recognition to the importance of the city. As a result intensive excavations have uncovered massive Crusader remains of the Hospitaller Compound and the Templar quarter. Together with the traditional Turkish bathhouse and some other buildings, these have been conserved, restored and turned into international touristic sites attracting thousands of visitors from all over the world each year. Although the infrastructure of the city has been replaced and housing buildings in one central residential quarter have undergone restoration procedures, social rehabilitation has not yet accompanied these developments.

The Acre of today is a vibrant city. The local residents reside within 300 year old Ottoman buildings. Most of the residents are Moslem Arabs that moved into Acre after the 1948 War of Independence and are generally of a low social-economic status. Thus the contrast in the city is enormous: there are beautiful restored tourist sites on the one hand and, on the other, old buildings housing the local residents who have few resources to modernize their homes.

Social values identified in the World Heritage Nomination describe Acre as a multi-cultural – religious city. However, updated research indicates that the cultural heritage of Acre has many additional values. These include intangible heritage and various cultural



symbols



## Putting the Workshop into a Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework behind the workshop is based on recent appraisals of the overall success of the sustainability paradigm to support socio-cultural processes among the communities hosting tourism. A recent document on the future of Green Tourism has produced a few indications that shed light on the limited achievements of this paradigm in making a real change. In other words, tourism planning, development and operation have not benefited local communities to the level where these communities are fully integrated into the tourism system (Gravari-Barbas & Mansfeld, 2010).

The fact is that so many communities located in or around tourism sites call for alternative sustainable solutions to the lack of community participation in planning, development and operation of tourism. Below are the proposed key elements of this alternative approach:

- **The assumption that each community is different** – therefore each community hosting tourism has to be carefully studied in order to generate its own tailor-made sustainable solution in terms of community participation.
- **Successful tourism planning, development and management must be based on a “bottom up” approach** – thus, imposing global, state, and/or regional tourism policies on local communities will generate, in most cases, local antagonism, ignorance, and active protests against tourism.
- **Socio-cultural feasibility study is a prerequisite** – if it is assumed that each community is different in terms of its socio-cultural sensitivity and aspirations *vis*



*a vis* tourism development, it is important to conduct such a study to detect the unique attitude of a given community toward tourism in its locality.

- **All solutions must take into account the local Limits for Acceptable Change-LAC** – namely that the specific willingness to trade off cultural and physical changes with economic wealth generated by tourism should be the baseline for any decision taken regarding tourism development.



## Methodological Overview

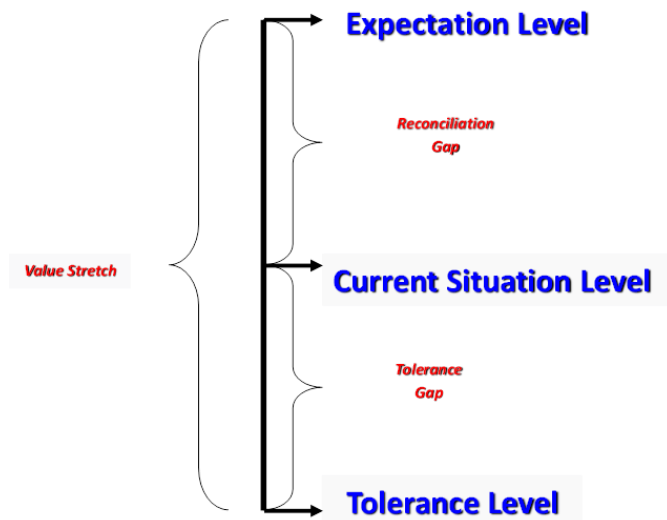
The workshop used the Old City of Acre as a case study to analyze the relationship between a given local community and all other stakeholders involved in developing tourism in a World Heritage Site. A conceptual model integrated into a group technique was used as the methodology for this workshop. The evaluators of these relations between the community and the other stakeholders were cultural tourism experts who are cultural tourism researchers and planners. All are members of the UNESCO-UNITWIN network on “Culture, Tourism & Development (see full list of participants in Appendix 1).

### The Normative Socio-Cultural *Value Stretch* Model:

This model, used and developed for the first time by Della Fave (1976) is based on a modified sociological concept arguing that when confronted by a decision situation that has both current and future dimensions, people adopt normative attitudes on three different levels: two of which represent their **minimal** requirements and their **future expectations**. Between those levels each of us develops a normative assessment of the current situation *vis a vis* this decision problem. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of this concept



Figure 1: The Value Stretch Model



As seen in Figure 1, the model's attitude levels generate three distinctive and measureable gaps:

- The *Tolerance Gap* between the minimal requirements (tolerance level) and the current situation.
- The *Reconciliation Gap* between the current situation and the expectations level
- The *Value Stretch* between the tolerance level and the expectations level.

When these gaps are measured, they can shed light on how the evaluated values stretch and hence call for some kind of planning intervention in order to improve a community's situation.



The application of this model in cultural tourism and community research may be applicable in the following circumstances:

- As a cultural tourism planning process for “untouched” communities
- When assessing the impact of tourism development processes on local communities
- When there is a need to improve poor cultural tourism performances affected by a hostile host community
- When there is a community call for help due to operation of a cultural tourism system beyond the community’s Limit for Acceptable Change.

The Nominal Group Technique (NGT):

NGT is a strategic planning and policy-making tool. It is based on focus group sessions and allows rounds of guided and controlled discussion on planning and development issues. Its end product is a group definition of a community attitude towards a given planning problem or issue. When applied to tourism planning and development processes, it defines the group’s development priorities on the one hand and its limits for acceptable change on the other. As such it is a highly useful tool for strategic plans and action plans for short, medium and long-term tourism projects. It has been widely used as a conflict management tool in planning situations where there are major and deep conflicts over the planning ideology and/or practice between the stakeholders involved. When modified to become a data collection tool using the Value Stretch model, it includes three rounds of discussions in accordance with the three normative levels of the model.



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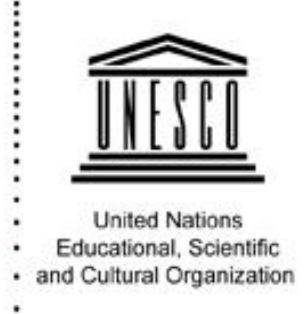
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The application of the NGT in the case of this workshop was an “expert session” and was aimed at achieving a group of experts’ collective evaluation of the level of community-based tourism development in the WHS of Old Acre. Using the VS model, the experts (all active members of the UNESCO-UNITWIN Network of Tourism, Culture & Development) were asked to share their normative views of the tolerance level; current situation level; and expectation level reflecting on the incorporation of the local community and planning, development, restoration, and conservation of the Old City of Acre. The collective data obtained through the NGT workshop was then processed to provide the group’s view of the level of involvement of the community in tourism developed in this WHS. This document will present these data, and analyses of these data will follow.





## Mapping Acre's tourism stakeholders

A number of stakeholders are directly involved in tourism planning, development and operation of tourism within the walls of the Old City of Acre. Following is a list of those stakeholders and a brief description of their nature of involvement:

- The Municipality of Acre – is in charge of planning; issuing planning permission; supporting entrepreneurs; and initiating tourism project through its municipal development corporation.
- The Old Acre Development Company (OADC) - a leading stakeholder in charge of planning, physical development and promotion of tourism in old city. The OADP has been in charge of the conservation, rehabilitation, renovation and upgrade of civil infrastructure of old Acre over the past two decades. The OADP is also in charge of tendering buildings within the walled city to real estate entrepreneurs for the purpose of tourism development.
- The Israel Antiquities Authority – a governmental authority in charge of excavation and research into archeological sites in Israel. A key stakeholder in determining the level of tourism activity in archeological sites in Acre, this authority has also bearing on planning process.
- Acre's Economic Development Company – a municipal for-profit organization aimed at promoting the development of economic projects within and outside the walled town. It is a subsidiary of the local municipality which operates according to local policies developed and led by the Mayor of Acre. This company started to re-operate recently and has become an important factor for all planning and development procedures in the city.
- UNESCO – this international organization promotes heritage conservation as part of its World Heritage Convention. It represents the international interest in the preservation of outstanding cultural and heritage values. Acre is one of the world heritage properties and was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It is in UNESCO's interest that the Old City of Acre will preserve its heritage including that of the current Arab community living there.



- The Baha'i World Center – the faith owns several properties which are all sacred to Baha'i followers worldwide. Their holy sites are located both within and outside the walls of Old Acre, are maintained by the faith and visited regularly by Baha'i pilgrims.
- The Moslem Wakf (Holy Assets) – The Wakf owns several sacred properties and secular buildings. Income from the secular buildings is used by the Wakf to maintain the holy sites in the city. During the Islamic festivals the Wakf together with additional local organizations offer activities which attract thousands of visitors from the surrounding villages.
- The Israel Land Administration – A governmental organization in charge of managing all state-owned land in Israel. This organization controls land within the old city, owns about 90% of the buildings in the Old City, and is involved also in planning and decision-making in terms of tourism development.
- The Ministry of Tourism – the ministry recognizes Acre as one of the leading cultural tourism sites in Israel and as such, has been promoting tourism to this town and has been involved in promoting its physical development. This has been done through its subsidiary – the OADC.
- Residents of Old Acre – the community in the old city is predominantly Muslim with a small fraction of Christians and a very small number of Jewish inhabitants. Its size is estimated at some 3,000-5,000 inhabitants. The community is characterized by a very low socio-economic background, high crime levels and high unemployment rates.
- Tourism providers – a very small group of tourism service providers who are not organized in any formal way and who are trying to make a living out of tourism in the old city. Recently, entrepreneurs living outside Acre are becoming more interested in establishing tourism businesses in the old city without moving in as members of the community.



## Results of the “Value Stretch Model”

The NGT workshop yielded data on the collective assessment of Acre’s community involvement in its tourism system. The team of experts elaborated aspects of community and tourism development in Acre on the five following levels:

1. **Recognition and acceptance** - from the people living in the Old City of Acre as legitimate stakeholders expected to voice their needs, expectations and limits for acceptable change (LAC), and that is expecting that these voice will be heard, taken into account and implemented in policies, panning? planning? processes, development processes and in implementation of Acre’s operation of its tourism system.
2. **Cooperation, communication and dialog** - that will transform the local community in the Old City into an equal partner aware of tourism processes, involved in operating the tourism system and supporting tourism as a legitimate economic base in Acre.
3. **Economic inclusion** – taking all necessary steps to actively integrate the local community into tourism, either as employees or as entrepreneurs of local tourism businesses.
4. **Education, training and awareness** – activities required to gain the community’s positive attitude toward tourism based on their LAC on the one hand, and on their wish to utilize the cultural tourism resource as a means toward economic prosperity.
5. **Tourism product management and maintenance** – to ensure that the tourist quality of the tangible and intangible cultural assets of Acre are maintained and managed in a sustainable manner.

These five levels already indicate that, in terms of minimal requirements (tolerance level) and in terms of the current situation, the involvement (or, rather, lack of involvement) of



the local community in the tourism system, is a complex and multidimensional problem.

The next section will list the constructs obtained for each Value Stretch level and analyze these findings.

***Constructs obtained on The Tolerance Level (in descending order):***

The leading question posed for the experts in the NGT workshop referred to the *tolerance level* of the Value Stretch model and was:

*What are the MINIMAL (prerequisite) cultural tourism development and operation characteristics needed to achieve Old Acre's local community support in tourism as a legitimate economic sector?*

Below is a list of the ten most important constructs that were noted collectively by the expert team with reference to the *Tolerance Level* (for the entire list of constructs see *Appendix 2*). These constructs appear in a descending order of importance and represent the minimal requirements that the team collectively compiled in order to achieve a community-based sustainable tourism system.

- Allow property ownership of tourism businesses and homes
- Putting in place heritage/ tourism pedagogical strategy
- Strike a contract between the central government and the local community
- Creating awareness and communication tools
- Establishing an incubation center



- Identifying job opportunities
- Creating a cooperation mechanism of all stakeholders
- Enhancing collective use of public space and free access to them?
- Providing incentives for local entrepreneurs
- Using the WH inscription and label as a branding tool

As seen from the above list, the team reckoned that property ownership, tourism education and training and a long-term binding contract between the central government and the local community are top priorities within this set of preconditioned constructs.

***Constructs obtained on The Current Situation Level (in descending order):***

The second leading question posed to the team of experts corresponded to the *current situation* level and was:

*What cultural tourism development and operation attributes currently characterize Old Acre?*

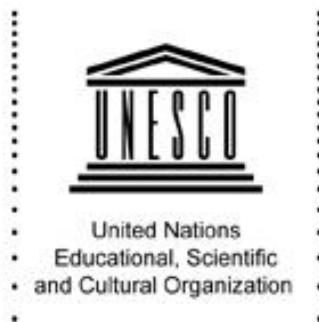
Below is a list of the ten most important constructs that were noted collectively by the expert team with reference to the *Current Situation Level* (for the entire list of constructs see Appendix 2). At this level of the Value Stretch Model, participants in the NGT workshop were asked to note those constructs depicting their impression on how the relationships between the local community and the other tourism stakeholders can be defined? When sharing their collective view on the current situation, participants made their judgment on the basis of bibliographical material made available to them prior to the



workshop, on an in-depth tour of the Old City guided by several experts and by the head of the Old Acre Development Corporation. Another ingredient in their data base was a series of lectures provided a day before the NGT workshop by several experts who portrayed the level of cooperation between the community and the development agencies from different perspectives.

- Lack of community integration in the tourism system
- No local leadership
- Poor tourism governance
- Inability of the leading tourism stakeholders to prioritize community interests
- Multi-faceted array of conflicts between stakeholders
- Lack of visible itineraries
- Lack of money-spending opportunities
- Neglect of urban spaces
- Very poor representation of local art
- Unwelcomed tourists

Together, all of the above constructs portray a gloomy picture of the Old City, the way in which its tourism assets are managed, the lack of integration of the local community in the tourism system, and the lack of strong community leadership that can better represent and pursue the interests of the local people in an socio-economic and cultural integration of their community to the local tourism.



***Constructs obtained on the Future Expectations Level (in descending order):***

The leading key question posed to the expert team and corresponded with the *expectations level* was:

*What operational and development attributes of cultural tourism are needed in the future in order to substantially improve its sustainable function in Old Acre as a community-centered cultural tourism site?*

Following is a list of the ten most important constructs that were noted collectively by the expert team with reference to the *Expectations Level* (for the entire list of constructs see *Appendix 2*).

- Provide educational programs to improve the local understanding of heritage
- Translating all tourism and planning materials into Arabic
- Measuring the LAC
- Facilitate the training of local guides
- Involving the local community in future tourism planning
- Improve integration between the local community and stakeholders
- Remove obstacles for local people's operation of business
- Use religious leaders as promoters of cultural tourism
- Create community-focused walking tours
- Encouraging NGOs' involvement in tourism planning and operation

As seen in the list of constructs above, the collective expectation of the expert team emphasized the relationship between heritage awareness and understanding, on the one



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hand, and community future active participation in the tourism sector, on the other.

Apparently, the lack of such understanding due to the absence of appropriate educational programs is perceived by the team as a key obstacle to future collaboration of the local community with tourism development processes. Another obstacle which the team found is the inability of the local community to communicate with other stakeholders in their own language – Arabic. The team of experts reckoned that a positive attitude toward the tourism processes is conditioned by the local residents' ability to read official documents related to tourism in their town. Hence, the team recommended that in the future all documentation related to tourism in Acre be translated to Arabic. And finally there was a strong plea through the Expectation Level to measure the LAC of the local community and to take their limits for acceptable change as a benchmark and guidelines for any further tourism development in Acre.





## Gap Analysis

The Value Stretch Model used to analyze the results of this workshop produced gaps which portray the major differences between the team of experts' minimal requirements and their observation of the current situation (the “*tolerance gap*”); between their observation of the current situation and their expectations in the way in which community-based tourism will be operating in the future (the “*reconciliation gap*”); and, between their minimal requirements and their expectation level (the “*value stretch gap*”).

### ***Tolerance Gap:***

The first interesting observation, and one which is of serious concern, is the finding that Acre's tourism is currently operating below its *tolerance level*. This in fact created a negative *tolerance gap*. It also means that Acre's stakeholders involved in promoting tourism development should take all necessary steps to first reach the minimal requirement level (*tolerance level*) before they take any other steps involving further tourism development.

When the tolerance gap is analyzed based on constructs prioritized by the expert team in the tolerance and current situation levels, the overall observation is that the negative gap is a result of four leading issues. Thus, the team suggested that an important minimal requirement is the need to establish sound confidence between the community and the other stakeholders. However, the team got the impression that, at the moment, such confidence does not exist. Furthermore, the team reckoned that an important prerequisite



for successful community-based tourism in Acre is tourism and heritage education.

Again, their impression was that currently such educational programs for the local community are not available. A negative *tolerance gap* was also detected with respect to cooperation between the community and stakeholders in charge of tourism development. While such cooperation was elaborated in the workshop as a prerequisite, the team's impression was that such cooperation is lacking. Finally, a negative tolerance gap was also found with regard to the need for economic integration of the Arab community into the existing and future local tourism system.

***Reconciliation Gap:***

The reconciliation gap emerging from the NGT workshop reflects the experts' understanding that the poor performance of Acre as a cultural tourism site is a result of major management flaws and a lack of local leadership that need to be addressed in the future. The experts viewed the current lack of community integration in the tourism system as a major problem affecting the product quality, their attitude toward tourists, and their lack of confidence in local and governmental stakeholders.

Thus, most constructs elaborated by the expert team on the *future expectations* level stem from the *current situation* level. As such, they can be regarded as management solutions that, if adopted and implemented in the future, will substantially reduce the gap between what is currently characterizing the local tourism system and the anticipated end product



– a balanced, sustainable and community-based cultural tourism system in the Old City of Acre.

***Value Stretch Gap:***

When constructs elaborated at the *tolerance level* and the future *expectations level* are compared in order to evaluate the emerging value stretch gap, a few interesting conclusions may be drawn:

First, that the gap is wide and emerges as a result of the team’s view that most of the attributes set by this team for the *tolerance level* are still to be achieved in the future.

Second, that the main issues that need to be addressed in the future include improvement of communication between the locals and the other tourism stakeholders; improving co-operation between them; installing educational programs on tourism and heritage as well as all necessary mechanisms to facilitate local tourism entrepreneurship among the local Arab population.

Third, quite interestingly, what have been thought of as major key attributes needed in order to assure successful community- based tourism in Acre – LAC measurement as a feasibility study and property ownership – do not appear on both levels. Thus, the prerequisite to ensure the local residents' property ownership in Old Acre does not appear on the list of the most important expected attributes depicting the future community-based tourism system. On the other hand, the call for a LAC feasibility study prior to any



further cultural tourism development in Old Acre appears as a management recommendation only at the *expectation level* but does not appear as a prerequisite at the *tolerance level*.

The lack of recommendation to allow private property ownership at the *expectations level* can be attributed to the expert team's impression that the chances to reach this stage are poor due to the long-term government socio-political policy which will prevail. On the other hand, the appearance of a recommendation to conduct a LAC study only at the *expectations level* can be regarded as a reaction to what was portrayed at the *current situation* level. However, it can also reflect on the team's wrong assumption that such LAC feasibility studies are standard operating procedures in socially and politically complex tourist attractions. The fact is that such a study has never been conducted as one of the feasibility studies prior to developing Acre's cultural tourism product. It is also clear that if it were conducted prior to tourism development, there would be no guarantee that the results would have been implemented in the planning and the development process. The inevitable conclusion is that, while conducting a socio-cultural carrying?not clear capacity measurement studies is vital, this has to be accompanied with socio-political readiness by governments in order to implement the results for the benefit of the host community.



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## Management Recommendations to the Old City of Acre

The findings of the *Value Stretch Model* obtained using a Nominal Group Technique workshop, resulted in five major recommendations for Acre stakeholders. These are aimed at transforming the current tourism system in this city into a community-based one. The five management recommendations are underlined herewith and are in line with the five main domains of attributes and constructs elaborated by the expert team during the workshop session:

1. **Recognition and Acceptance** - Currently, the people of Old Acre feel excluded from the tourism development process. Therefore, when restructuring the relationship between the local community and the other stakeholders, the residents' interests should be voiced and taken into account in any future discourse and decision-making processes related to tourism development in the Old City. In order to facilitate this process, the first and most important step would be to facilitate property ownership of real estate, tourism businesses and homes. This step should be accompanied with a binding contract between the central government and the local community; and by translating all tourism and planning documentation into Arabic.
2. **Cooperation, Communication and Dialog** - Currently, there is a problem of communication and collaboration between Acre's various stakeholders. This is evident primarily with regard to the lack of proper communication between the



local community and all other stakeholders/participants in charge of planning, conservation and development of tourism in the Old City. Consequently, it is recommended to form a cooperative mechanism of all stakeholders, one that is capable of providing a bridge between the different opinions and identifying mutual interests. This should also include the cultivation of local leadership and ensuring that the local community is well represented and that the residents' interests are being considered.

3. **Economic Inclusion** - Currently, the level of community integration in the tourism system is minimal. It is of great importance to increase and promote community integration in the local tourism business so that actual tourist revenues will directly benefit the people of Acre and improve their standard of living. This may be achieved, inter alia, by providing professional training in the tourism trades; identifying job opportunities; providing incentives for local entrepreneurs; creating an incubation center for small and medium tourism enterprises; and removing bureaucratic obstacles to encourage the local residents' operation of such businesses.
4. **Education and Awareness** - The local community in Old Acre has very little awareness of the city's heritage or of its cultural and historical importance. This can be mended by establishing a local tourism education center which would form



a heritage/ tourism pedagogical strategy and provide educational programs to improve the local understanding of heritage.

5. **Tourism Product Management and Maintenance** - Despite the large governmental investment put into Acre's physical infrastructure in recent years, Old Acre's level of maintenance is still extremely poor. Some urban spaces are neglected or poorly maintained, the level of tourism development does not meet international standards and there is a limited number of tourism services and facilities. To promote Acre as a tourist destination, the level of maintenance should be immediately improved, together with the development of tourism services and itineraries. In addition, the management of the Old City as a tourism destination should also be improved.

6. **Tourism development as a means of intercultural understanding and cooperation** - Tourism development in Old Acre should be fostered not only as a means of economic development but also as a means of true collaboration and better understanding between different communities. Tourism, bringing international visibility and awareness, may represent a precious opportunity for intercultural dialog and collaboration. Beyond architectural, urban and aesthetic values, Acre's World Heritage should give the clear message of a consciously shared space for the empowered communities living there.





## Recommendations to UNESCO

UNESCO is a key stakeholder in the Old City of Acre. As such, it is in UNESCO's interest that all WHSs operating on the basis of cultural tourism attractions will thrive by achieving all standards and benchmarks that have been set as part of its inscription. However, these standards and benchmarks should also include parameters referring to the level of integration of the local community in the tourism planning and development process. It is obvious that the needs and expectations of a given community, which share its living space with tourism attractions and the tourists who visit them, should be taken into account.

However, what is so often neglected, and was ignored in the case of the Old City of Acre while being nominated for UNESCO's WH inscription, is a prefeasibility study of the local community's needs, expectations, reservations and attitudes toward tourism development in their locality. If such attitudes are not studied and made public, then conflicts between the local community and other stakeholders in the local tourism system are almost inevitable (as has been well documented in the case of Acre).

Moreover, UNESCO is making efforts to develop sustainable tourism systems in places where culture, heritage and historical assets are the predominant features of the place. Adequate sustainability levels cannot be achieved if socio-cultural issues related to the locality are looked at only from the perspective of their contribution to the tourism



system itself. Furthermore, in some of such cultural tourism destinations, the community itself is part of the cultural, historical and/or heritage attraction.

Therefore, it is believed that it is in UNESCO's interest to ensure that the local community is positively integrated into the tourism system. In pursuit of this end, **it is highly recommended that as part of the nomination and evaluation of applications for WH inscription, UNESCO will categorically demand that, as a prerequisite, a socio-cultural LAC evaluation be conducted.** This evaluation can be in the form of expert evaluation (as was done in the workshop reported here), in the form of community workshops, or both. In fact, the methodology used in the workshop reported here proved its ability to perform an efficient, low-cost and practical LAC analysis which, in a very short period of time, could provide decision-makers, planners and UNESCO's evaluators with decision-support information. The comprehensive report on the specific attitude of a given community toward tourism development will help in tailoring the WHS as a cultural tourism attraction which is in line with the local residents' limits for acceptable change. In other words, it will facilitate a community-based tourism solution which will benefit the local residents economically, culturally and in terms of its quality of life and heritage awareness. In such circumstances, the perceived quality of the tourist product will be improved too, thus, creating a win-win situation for the tourism sector on the one hand and for the local community on the other.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization



UNESCO Network on:  
Culture, Tourism &  
Development



## Appendix 1: List of participants:

Name	Affiliation
Barré, Hervé Mr.	UNESCO, France
Bourdeau, Laurent Prof.	University of Laval, Quebec, Canada
Dallari, Fiorella Prof.	University of Bologna, Italy
Dyakonova, Olga Ms.	Russian Academy of Tourism
Gravri-Barbas, Maria Prof.	IREST, Sorbonne Paris 1, France
Jacquot, Sébastien Mr.	IREST, Sorbonne Paris 1, France
Laguseva, Nadezhda Prof.	Russian Academy of Tourism
Mariotti, Alessia Dr.	University of Bologna, Italy
Morere, Nuria Prof.	Ray Juan Carlos University, Spain
Ramos, Carmen Maria Dr.	UNESCO Chair on Culture, Tourism & Development, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Salazar, Noel Dr.	University of Leuven, Belgium
Jocelyne Napoli, Prof.	University of Toulouse 3, France
Yoel Mansfeld, Prof.	CTPRR, University of Haifa, Israel
Noga Collins-Kreiner, Dr.	CTPRR, University of Haifa, Israel
Eran Ketter, Mr.	CTPRR, University of Haifa, Israel
Shelley-Anne Peleg, Ms.	Israel Antiquities Authority and the University of Haifa, Israel



## Appendix 2: *Value Stretch* obtained data

### Tolerance level constructs - in descending order:

- Allow property ownership of tourism businesses and private homes
- Putting in place heritage/ tourism pedagogical strategy
- Strike a contract between the central government and the local community
- Creating awareness and communication tools
- Establishing an incubation center
- Identifying job opportunities
- Creating a cooperation mechanism of all stakeholders
- Enhancing collective use of public spaces and free access to them
- Providing incentives for local entrepreneurs
- Using the WH inscription and label as a branding tool
- Establishing a tourism training center on a multilayer basis
- Re-define the heritage values in Acre
- Creating balanced narratives for cultural tourism
- Equitable distribution of tourism wealth
- Identifying job needs
- Re-grade the heritage values in Acre
- Developing a selection of the city's themed itineraries reflecting its tangible and intangible heritage
- Identify characteristics of shared values of all stakeholders
- Define training needs
- Establishing business partnership with the municipality
- Recreate the institutional tools to safeguard heritage values
- Balancing local involvement in transformation of heritage sites



## Current situation level constructs - in descending order:

- Allow property ownership of tourism businesses and private homes
- Putting in place heritage/ tourism pedagogical strategy
- Strike a contract between the central government and the local community
- Creating awareness and communication tools
- Establishing an incubation center
- Identifying job opportunities
- Creating a cooperation mechanism of all stakeholders
- Enhancing collective use of public spaces and free access to them
- Providing incentives for local entrepreneurs
- Using the WH inscription and label as a branding tool
- Establishing a tourism training center on a multilayer basis
- Re-define the heritage values in Acre
- Creating balanced narratives for cultural tourism
- Equal Equitable distribution of tourism wealth
- Identifying job needs
- Re-grade the heritage values in Acre
- Developing a selection of the city's themed itineraries reflecting its tangible and intangible heritage
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- Recreate the institutional tools to safeguard heritage values
- Balancing local involvement in transformation of heritage sites



## Expectations level constructs - in a descending order:

- Provide educational programs to improve local understanding of heritage
- Translating all tourism and planning materials into Arabic
- Measuring the LAC
- Facilitate the training of local guides
- Involving the local community in future tourism planning
- Improve integration between the local community and stakeholders
- Remove obstacles to encourage the local residents' operation of business
- Use religious leaders as promoters of cultural tourism
- Create community-focused walking tours
- Encouraging NGOs' involvement in tourism planning and operation
- The integration of young people on a voluntary and a paid basis
- Create a strategy for local, private and tourism ownership
- Improving inter-community communication on heritage tourism through social cultural events
- Create an association for B & B and open houses ( what are these?)
- Conduct an NGT to observe the community values of cultural tourism
- Create a monitoring system to evaluate planning and development results with special reference to communal impacts and participation
- Effective integration of Acre into a real tourist system
- Diversification of the tourist attractions
- Use heritage monuments as functional social, public spaces within the limits of conservation
- Integrating community components in tourism events
- Creating historical events relating to the city and taking place in heritage sites and the city
- Creating and providing incentives for local quality and sustainable business
- Improving heritage tourism by integrating tangible and intangible cultural assets
- Building capacity in the arts and crafts sector
- Establish professional Destination Management Organizations
- Sustainable empowerment of the local urban landscape
- Create a guide/ benchmark set on best practice
- Create a tool-kit for local entrepreneurs
- Involving UNESCO in Acre's promotion as a cultural tourism hub
- Improve buffer/sustainable zone area
- Encouraging the creation of local leadership through tourism
- Establish a mechanism for international inter-cultural collaboration in training



## Appendix 3: The Workshop Program

### 1<sup>st</sup> day - Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

8:00 Depart from hotel (Drive to Acre)

9:00 Greetings:

Prof. David Faraggi - Rector, University of Haifa

Mr. Hervé Barré, Division of Cultural Expressions and Creative Industries,  
UNESCO

Mr. Dani Barelli, Secretary-General, Israel National Commission for UNESCO

9:30 Refreshments

10:00 Acre: From a Glorious Past to a Problematic Present

Prof. Michael Turner, Chairman, the Israel World Heritage Committee

Dr. Nadav Kashtan, University of Haifa

Mr. Raanan Kislev, Director, Conservation Department, Israel Antiquities  
Authority

Prof. Yoel Mansfeld, Director, Center for Tourism, Pilgrimage and Recreation  
Research

Mr. Sami Hawari, El-Yatir

Dr. Shelley-Anne Peleg, Director, International Conservation Center, Acre

Mr. Dudu Harari, Director-General, Old Acre Development Company

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Old Acre walking tour



18:00 Depart for Haifa

19:00 Dinner

### 2<sup>nd</sup> day - Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>

8:00 Depart from hotel (Drive to the University of Haifa)

8:45 Greetings: Mr. Moshe Tzur-Zurich, General Manager, Haifa Tourist Board

9:00 Prof. Yoel Mansfeld - Introduction to nominal group technique methodology

9:30 Refreshments

9:40 Discussion

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Discussion (optional)

15:00 Break at hotel

17:00 Walking Tour in the Baha'i Gardens, Haifa

19:00 Dinner

### 3<sup>rd</sup> day - Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>

9:00 Depart from hotel (Drive to Acre)

10:00 Refreshments

10:30 Presentation to stakeholders

12:30 Lunch

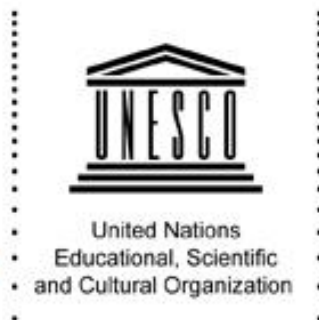
14:00 Network business meeting

17:00 Refreshments

18:00 Depart to Haifa

19:00 Drop at hotel/ train station.





## Appendix 4: Bibliographical Resources

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5. UNESCO – World Heritage Convention – Old City of Acre -

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