

# Developing a local experience

in the framework of the INTERREG project Transdanube Travel Stories

## General notes

Shaping experiences is basically like writing a script. It follows the principle of the classical drama with different acts, introduction, climax and conclusion.

The methods are taken from classic event dramaturgy, such as brain script, inferential beliefs, cognitive maps, anticipation, cliff-hanger, sentence frames, media literacy. (please see also the presentation added to this paper)

The most important thing, however, is to be aware of why you are doing something. It's not about a string of POIs that fit the theme, but a conscious decision to create certain emotions and thoughts in the guest that he or she experiences at that moment and that will have an impact for a long time to come and that he or she will tell others about at home.

## Basic needs

In order for the guests to be able to move to a "higher level" of experience at all, the basic needs (physiognomic and psychological) must be fulfilled.

### Questions:

- - Where and when are there toilets?
- - Are there drinking facilities or restaurants?
- - Is the entire route signposted so that you cannot get lost?
- - Is the trail safe?
- - How long does the experience last?
- - Where does it start and where does it end?
- - What is the trail like?
- - Who is the experience suitable for?
- - What do we want to achieve with this experience?
- - Which kind of visitors do I address?
- - Is the experience suitable for everyone or which adaptations are necessary?

## Target groups

Each target group has different levels of needs. This does not only mean children, elderly or people with special needs, but also different interests (culinary, art, activities, intellectual, customs, etc).

### Questions:

- Who could the experience appeal to?
- How could the experience be modified for different target groups?
- Which target groups is the experience not suitable for?
- Which target groups is the experience focused on?
- What do the visitors need to be happy and satisfied?
- Is the experience suitable for individuals and groups?
- What does the experience need to be used by tour operators too?

## Golden Thread

There are different meta-narratives for different routes. These should be depicted in each experience in a partial aspect or as a whole.

### Checklist:

- Explain the golden thread at the beginning.
- Refer back to it again and again and charge the climax with the golden thread.
- At the end, give a summary and ask the golden thread again as an answered question or open question for reflection.

If the meta-narratives are too general or only partly applicable to the local experience, the following questions could help to develop a common thread.

### Questions:

- Is there a superordinate theme/topic/meta narrative?
- To which narrative should we link the site and the golden thread for the site?
- Should the golden thread cover the whole trail or only the site?
- What is important and specific for this area?
- How does the experience fit into the Danube-Story, the narrative of the trail.
- What do I want the visitor to remember?
- What is my USP of the site?
- What is unique about the site / object?
- What values do we want to address?
- What is in demand from tourists, current trends?
- • But tourists don't know what they don't know!
- Does the thread have a new approach, does it inspire new thoughts?
- What is being discussed socially right now?
- How to address widespread trends?
- Why did something happen?
- Why did something become big?
- Why is something no longer there?
- How can you motivate people to take up topics?
- Can you include a tasting or tips on where the next stop is?
- Is there a brain script that fits the red thread?

## Incorporate dramaturgical elements

Dramaturgy is the distribution of climaxes; it is a game of tension and release. But dramaturgy also means creating storylines and working out developments.

The seven rules of event dramaturgy: getting participants to 1. make sense of stories, 2. navigate in space and 3. in time, 4. build up tension and release it again, 5. form an image picture of something, 6. explore the "rules of the game", 7. sense rhythms and tides.

There are different methods / tools to build tension.

- Brainscript
- Multisensory
- Cliffhanger
- Surprise
- Meeting personalities
- Culinary
- Different tempos
- Selfie moments

→ see presentation Experiences from the workshop

### Questions:

- Are there any "hidden treasures"?
- Is there a surprise somewhere?
- Is there anything that visitors could bring home?
- What method fits for telling the story?
- How do we engage the visitors with the site?
- How can I surprise the visitors?
- When is it best to have the experience?
- Have I built in an encounter?
- Can I break the theme into smaller undertakings?
- Which methods can be used to reinforce the experience, to further elaborate the golden thread?
- Is the guest stimulated?

## Check arc of tension

We know the basic features of the arc of tension from Aristotle's Poetics in the form of three acts. These are subdivided into seven phases so that a tension curve is created: Intro, identification, interconnection, climax / fascination, projection, conclusion, fade-out.

### Questions:

- Is there an entry point?
- Is there a slow introduction?
- Is the narrative explained at the beginning?
- Is there a climax?
- Is it charged?
- Is the timing of the climax right?
- Is it made clear that this is the climax?
- Is there a review phase?
- Is there time to review the new experience with your own life?
- Is there enough time for the projection phase?
- Is there a summary again at the end?

## Simplifying the narrative strands

Finally, it is important to review the developed experience again. Too often people try to pack too much into an experience.

### Questions:

- What is the message behind the different steps of the experience?
- How do I tell the simple story?
- How can I explain the message in an understandable way?
- How can I explain connections to the masses?

## Conclusion with meaningful questions to the guest

Good experiences can be found all over the world. But what makes the Transdanube Stories really unique? Does it remain a pure experience or can the guest be stimulated with questions?

### Questions:

- What should the guests tell others at home?
- What questions do you want them to think about?
- What new knowledge have the guests gained from the experience (knowledge is not just knowledge)?

By Sebastian Frankenberger, April 2021.