

LIFE BEYOND TOURISM - BEYOND TOURISM FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

LIFE BEYOND TOURISM –Spanish..... - for intercultural dialogue

for tourism based on values, not just on consumer services

This presentation by the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco is an account of the first-hand experience that we have built up over the years we have been working, and of how that experience has prompted us to focus on the importance of intercultural dialogue, highlighting the opportunities -- indeed, a "world of opportunity", a lifetime of opportunity -- that lie hidden behind the mask of tourism that is plainly visible to all. Hence our decision to undertake a journey "beyond tourism, for intercultural dialogue," promoting "tourism based on values and not on consumer-driven services."

In other words, we will be telling you:

- how a Florentine hotel company ended up bent on setting up a Foundation to help promote encounters among young people from the former Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc countries;
- how the Foundation's activities crystalized over time into making a contribution to intercultural dialogue and to an awareness of cultural diversity;
- how the Foundation's international encounters have translated into "authentic tourism" based on two crucial factors: knowledge, and intercultural dialogue;
- how the Foundation took this experimental 'value' and developed it into a 'philosophy' to interpret tourism's potential and its huge importance -- particularly in terms of mass tourism -- in this historic era of globalization;
- how the Foundation decided to formalize this philosophy with an initiative called 'Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo', to illustrate
 - . the huge opportunities offered by tourism over and above the mere pleasure involved in traveling,
 - . the world of opportunities offered by tourism that society has so far failed to seize, particularly with regard to mass tourism, but that could contribute to intercultural dialogue, thus a lifetime of opportunities beyond tourism: 'Life Beyond Tourism'
- how this 'Life Beyond Tourism' initiative, presented in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio city hall on 15 March, was approved by the Foundation's Experts who traveled from 23 different countries to attend the inaugural ceremony;

- how those Experts formally called on the Foundation to disseminate its philosophy worldwide, also through the international institutions, in an experiment lasting at least five years, from 2008 – 2013;

In response to the Experts' request, as voiced in their Declaration of Intent, we will be showing:

- how the Foundation has promoted and set up an Association to disseminate the philosophy of Life Beyond Tourism worldwide -- an Association which it is planned to develop by establishing associations of the same name in cities where the need for them is felt, but also in cities that have the ability to fuel intercultural dialogue, the awareness of cultural diversity and traditional knowledge.

We will attempt to communicate what we see as the magnitude of the role that tourism, and mass tourism in particular, can play:

- how mass tourism can play a crucial role in this whole process for fostering intercultural dialogue;
- how all cities, but especially cities on the UNESCO World Heritage List, can play a role as centers for research and education and workshops of knowledge, enhancing this highly sensitive function and vying with each other in the very lofty undertaking of helping to foster intercultural dialogue, thus furthering the globalization process while nurturing proper respect for cultural diversity and traditional knowledge;

And finally, a huge change:

- how knowledge (also in the sense of an awareness of having insufficient knowledge) can boost the quality of market 'demand', especially in the case of mass tourism, and thus influence the future shape of the 'supply' side;
- how quality on the supply side can determine a demand for tourism rich in 'values', not just in consumer-driven services', thus changing the whole mindset of the tourist industry;

Incredibly, this in turn will mean that:

- mass tourism will no longer be a potential consumer of mankind's world heritage or a vehicle for standardizing the identity of every place on earth. In adopting the Life Beyond Tourism philosophy, it will become a sensitive factor for the enhancement and safeguarding of our world heritage and of the identity of tourist sites, aware of and showing respect for local identity.

This table summarizes the content of our presentation:

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 - Conservation and enhancement of the commitment to fostering intercultural dialogue
 - Life Beyond Tourism-Oltre il turismo, a brainchild of the experience built up by the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco
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 - The Association for the dissemination of Life Beyond Tourism – Oltre il Turismo, with the motto “Tourism based on values, not just on consumer-driven services”.
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Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989¹, the attack on Michelangelo's statue of David in 1989², and the Florence Municipality's General Urban Planning Law for 1994³, are the three crucial episodes whose emotional impact on the management of the Florence-based Vivahotels[®] company persuaded that management to launch a project known as VivaFirenze[®]. This project saw the start of a program of contributions to the city itself, both in the shape of a reflection on the '92 Urban Planning Law in the effort to enhance the management of tourism in its positive aspects in order to avoid being managed by its negative aspects, and in the shape of a heartfelt tribute to the city on the company's part involving the conservation of its cultural heritage through the restoration of works of art in the city's museums -- also with the hotels' guests being involved, emotionally rather than financially, in that task -- as well as by sponsoring visits to Florence on the part of youngsters from developing countries after the fall of the Wall.

Since then, precisely with Poland, in particular with the cities of Cracow and Warsaw, activities have been under way to develop interpersonal and international relations in an attempt to offer fresh opportunities and occasions for new contacts and relations among youngsters from neighboring countries in central and East Europe and in Eurasia -- countries initially united by politics but then, since 1989, all intent on training their gaze toward the West rather than on their immediate neighbors.

In practice, the VivaFirenze[®] project was designed to develop Vivahotels[®] sensitivity toward its own city, to take a greater interest in guests by, among other things, getting them morally involved in Florence's heritage, and finally, to offer firm support to dialogue among young people from different countries and different cultural backgrounds.

As our project got under way, we found ourselves focusing increasingly on the fact that, while there was a time, back in the golden days of travel, when hotel staff would refer to a client by his or her name, which later changed to staff referring to the client using a room number (and the guest in room 15 ended up becoming the guest in room 230!), today the guest is known merely by a credit card number.

¹ Il 9 November 1989

² Pietro Cannata used a hammer to strike a blow at the left foot of Michelangelo's statue of David in the Galleria dell'Accademia on 14 September 1991.

³ The issue of tourism is addressed under the heading *Resources* in the city of Florence's Urban Planning Law for 1992, approved in 1994. It appears on only one page, despite the issue being of crucial importance in a city like Florence whose economy depends largely on tourism; thus, a city where tourism needs to be managed if we want to prevent it from managing the city.

In the golden days of travel a guest would be welcomed by the hotel's owner; that later became the manager, and today the guest is greeted by the lowest clerk in the pecking order whose sole task is to check that the guest's credit card is good for the price of a night, to swipe it to make sure the guest does not leave without paying for drinks from the minibar, and then to hand over an electronic key that will only work for as long as the guest has contracted to stay in the hotel. The next time the guest is seen tends to be immediately prior to departure. Admittedly today the guest goes up to the room and is greeted by a televised message from the hotel management that starts running as soon as he or she opens the door! But that kind of robotic politeness does not offer the guest a chance to respond to the greeting with a greeting of his own, and if that trend continues, we are going to end up losing even our most cherished traditions.

Our focus on our guests also prompted us to reflect on how one seems to need to bedazzle tourists today in order to sell a product - even to sell ice-cream! Ice-cream parlors host mountains of multi-colored ice-cream designed to lure even the least gluttonous amongst us, but the mountain 'peaks' are so far from the source of refrigeration that the result could well be a 'lemon bacteria ice-cream'! And it is a fashion that is spreading to many countries around the world.

Tourist souvenirs and trinkets that show neither imagination nor taste but that are in danger of undermining the residual refinement of a tourist icon like Florence, merely betray the decadence of local craftsmanship.

But then, rows of jeans hanging in an important Florence shop window show that perhaps 'the customer needs to be helped to improve the quality of his demand' if a downtown store paying premium rents can afford to display that kind of apparel in its window.

The Direction of the Uffizi Gallery has had to put at the entrance a plate with written "Visitors are kindly requested not to throw chewing gum on the floor. Please dispose of it in the rubbish tin. It is strictly prohibited to lean with your feet against the walls." (Photos 2008-04-19).

So what has happened? Business has cannibalized all other considerations: fashion, service and consumption have 'gone overboard'. We are losing all sense of the importance of boundaries, of the value of the 'human dimension'.

The city can do a great deal in this connection to rebuild those boundaries.

The success achieved thanks to the creative participation of those universities that subscribed to the initiative prompted the Vivahotels® hotel company, run at the time by Paolo Del Bianco, to set up the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco⁴.

The Foundation's mission addresses intercultural dialogue and world heritage, as the statute explains: "...to enhance, pass on, disseminate and safeguard the cultural, artistic, historical and scientific heritage ..." of mankind, and "...to promote the establishment in Florence of a Center for the Development of International Encounters designed to attract, in particular, young people and people from the worlds of culture, art and science, in order to foster mutual acquaintance, understanding, friendship and peace among people of different nationalities, religions and ethnic groups...".

The Foundation's initial work in the field of convivial hospitality and friendly relations among the youngsters and their teaching staff was soon supplemented by an ever increasing number of quality opportunities for study and debate thanks to all the researchers, scholars, professional people and students taking part. This prompted numerous initiatives designed to get youngsters of various nationalities to meet in the course of an ongoing exercise in *intercultural dialogue*, under the motto: *International Encounters, without competition, within a framework of respect for individual identity: discovering the past together, building a common future.*

Preserving and Promoting a Commitment to Foster Intercultural Dialogue

While we were fully aware of what we were doing in all the various different fields and disciplines, what we had not realized was that our greatest achievement had been to merge the activities described in the two points in our statute: namely, the enhancement and preservation of cultural heritage, and intercultural dialogue. In other words, we had managed to forge a particularly important kind of *alloy*, just as though we were fusing different metals together, and we decided to call it: *conservation and enhancement of the commitment to foster intercultural dialogue*. The importance of this alloy lies in the historical era in which we are living, where we are surrounded by technology designed to boost communication, but where there is not a great deal of interest in communicating for the purpose of understanding and accepting our fellow humans with their different cultural backgrounds.

⁴ The Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco was established in Florence on 3 November 1998, in the Sala Martino V in the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, an institution that has been a symbol of Florentine solidarity for over 700 years. An important role in the decision was played by the active participation of the family of promoter Paolo Del Bianco, who dedicated it to the memory of his father Romualdo, the constant support offered by Emma Mandelli, Simone Giometti's enthusiasm, and the invaluable confidence displayed by Gianfranco Catarzi and Francesco Marchi, not to mention the eager assistance of Alessandro Ruggiero in a consultant's role, and the crucial support vouchsafed by Antonio Natali.

Our perception of the importance of this alloy grew to the point where we felt that it should become part and parcel of our intangible heritage. Florence and Cracow represent crucial phases in the formation of this alloy: The initial feeling was taken on board in Florence, as we said, and then in Cracow, in 1996, we disseminated the first reports of our activities in Florence; the Foundation's manifesto was drafted in Cracow in 2000, in the course of a trip to wind up the "Cracow 2000" conference. And again, the conference organized by the International Cultural Centre under the title of "Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century -- Opportunities and threats"⁵ was held in Cracow and we were invited to attend in order to present the Foundation's activities. This opportunity prompted us to review our activity so that we could present it comprehensively and succinctly⁶ in the program of the first conference of the ICOMOS International Committee for the Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration. On that occasion, we realized the value that others attached to our activities. And that is not all. On that occasion the Foundation decided (within the confines of its capabilities) to work alongside this ICOMOS International Committee, in the belief that that its activities would admirably enhance the Foundation's own theoretical basis over time. The conference was attended also by ICCROM Director General Mounir Bouchenaki and by ICOMOS Chairman Michael Petzet, as well as by Andrzej Tomaszewski, chairman of the ICOMOS International Committee for the Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration.

On that occasion, the Foundation not only presented its activities on the basis of the experience that it had built up with youngsters and on the basis of its experience in the tourist industry gained through Vivahotels[®]; it also managed to briefly introduce its own vision of how people seem to have failed to grasp the important role that tourism, and mass tourism in particular, can play in fostering dialogue among peoples in this 'global village' we live in, which is getting smaller every day and where relations are becoming more and more difficult both to forge and to sustain⁷.

The participants' appreciation provided us with the stimulus we needed to fine-tune our research in line with the Foundation's statute and with its manifesto. The resulting project we chose to call *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*, in other words a world of opportunities, a life going beyond, transcending, the kind of tourism that is based solely on consumer-driven services. It is worth repeating that this research was prompted by our belief that the conservation and enhancement of the commitment to foster intercultural dialogue and hospitality is part and parcel of

⁵ 24-28 May 2006

⁶ the 26th May

⁷ The proceedings of the conference were published by the International Cultural Centre in Cracow in a volume entitled 'Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century: Opportunities and Challenges'. The Foundation's research was published in that volume under the title 'Recovery and Restoration of the Values of Socialisation', in section IV entitled 'Non Governmental Organisations and New Initiatives in Heritage Management'.

the world's intangible heritage, just as much as the traditions that need to be safeguarded and promoted.

The Foundation has been working on the basis of precisely those values since it first saw the light of day, and those are the values that the Foundation is eager to safeguard and to preserve as though they were a work of art; indeed, more than a work of art, because those values represent the premise for appreciating and enhancing the world's cultural heritage, and for using that appreciation to understand the culture and roots of our neighbors both near and far.

Life Beyond Tourism – Oltre il Turismo, a Result of the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco's Experience

Despite the fact that the Foundation's initial idea was fairly simple, it met with support and appreciation beyond all expectation. The reason for that may well lie in the fact that youngsters have shown tremendous appreciation of these opportunities for international encounter, these major opportunities for dialogue: an exciting moment of dialogue, in the course of a well-deserved dream stay in such an iconic city as Florence.

Simply to give you an idea of the magnitude of this experience, it is worthwhile pointing out that in 2007 the Foundation offered the opportunity for dialogue to fully 8,000 youngsters and their teachers, who traveled to Florence in groups of about 50 people each, from at least five different countries. That makes a total of about 60,000 man-days. These youngsters stayed for a week, working in international groups on specific issues that they had already prepared and addressed in their own universities before setting out. So for many weeks young people from four continents, 46 countries, 146 cities, and more than 300 institutes of higher education were dialoguing in Florence through their didactic activities.

Reviewing the activities in which we were engaging, we realized that what we had been unwittingly promoting was *authentic tourism*, in other words travel not simply for personal pleasure but also to allow the traveler to familiarize with the identity of his or her chosen destination in its unique development through time, and also to make the acquaintance of other visitors to that destination, subsequently going on to interpret and discuss it with them. This, because everyone, when relaxing in the oasis that is their vacation, is more amenable to opening up to dialogue; and that amenability, an invaluable asset, must be encouraged and used to best advantage in order to contribute to serenity in this world of ours. Well, that simple activity has achieved tangible international recognition, as shown by the numerous prestigious awards received⁸.

⁸ http://www.fondazione-delbianco.org/inglese/index_a.html

This simple observation of what *authentic tourism* can be, led us to view *tourism as a widespread asset, yet one which is too little understood in terms of its true value, and thus insufficiently exploited*: it is an asset because it offers tourists a chance to meet people, it makes them receptive to communication, and it prompts them to listen, to take note and to familiarize with their surroundings, thus enabling them the better to appreciate those surroundings in their reality and development over time; it is a widespread asset because tourism is now a global consumer product; and it is underexploited because it is seen solely as a source of business and revenue, when it is also an opportunity to promote genuine acquaintance with people's habits and customs, in other words with their culture -- and that is crucial if we are to ensure respect for individual identity in the current globalization process. An example of this is the spread of world famous designer labels in every tourist venue in the world. At first sight this may appear to be a service for the tourist, but in fact it contributes to disinformation and to depriving that tourist of the chance to get acquainted with his or her destination's "spirit of place", with its typical produce and with its nuances; moreover, it is unquestionably also an insult to the sensitivity of the observant traveler, who would like to discover the true "spirit of place" and to understand that simple gestures such as a handshake may have a different meaning in other countries. Thus, while no one is suggesting that things should not change over time, and while no one disputes the inevitable growth of intercontinental trade, our cultures' assets must be preserved also to allow others to get better acquainted with, and to better understand, the wealth of our roots and traditions in the specific cultural context that has built up over the years like a layer-cake, and that is continuing to pile layer upon layer with every passing day. This would also make trade more profitable by offering new kinds of products based on *values* rather than on mere *consumption*.

So the Foundation today feels committed to helping to enhance the work of all those in the tourist industry (tour operators, hoteliers, restaurateurs, carriers and others generally involved in the trade) because, as we explained, they can rise to the level of promoters of intercultural dialogue. People working in the tourist industry can help to spread a more authentic familiarity with a destination, and that in turn will focus the tourist's attention and respect for that destination; by the same token, they can help to create opportunities for dialogue among tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, private and public institutions can make a determined effort to help the traveler to better understand his role not only as a beneficiary of services but also as a pro-active player, using his travels to underscore the importance of dialogue and of the commitment to fostering opportunities for intercultural dialogue to familiarize with and respect the values of others.

Thus what we are looking at here is something rather exceptional: those who are helping today to standardize the world and to threaten the conservation of our heritage and of the spirit of

place, will be able, thanks to the philosophy of *Life Beyond Tourism – Oltre il Turismo*, to contribute to *safeguarding, preserving and disseminating heritage and spirit of place*, becoming leading players and making a concrete contribution to *intercultural dialogue*, and to spreading appreciation for *cultural diversity* and for *traditional knowledge* throughout the world.

In doing this, of course, they will be taking the significance of their travels way beyond mere consumption and superficial curiosity. Moving in this direction, tourists themselves will start to *demand* more and better quality from the industry, thus triggering a virtuous supply and demand cycle.

So that, in a nutshell, is the *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* initiative. It was officially presented in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio city hall on 15 March 2008.

Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo is not a product, it is an ethos, an approach; it is not something you 'sell', it is something you offer.

***Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo: Principles and Practice*⁹.**

Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo contributes to the dissemination and recognition of such universal values as respect and harmony among peoples. To achieve this goal, *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* aims to turn the tourist experience from a mere opportunity for leisure into a unique opportunity for in-depth familiarization with the tourist's destination and for promoting encounters between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Thus it can help people to overcome the difficulties that prevent them from accepting and getting to know those who are different from them, by putting to good use the value of human relations and of the civilization inherent in the pleasure of offering (including the pleasure of offering one's amenability to getting to know others) which is such a traditional feature of travel worthy of the name.

There is a way of practising tourism that transcends mere snapshots, souvenirs and shopping; the mutually interactive network that comes into being between travelers and their destination provides a golden opportunity for intercultural awareness.

It is crucial for the spirit of *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* that the relationship between the visitor and his or her destination not boil down to a mere offering of consumer-driven services. Rather, it needs to foster the guest's close involvement with the spirit and identity of his or her destination and with its history, as well as with its present and future prospects. Thus one of the mainstays of *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo's* philosophy involves safeguarding a tourist destination's identity in its most vibrant tradition and in its ability to address historic change.

⁹ A committee was appointed in November 2006 to develop the idea formulated by the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco, to define it in detail, and to test it in Florence. The committee members were: Maurizio Bossi, coordinator, Serafino Degli Innocenti, Carlotta Del Bianco, Paolo Del Bianco, Antonio Natali and Stephen Tobin. Antonio Paolucci took part in the work.

With *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*, destinations visited by tourists, particularly if they are recognized *UNESCO World Heritage* sites, take on a new and crucial role as *workshops* for contributing to dialogue and to cooperation, thanks to the *enhancement of tourism that can make a substantive contribution to intercultural dialogue*. Historic cities in the 21st century will have no option but to take into account their nature as venues providing favorable opportunities for encounter, in order to stimulate knowledge, acquaintance, and intercultural dialogue in a world where booming intercontinental trade demands greater knowledge and a better developed ability to dialogue.

Thus we need to view cities as playing also this new and crucial workshop role. And that means that, when planning a city's development, we are going to have to point up this invaluable opportunity, in the spirit of *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*, in order to make it easier for those in the tourist industry, for tourists themselves, and for public and private institutions to perceive their mission involving the management and practical exercise of such an exceptionally important asset, thereby also ennobling the work they do.

If tourism is envisioned, used and managed to its full potential by everyone on both the supply and demand sides of the industry, tourists returning from their trip will no longer say: "Been there, done that, got the T-shirt!" They will be able, far more responsibly, to say: "I have understood, and I have realized that I still have a great deal more to get to know and to understand!" At that juncture, everyone involved in tourism will be able to take on board their new, human element in a truly concrete fashion.

Manifesto - The Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo for tourism based on values, not just on consumer services

Life Beyond Tourism

- contributes to the dissemination and recognition of such universal values as respect and harmony among peoples, turning the tourist experience into a unique opportunity for knowledge and for the promotion of intercultural dialogue
- promotes familiarization with the spirit of a place, its past, its present and its future prospects;
- offers a new vision of tourism, including mass tourism, designed to highlight its strategic nature rather than its consumer-driven aspect:
 - to promote intercultural dialogue
 - to foster awareness of and familiarity with cultural diversity and traditional knowledge
 - to safeguard spirit of place

- to communicate spirit of place, imbuing it with new life
- hopes to see the ethos of commitment to fostering intercultural dialogue become part and parcel of our intangible cultural heritage

With Life Beyond Tourism, tourist destinations, especially those included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, can play a role as workshops contributing to intercultural dialogue, cooperation and shared cultural growth and enrichment.

* * *

Life Beyond Tourism will turn that very tourism that is helping today to standardize the world, threatening our tangible and intangible world heritage, into a tool for enhancing individual experience in a context based on the rediscovery of values, not just on consumer-driven services.

Manifesto

- Tourism is a crucial source of prosperity
- Tourism provides an opportunity for getting to know
 - spirit of place
 - cultural diversity
 - traditional knowledge
- Tourism, in its various forms goes way beyond the mere satisfying of personal needs
- People working in the tourist industry foster awareness of spirit of place and of intercultural dialogue
- The tourist is a potential harbinger of knowledge and of intercultural dialogue;
- Tourist destinations become workshops for knowledge and cultural enrichment for every traveler, thus stimulating an increasingly high-quality demand for tourist products not only in terms of consumer-related services but, above all, in value-related terms.

The Life Beyond Tourism – Oltre il Turismo flower

Its symbol is a five-leaf clover, a message devised by Carlotta Del Bianco, showing a globe revolving around a vessel called *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*, the heart of a flower whose five petals are: *encounters, communication, knowledge, conservation and economy*. In other words, through tourism: you meet people; you communicate; you get to know people, places and things, also thanks to the conservation and safeguarding of your own tangible and intangible cultural heritage; and the positive fallout is that the economy gets a boost from all of this too. These are the five petals that help to protect and to enhance the precious core of the flower, the *philosophy* of Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo.

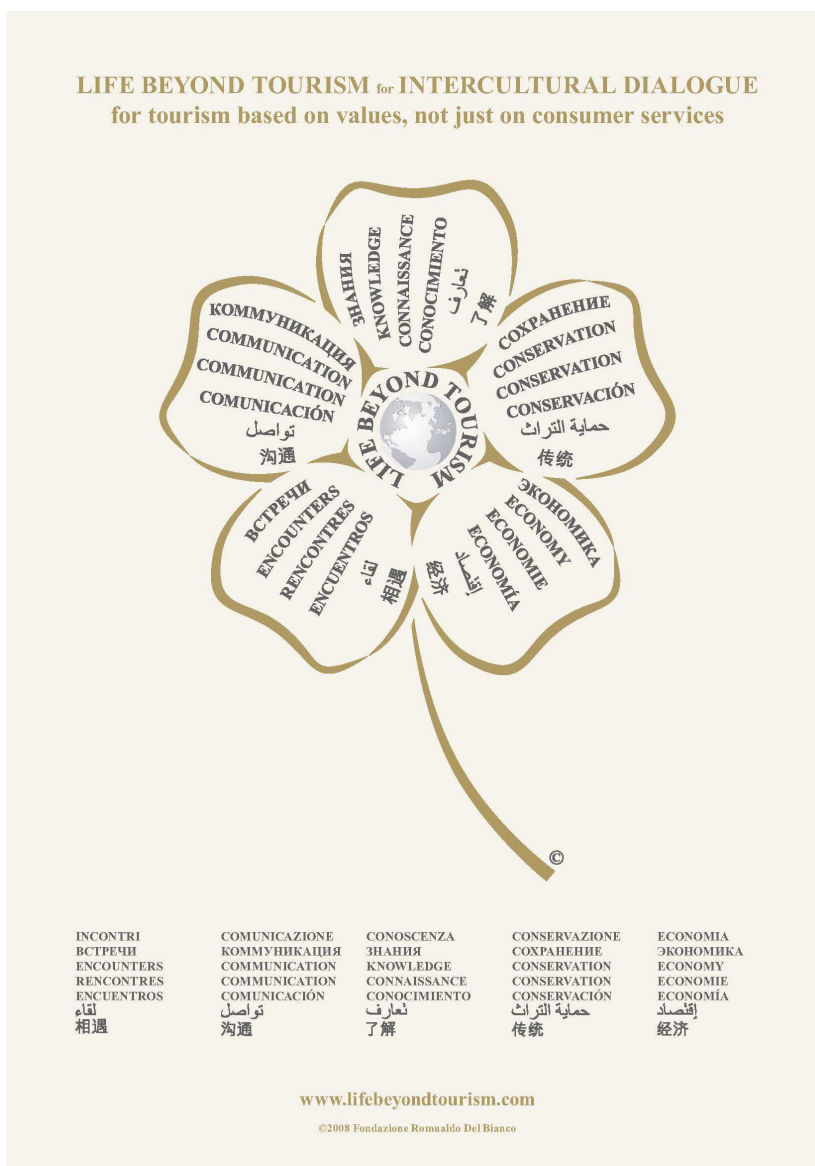


Figure 1: The Five-Leaf Clover: *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*

The Experimental Phase¹⁰

On the basis of the principles succinctly outlined above, the experimental phase in this project was launched in the hotel industry; this, because a hotel is the first opportunity a traveler has to familiarize with his destination's identity and to meet other travelers of different nationalities. It is the first port of call in which a relationship based on mutual respect can be established between the traveler and his destination, but also between travelers who are staying or who have stayed in that destination.

The experiment's beauty and message does not lie only, or simply, in the range of individual initiatives taken singly, but also, and indeed especially, in the package that those initiatives comprise, all of them being designed to help the visitor familiarize with the area and to foster intercultural dialogue. These initiatives include an area specially set aside for dialogue among guests from different countries, with a welcome card delivered to guests when they arrive, bearing their country's flag; cultural information programs screened on the hotel's closed-circuit TV system; touch-screen monitors providing rapid information also on less well known itineraries and walks; the drinks in the minibar in guestrooms; and the products on display in the bar, or served at breakfast and in the restaurant, all of which are traditional and sourced locally. These are only some of the more salient features in this experimental phase, giving the hotel a new function as an active player offering a heartfelt welcome and as a fount of knowledge; and this, without detracting from, indeed adding to, its function as a profitable business.

While hotels play an important role in the philosophy of "Life Beyond Tourism", an equally important role is played by those in the tourist industry who actually "design" and plan tour packages. They are rather akin to university professors in a way, because they can choose whether to offer their students a major opportunity for cultural enrichment, assessment and debate, or not. They are also responsible for their audience's attention span, level of interest and opportunities siezed. But when "the market", in this case when "tourists", realize that there is a different way of engaging in tourism, that there is a kind of tourism that may offer 10 grammes of soap less but that offers 10 grammes of cultural value more, then they themselves are going to foster a new type of demand. And tour operators will also start to offer "tourism based on values, not just on consumer-driven services", sparking a desire in the tourist to find out the difference. That is when the arena of competition will shift away from mere consumer-style tourist products to an incipient enhancement

¹⁰ The experimental phase began at the Vivahotel Pitti Palace al Ponte Vecchio, in Florence, on 15 March 2008.

of "values" as a crucial component part of tour packages: an exceptionally beneficial market trend that will trigger a huge change in that market.

Declaration of Intent - 16 March 2008

Following the official presentation of the *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* initiative, representatives of 23 different countries present in Florence signed a 'declaration of intent'¹¹ on 16 March 2008. This declaration approved the *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* project and voiced the hope that it might enjoy as broad a dissemination as possible at the international level, also working alongside government institutions and NGO's with the start of a Europe-wide experiment on a five-year basis from 2008 to 2013.

The Association for the Dissemination of *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*, with its motto *Tourism Based on Values, Not Just on Consumer Services*.

In order to follow up on the Declaration of Intent, the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco decided to promote the establishment in Florence, on 25 July 2008, of an association called 'Beyond Tourism for Intercultural Dialogue'^{12/13}.

¹¹ www.lifebeyondtourism.org

¹² Founding principles of the association

"Life Beyond Tourism for Intercultural Dialogue" is an association that proposes to disseminate, both in Italy and abroad, the founding principles of an initiative known as "Life Beyond Tourism" originally formulated by Paolo Del Bianco, the promoter and chairman of the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation in Florence, and designed to promote a form of tourism based on values rather than on the mere offer of services to the traveler.

To date, "Life Beyond Tourism" has attracted the patronage of ICCROM, of the Tuscan Regional Authority, of the Florence Provincial Authority and of the Florence Municipal Authority.

Transcending consumer tourism, the cultural initiative known as "Life Beyond Tourism" aims to help foster and disseminate such universal values as respect and harmony among peoples through intercultural dialogue and an awareness of, and familiarity with, cultural diversity and traditional knowledge.

"Life Beyond Tourism" was officially launched in the Salone dei Duecento, in Florence's city hall, Palazzo Vecchio, on 15 March 2008 (a practical experiment began on that date at the Vivahotel Pitti Palace al Ponte Vecchio and is still under way) with the participation of Deputy Mayor Eugenio Giani; of Antonio Natali, director of the Uffizi Gallery; of Maurizio Bossi, director of the G.P. Vieusseux Literary and Scientific Cabinet's Center for Romantic Studies; of ICCROM Director General Mounir Bouchenaki, represented for the occasion by Andrzej Tomaszewski, chairman of the ICOMOS International Committee for the Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration, and by Limburg Cultural Heritage Center Director Marc Laenen, both of whom are Emeritus Director Generals of ICCROM (International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property); and in the presence of Maurizio di Stefano, chairman of the Italian National ICOMOS Committee, along with over 90 experts from 23 countries on three continents, and of an authoritative audience of Florentine citizens.

The launch of the "Life Beyond Tourism for Intercultural Dialogue" Association is designed to provide a framework for the implementation and practical application of a "Declaration of Intent" signed on 16 March 2008 by those who attended the presentation of the "Life Beyond Tourism" project. This declaration acknowledges the importance both of the "Life Beyond Tourism" project per se and of getting it started; it voices the hope that the project's promotion, development and immediate practical application may take off also at the international level, in harmony with such international and intergovernmental institutions as UNESCO, ICCROM, UNWTO, the Council of Europe, and with such International NGO's as ICOMOS, IUCN and ICOM.

It also aims to promote the development of training curricula in cooperation with UNESCO, ICCROM, UNWTO and the tourist industry in order to further intercultural dialogue.

"Life Beyond Tourism" is designed to help as vast a number of tourists as possible impart a quantum leap to the quality of their demand -- a demand aimed not only, or not so much, at standard tourist industry services, and more at the world of values which can provide the real motivation behind those services, thus making tourists' own investment in time and money more fruitful. In keeping with this aim, the Association aims to help to make cultural heritage easier to interpret and more easily comprehensible, as a crucial tool for fostering intercultural dialogue and an awareness of, and familiarity with, cultural diversity and traditional knowledge.

At the same time, "Life Beyond Tourism" hopes to be able to help boost an awareness in the tourist industry itself of the importance not so much of increasing the amount of services offered, as of fostering intercultural dialogue, and of using healthy competition in that field as a yardstick of success.

In conclusion, Life Beyond Tourism is designed to change the current cliché "Been there, done that..." into "I have familiarized with ...", "I have realized ...", "I have understood that there is a whole world of values out there for me to delve into and

The Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco is a founder member and a contributing member of this association. The association's motto is: 'For tourism based on values, not just on consumer services'.

Conclusions

With the newly established association known as *Life Beyond Tourism for Intercultural Dialogue*, we in Rosario intend to offer our contribution to the world at large, to disseminate worldwide the implementation of this philosophy, of this flower called *Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo* with its five petals: 'Encounters', 'Communication', 'Knowledge', 'Conservation', and 'Economy', with its inebriating scent of genuine, authentic tourism based on values, not just on consumer services.

So our hope is that all the institutions that cooperate with the Foundation will seize this opportunity to make their own contribution to the world by setting up further local *Beyond Tourism for Intercultural Dialogue* associations.

embrace"; also, it aims to help boost people's awareness, limiting or restricting the number of their potential yet inappropriate "certainties".

Thanks to the reversal of perspective proposed by "Life Beyond Tourism", that very tourism which is helping today to 'standardize' the world and to threaten both our tangible and our intangible universal heritage, can help to safeguard and to enhance the diversity of expression that is the very lifeblood of that heritage.

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From the association's statute:

Article 4) -Aims and activities

4.1. The association is based on the founding principles of "*Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*" (life beyond tourism) illustrated by Paolo Del Bianco in the relevant document attached to the Articles of Association, **for tourism based on values, not just on consumer services.**

4.2. The association pursues the following institutional aims:

- to promote, disseminate and implement both in Italy and abroad, intercultural dialogue, an awareness of cultural diversity and the conservation of traditional knowledge, thus enhancing the potential of tourism, including mass tourism, as a crucial tool for cultural enrichment if based on values and not merely on consumer services;

- to research, promote and publicize the natural and cultural heritage of the world's civilizations in, both their tangible and intangible forms;

- to promote and spread an awareness of the role that travelers, tourists and those involved in the tourist industry, professional people, public and private institutions, and everyone involved in this sphere can play in boosting the quality of tourism in terms of intercultural dialogue, of the awareness of cultural diversity, and of traditional knowledge;

- to promote the dissemination and implementation both in Italy and abroad, of the founding principles underpinning the theory of "*Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*".

4.3. To achieve these institutional aims, the association may engage in the following activities, and is empowered:

- to promote, sustain and develop, including in conjunction with other Italian or foreign institutions both public and private, research, study, surveys, databases and study centers;

- to contribute to the implementation of cultural and scientific projects and initiatives, also through consultation with the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco, and to:

. to promote, both directly or indirectly, a search for traditional knowledge with the aim of setting up a worldwide database of traditional knowledge, working in conjunction with international institutions for the establishment of a center, in Florence if possible;

. to sponsor and assist the activities of institutions and committees, including at the international level, in connection with issues involved in the interpretation of the theory and philosophy of the safeguarding and conservation of cultural heritage in different cultures, in accordance with the association's aims;

- to set up and manage study, training and institutional refresher and specialization courses, comparing and coordinating a variety of didactic and practical activities, also in conjunction with universities and other national and international education and cultural institutions, in order to bring youngsters into contact with the work rationale in an environment where the role of values has been afforded proper recognition;

- to establish and allocate study grants, bursaries, scholarships and other incentives;

- to promote the establishment abroad of working groups or clubs, independently functioning associations to interpret and promote in a local environment the theory and ideals of "*Life Beyond Tourism - Oltre il Turismo*"; these clubs will be authorized by the association and organized in accordance with regulations expressly drafted by the association for that purpose.

- to sponsor and organize conferences, study seminars, exhibitions, concerts, master classes, theatrical performances, trade fairs and other cultural and artistic events connected with its institutional aims;

.....

- to promote, organize and manage marketable cultural itineraries;

.....

The time at tourists' disposal and their amenability to listen while on vacation are a hugely important potential resource -- even more important than crude oil. The time that they devote to their travels represents a financial investment but, above all, it is an investment of confidence in the tour operator.

That time can be used profitably or not, just like at university! Hence the importance of the tourist industry in its entirety, from the agency planning the trip through to all of those who play a role in the trip itself. Time is a factor of whose true value, whose true richness and potential, people often underestimate the importance. Tourists' extremely precious amenability in terms of time will be the best resource for enhancing this new, natural transition thanks to their attention and their ability to listen, but above all in the knowledge of the growing demand on their part for an improvement not only in the quality of the services offered but, far more, in the value aspect of the trip that they have chosen. They will be bent on improving their capacity for learning and for quenching their thirst for knowledge. And 'they' are 'mass tourism', thus they are 'the big market', the massive demand that will prove capable of turning the entire approach to travel on its head.

Cities are going to have to adapt to this change; but above all, cities are going to have to start seeing their visitors not so much as clients, thus as potential moneyspinners and unfortunately on occasion even as potential 'suckers', but more as friends and as potential promoters of the city itself. Thus guests must be helped, protected and advised; and they must be offered authentic, tried-and-tested suggestions, not 'advice' dictated by mere commercial advantage.

No city's marketing campaign can afford to do without implementing the philosophy of Life Beyond Tourism.

PAOLO DEL BIANCO



- Born in Florence, 2nd August 1945
- *Chairman of the “Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco”*
acting “For Peace in the world, among Young People of different Countries, through Culture – meeting, getting acquainted, understanding each other to develop Friendship among People”.
- *Chairman of the Association “Life Beyond Tourism for intercultural Dialogue”, set up by the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation to disseminate the philosophy of ‘Life Beyond Tourism’: a program designed to add value to the huge opportunities offered by tourism, taking it beyond the façade of a consumer-driven service industry. The Association “Life Beyond Tourism for Intercultural dialogue” motto is: “Tourism based on values, not just on consumer services”.*
- *Florence hotelier from 1975 to 2006*
- *Degree Honoris Causa in Humanistic Sciences from Green Bay University, Wisconsin – U.S.A. (2007)*
http://www.fondazione-delbianco.org/inglese/index_a.html