

# Article

## Woza eNanda: perceptions of and attitudes towards heritage and tourism in a South African township

Sabine Marschall

Marschalls@ukzn.ac.za

### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on local knowledge and perceptions about heritage and tourism in Inanda, north of Durban, in view of the eThekweni municipality's recent investment in the upgrading of the Inanda Heritage Route. The research is based on in-depth interviews with a cross-section of Inanda residents and tourist guides, as well as a small survey and the experiences of a community outreach project based at two high schools in Inanda. It is evident that many residents of Inanda have never visited the route attractions, show little interest in heritage conservation, and appear to have no genuine sense of ownership of the heritage sites. While being positive about attracting tourists to Inanda, the paper finds that the community knows little about tourism and the needs and motivations of tourists. It is argued that this lack of knowledge and interest impedes local people's ability to connect with the tourism phenomenon and take advantage of the opportunities it creates. This study highlights especially the role of young people as brokers of new value systems and the importance of instilling a passion for heritage and a locally contextualised understanding of tourism in the transformation of the tourism industry and heritage sector.

### **Introduction**

*Woza eNanda* is the marketing slogan for the newly upgraded and revamped Inanda Heritage Route (IHR), outside Durban, part of the eThekweni Municipality on the South African east coast. In time for the 2010 Fifa World Cup, much was invested in the improvement of various historical sites that form part of this route, among them Mahatma Gandhi's Phoenix Settlement and the Ohlange Institute, established by Rev John L. Dube, co-

founder of the African National Congress (ANC). The initiative was not only prompted by a concern for the conservation of badly neglected heritage sites of national and potentially international significance. Perhaps more importantly in the current socio-political climate, the city's investment was intended to bring much needed development to this marginalised semi-urban municipal area and uplift the economic conditions of its poverty-stricken inhabitants through tourism-induced income generation and employment creation.

The World Cup has come and gone and although the city has continued its investment in the route, visitor numbers remain low and many local people feel that they are not benefiting from the tourism development. It was initially outsiders, as cultural brokers (Smith 2001), who started taking tourists to the heritage sites and stimulating demand; then the local government stepped in to institutionalise tourism in the area. Now – this paper argues – it is important to improve the community's sense of ownership and identification with the heritage sites in their midst, help local people understand the tourism phenomenon, how they can more meaningfully connect with it and take advantage of the opportunities it creates. Although there is now increased travel among Africans, observation and research (DT 2012) shows that few of these 'native tourists' (Ghimire 2001) are heritage tourists and it must be remembered that both visiting heritage sites and travelling for leisure purposes have historically been foreign concepts for the impoverished black majority. It is important that the city improves its marketing efforts and establishes more tourist facilities and amenities in the area to stimulate higher visitor numbers and create more tourist spending opportunities, but in terms of attaining responsible tourism objectives, it is equally vital to build capacity and empower local people to actively engage with the industry.

The research presented here is an extension of an earlier paper focused on the perceptions of tourists who visited the IHR during the World Cup (Marshall 2012). Complementing the 'guest' perspective, this paper concentrates on the 'hosts' or local community in Inanda – or eNanda, as it should more correctly be called – and their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism, heritage and the IHR. The local municipality habitually refers to the residents of Inanda as 'the local community' and indeed, the term 'community' has become one of the keywords of the post-apartheid South African socio-political arena and policy environment. But the term is also the subject of critical debate and contestation, as the spatial and social

boundaries of such communities are often vague and local people's notions of community may conflict with those held by outsiders (Kepe 1999: 418). For the purposes of this research, a spatial or geographical approach to community is used, referring in the first instance to the residents of the Inanda township. The majority of these share similar socio-economic conditions and are in similar ways affected by the area's underdevelopment and marginalization, while older residents share similar experiences of the past. But not all residents are poor and uneducated and one cannot necessarily speak of a shared community spirit. The term community is used here to facilitate the shift from the much cited 'tourist gaze' to the 'community gaze' (Robinson 2001: 50). The study is based on in-depth interviews with a cross-section of Inanda residents and tourist guides, the experiences of a community outreach project based at two high schools in Inanda, the results of a small questionnaire survey and a host of observations gathered throughout the years of my research involvement in Inanda.

### **Tourism and cultural identity**

Otherness and difference are key concepts in tourism studies, as tourists are thought to be attracted to destinations, peoples and activities that differ from their home environment and daily routines (Craik 1997). Much scholarship in the field of tourism focuses on the impact of tourism on local cultures, and self-other relations in the tourism context – or the relationship between 'hosts' and 'guests' (Smith 1989) – terms that have also been contested (eg Aramberri 2001). Based on Lacan's famous argument that psychoanalytically the self is constructed in the image of the Other, various researchers have investigated how the presence of tourists and local people's observation of tourist behaviour affects their sense of identity and conceptualisation of the self (Galani-Moutafi 2000, Bruner 1991). This is particularly pertinent among people (including the majority in Inanda) who have few opportunities to participate actively in tourism.

While older perspectives focussed on the negative, destructive or 'contaminating' effects of western tourists on 'authentic' local cultures, scholars today advocate more complex and constructive perspectives, in which cultures continuously change, but not in simplistic and predictable ways, and in which the host community is not always the passive recipient of cultural influences imposed by tourism and globalisation (Meethan 2003, Craik 1997, Nuñez 1989, Rojek and Urry 1997, Robinson 2001). Picard (1996), in his classic study of the role of tourism in Balinese identity,

found that cultural tourism neither ‘polluted’ Balinese culture, nor contributed to its preservation or ‘renaissance’, but rather ‘rendered the Balinese self-conscious about a thing they possess called “culture”’, a source of profit and pride, but also anxiety, because of its perceived need for protection (Picard 2008: 163). In a similar vein, Franklin and Crang (2001: 9-10) speak of ‘cultural involution’, whereby the presence of tourism results in local people’s heightened awareness and greater knowledge about their own locality, its history, geography, natural resources and cultural attractions. The authors advocate a shift away from the older notion of ‘authentic place’, corrupted by tourism, to a conceptualisation of tourism as a potentially more constructive force that leads to innovation of local cultural materials and new conceptualisations of local identity based on a constantly recreated sense of place, belonging and ownership. As I will show below, this development has – by and large – not yet taken place in Inanda and certain preconditions must arguably be met before this can become a reality.

### **Heritage and tourism in South African – the policy context**

Tourism, both foreign and domestic, has grown substantially in South Africa since the end of apartheid. The White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism (1996) declares that tourism has largely been a lost opportunity in South Africa and should be strongly promoted as a vehicle for development and poverty alleviation. The policy explicitly promotes the concept of ‘responsible tourism’, which means firstly that all stakeholders within the tourism system must be accountable for their actions and take responsibility for attaining sustainability goals. More importantly for this paper, responsible tourism is based on the notion of community participation, ie the duty of the government and developers to engage communities, but also the responsibility of communities to involve themselves and become active participants in the development of tourism and to ensure the safety and security of visitors. Although the White Paper never developed beyond a set of guidelines, its commitment to responsible tourism has been endorsed by several follow up policies and practical measures towards implementation (eg DEAT 2002, DEAT 2003, DT 2012, see also Booyens 2010, Keyser 2009: 40-41, Spenceley 2008).

Since the 1970s, the international policy environment has significantly shifted towards emphasising ‘people centred’ approaches to development and valuing grassroots input to planning and implementation. At the policy

level, the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and respect for local cultural values is often affirmed, both in South Africa and internationally, as seen most recently in UNESCO's initiative 'Rio+20 Culture for Sustainable Development'. Similarly, within the heritage sector there is evidently much concern about redressing South Africa's long history of top-down approaches to conservation and the disenfranchisement of black communities. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999 explicitly states that: 'Heritage resources form an important part of the history and beliefs of communities and must be managed in a way that acknowledges the right of affected communities to be consulted and to participate in their management' (1999: 13). Internationally, notions of community identification and ownership are frequently tied to the community's right to participate actively in decision-making about the selection, development, conservation and management of heritage.

As will be discussed below, the reality looks very different. It is, of course, widely acknowledged internationally that the successful implementation of community participation is fraught with obstacles and challenges (Marien and Pizam 1997), but in the specific South African context, additional problems prevail. For instance, a long history of disenfranchisement and low levels of skills and education hamper the black majority's ability to understand key issues and participate meaningfully. The dominance of local elites, the prevailing conservative, patriarchal societal order and the influence of traditional cultural value systems may relegate some sectors of the community, notably women and young people, to a status of relative passivity, hence impeding the development of truly democratic processes of decision-making. The Community-based Tourism Development Strategy for KwaZulu-Natal (1998: 16) moreover found that the initiation of democratic local structures easily leads to conflict with the traditional leadership. A host of other community dynamics are identified as constraining factors.

Although public policy demands community engagement as a form of empowerment and redress of past injustices, heritage officials and development agents are in reality not equipped effectively to conduct such processes. Community engagement requires much time and patience, which poses a particular problem where projects must meet tight deadlines due to an upcoming anniversary or event, as in the case of the IHR and the Fifa World Cup. These constraints lead to shortcuts and token forms of community engagement, notably 'consultation' rather than active 'participation', the

former amounting to little more than telling people what has already been decided. In fact, Bakker (2011: 249) notes that even the NHRA mentions the term ‘participation’ only once (namely in the section quoted earlier), while ‘consult/consultation’ is used 40 times, most often referring to intergovernmental consultation, not direct communication with people in communities.

Within the eThekweni Municipality, Robbins (2005) observed a clear shift away from the widely inclusive, participatory and consultative modes of governance during the immediate post-election period, to more expedient, stream-lined decision-making processes among political representatives. This is legitimated in the interest of efficiency and on the basis of the democratic mandate for political representative structures, elected by an overwhelming majority, as well as – one might add – inherited cultural rights for the decision-making powers of traditional leaders. While the municipality and the consultancy team appointed to advise on the upgrading of the IHR followed standard community consultation processes (Harber 2009), the findings of this study suggest that these engagement processes have not filtered down to grassroots level and that community ownership of the tourism product in their midst is lacking.

### **Township tourism and the Inanda Heritage Route**

The development of route tourism, ie themed routes or trails presented as tourist attractions, has gained prominence internationally in recent years and in South Africa, the government identified route tourism as a niche area that deserves to be strengthened, especially in ‘less mature tourism areas with high cultural resources’, as it facilitates tourism distribution and local economic development (Rogerson 2009: 29-30). The IHR combines elements of route tourism and township tourism. After 1994 the government invested much political and economic capital in the development of township tourism, often structured around cultural attractions and commemorative sites linked to the ‘Struggle’. This was meant to add value to existing tourism products, but more especially to provide employment opportunities for impoverished communities and spread the economic benefits generated by the tourism sector into marginalised areas. As a relatively new phenomenon of the South African tourism sector, intricately connected with, and perhaps symbolic of both the opportunities and challenges of the post-apartheid order, township tours have attracted some scholarly attention. Most of the existing literature focusses on Soweto, where the Vilakazi

district in Orlando West has become a prominent development node for township tourism (Ramchander 2004, Briedenhann and Ramchander 2006, Booyens 2010). Some investigations have been conducted on township tours in the Western Cape, notably the Cape Flats outside Cape Town (eg Robins 2000, McEachern 2002), but little has been published on similar initiatives in Durban and other urban centres.

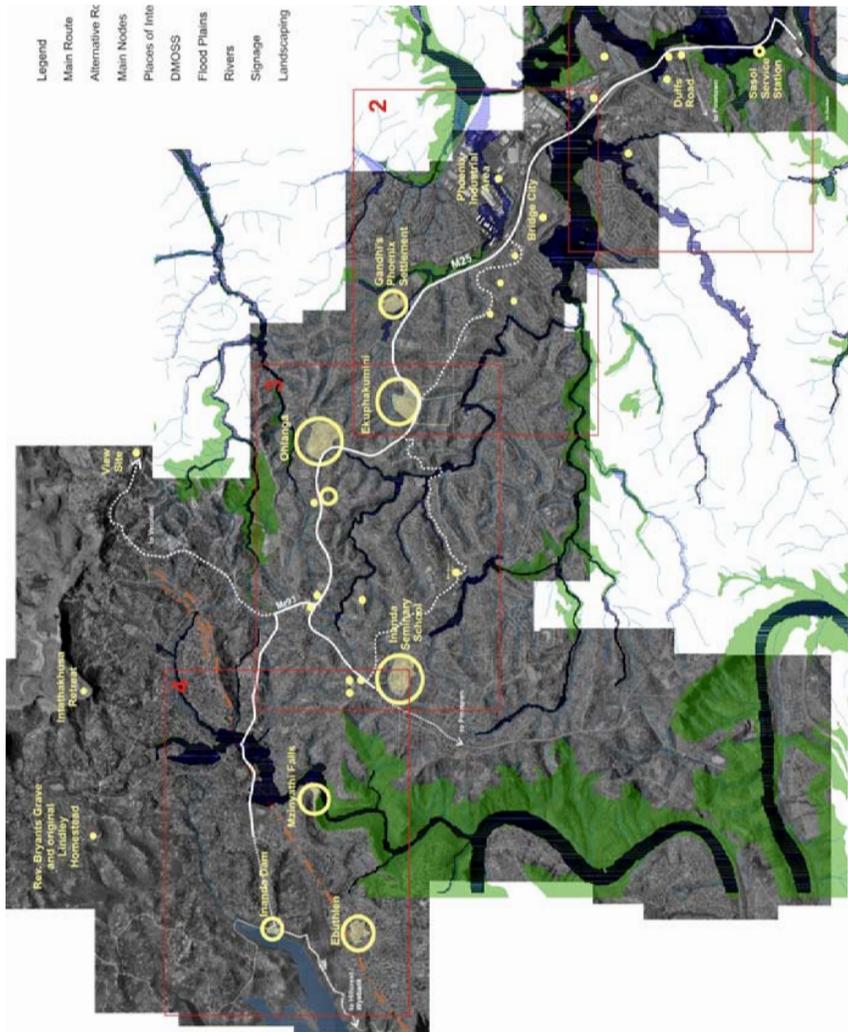
In the Durban area, tourism was repositioned after 1994 by focussing in particular on sports, conventions and cultural attractions (Maharaj et al 2008). In 2004, the provincial tourism authority commissioned the Durban Township Tourism Survey to assess the tourism potential in surrounding townships (Khuzwayo 2004: 9-10). The study found that a fair percentage of tourists expressed interest in township tours, but very little appeared to be happening in practice, as most tour operators and guides reported conducting very few such tours. Insufficient marketing was highlighted as a key factor constraining township tourism, along with a generally poor understanding of the township tourism product and a lack of tangible attractions, restaurants and other amenities. After South Africa won the bid for the 2010 Fifa World Cup, the eThekweni municipality embarked on planning the upgrading of the IHR with the aim to have an attractive route/township tourism product on offer in time for the expected influx of soccer-related tourists in 2010. Some of the above mentioned constraints have been addressed in this process, especially through the upgrading of the heritage sites and some road infrastructure, but so far the IHR has only marginally delivered on its socio-economic promises.

To a large extent, this is a generic problem with township tourism in South Africa. Gold (2012) maintains that many politicians and officials are in denial about the fact that township tourism 'doesn't work', as the market for such tours remains minute, despite increased marketing and provision of attractions and products. Booyens (2010) found with respect to her Soweto case study that there is fairly substantial demand for township tours, but Soweto residents are not benefiting from this, as tour operators are mostly outsiders (white entrepreneurs from Johannesburg and Pretoria) and tourists have few opportunities for interacting with locals and spending money. She concludes that 'township tourism can promote socioeconomic regeneration and pro-poor development, but only if it is developed responsibly and the benefits are spread more widely' (2010: 284).

## **Inanda context**

The six core attractions of Inanda are (from the beginning of the route): the Phoenix Settlement, established by Mahatma Gandhi in 1904, which is today preserved in truncated form (Tichmann 1998, Marschall 2008); Ohlange, where John Langalibalele Dube established the country's first industrial school for African boys (Marable 1980, Hughes 2011). Because Dube was also the co-founder of the ANC, Nelson Mandela chose to cast his first democratic vote at Ohlange. A few kilometres further north, Prophet Isaiah Shembe, founder of the Nazareth Baptist Church, established Ekuphakameni, the religious centre of the 'Shembe' Church, one of the most important African initiated churches in South Africa. When the church split over a succession battle in the late 1970s, Ebuhleni, a flat hilltop area near the Mzinyathi waterfall, was established by Amos Shembe as headquarter for what is now the church's majority faction (Papini 1992). The Inanda Seminary, founded by American Board missionaries, Rev Daniel Lindley and his wife Lucy, became famous as the first secondary school for African girls in southern Africa under the leadership of Mary Kelly Edwards as head mistress during the late nineteenth/ early twentieth centuries (Hughes 1990). Mzinyathi Falls and the Inanda Dam, the latter created in 1986, are associated with rich oral history and cultural rituals, moreover containing much potential as a source of recreational attractions.

From the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, Inanda was exposed to intense political violence, in the course of which the Phoenix Settlement was largely destroyed and plundered. Most Indians were expelled from the once racially mixed area. Population density had increased due to migration and population growth for some time, and after the land invasion new informal settlements for Africans sprang up around the core buildings of Gandhi's settlement. Although the general infrastructure and access to basic services have improved during the post-apartheid period, the population of Inanda today still suffers from high levels of poverty, unemployment and crime; a high HIV/Aids infection rate and other public health problems; shortage of housing; lack of transport options and a host of other socio-economic problems. The challenge today lies in how to integrate this peripheral, historically disadvantaged area into the larger eThekweni Municipality; the IHR, officially launched on 9 May 9, 2010 at Ohlange Institute, is meant to be the key vehicle in this regard (Hennig 2010, Harber 2009).



Inanda Heritage Route. Source: Harber 2010.

Inanda is not only a particularly interesting focal point for research because of its extraordinary concentration of cultural heritage sites, but also because many traditional or rather hybridised beliefs and practices have survived here. In this context, young people are often brokers of transformation and new cultural values instilled through the education system and the media. This is manifested, not least, in perceptions of and attitudes towards heritage and tourism, because these phenomena are closely linked with issues of culture, identity and lifestyle. Compared to numerous similarly impoverished communities in South Africa, the municipality's investment in the IHR represents a unique prospect for Inanda residents to attain development, social uplift and economic benefits, but it is argued here that lack of knowledge and engrained cultural patterns and perceptions impede the community's chances to participate and benefit from this opportunity.

### **Community outreach project**

It is widely agreed upon that capacity building is essential for facilitating meaningful community participation and many point out that such education should ideally start at an early age (eg Khuzwayo 2004). The introduction of Travel and Tourism as an elective subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase of the secondary school system makes an important contribution to imparting basic knowledge about tourism, but as the experience at two high schools in Inanda has illustrated, learners do not easily relate academic knowledge to their daily life context. The Inanda Community Outreach Project was initiated by the Cultural and Heritage Tourism Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) immediately following the 2010 World Cup, first at Ohlange High School and later at Inanda Newtown Comprehensive High School. Both schools were selected primarily for their affiliation with or proximity to core attractions of the IHR, namely the Ohlange heritage site (with John L Dube's restored house and family grave) and Gandhi's Phoenix settlement. The project engages volunteers among grade 10-12 learners, mostly those enrolled in Travel and Tourism and consists of weekly extra-curricular meetings facilitated by the university students and myself.

Complementing the curriculum's emphasis on imparting basic factual knowledge about tourism, the aim of the outreach project is to cement and enhance that knowledge by focussing on consciousness formation. Learners in what we call the Tourism Club are meant to see themselves as 'ambassadors

of tourism' and 'guardians of heritage' in their own community. They are encouraged to view their own environment from the perspective of tourists, to understand tourists' potential likes and dislikes, their needs for amenities and services, their expectations of attractions and their motivations to travel and visit. Through discussions, activities, and small competitions, learners are meant to become more aware and keep abreast of current developments in Inanda, as well as gain a better understanding of the tourism phenomenon, the community's endowed resources and the purpose and significance of heritage conservation. Although negotiated with learners, this agenda is ultimately imposed by the project facilitators, who become cultural brokers in their own right. In the long run, however, it is hoped that the Tourism Club will become self-sustaining with learners increasingly adapting the aims of the project to their own interests and priorities, initiating action and spreading the word to other members of the community.

The National Department of Tourism's (DT) most recent Sector Strategy acknowledges that the transformation of the tourism industry has progressed very little (DT 2011). This is despite the fact that every year, many local Africans qualify as tourist guides or complete tertiary degrees and a variety of lower level training programmes, in the tourism sector. Tourism KwaZulu-Natal moreover runs regular training and information workshops geared towards assisting the emergence of prospective entrepreneurs in tourism. Yet very few black entrepreneurs are entering the market and few Africans are found in higher management positions in the tourism sector. One might argue that positive role models must be provided and an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for tourism and heritage instilled at a young age for successful transformation to take effect.

As some of the UKZN students emanate from Inanda, learners in the Tourism Club build up personal relationships with important role models, encouraging them to strive towards tertiary education or entrepreneurship. More importantly in terms of this paper, it is assumed that members of the Tourism Club will in myriad informal ways communicate their knowledge and understanding of heritage and tourism to their families, friends and neighbours, who might in turn initiate a snowball system of communication by word of mouth that is based on personal relationships and trust. Of course, this is an idealistic perspective, perhaps unrealistic in view of the multifarious challenges that have been experienced at the schools and especially the larger problems faced by the community. Nevertheless, following Dann's (1999) call for creative new approaches to community

engagement, it is hoped that the benefits of this experiment will become fully evident in years to come and that its *modus operandi* might successfully be applied in other contexts in South Africa.

### **Tourism Club administered survey**

One of the projects conducted with the members of the Tourism Club involved them interviewing a few of their personal relations through a two-page questionnaire survey (devised in consultation with the Travel and Tourism teachers). This was meant to initiate the contact with other members of the community through personal liaison, while simultaneously teaching learners basic interviewing skills. Only 184 usable questionnaires were returned due to various problems. All respondents were African, the majority were female; they came from all age categories, but young people predominated (coinciding with the demographic profile of the area at large). The small size of the sample and the fact that the learners were interviewing personal contacts renders the results unrepresentative, but they are nevertheless indicative of some local people's knowledge of the IHR, their attitude towards the area's core heritage sites and the tourism phenomenon more generally.

Despite posters along the main road and the fanfare created around the IHR by the municipality and other stakeholders, 27 per cent of those interviewed had never heard about this important initiative. However, some 41 per cent of respondents appeared to know what the main attractions of the route are. Asked whether they like to see tourists in Inanda, 83 per cent responded yes, citing mostly economic reasons, such as income generation and employment creation, but also a desire to spread knowledge about local heritage and culture. Only a few respondents were negative or not sure about tourists, primarily out of concern for their safety in view of the local crime rate. Asked whether they knew what tourists were interested in, 52 per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative, citing history, culture, 'information', the beauty of the place, and new experiences; 14 per cent did not know and 28 per cent were not sure what tourists might be looking for. Of the total, 29 per cent of interviewees felt that they were benefiting from tourists in Inanda, while 46 per cent did not and 21 per cent said maybe (four per cent no response). The final question tried to establish whether people would like to know more about how they can get involved in tourism. 57 per cent responded yes and 18 per cent maybe, although many respondents thought this question refers to their wish to become tourists themselves. In

summary, the survey suggests that respondents are overwhelmingly positive about tourists visiting their area, but it is remarkable that almost half were not sure, what exactly attracts these tourists or what tourists might expect to see and do. This corresponds with informal observations, findings of previous studies conducted in Inanda and the responses elicited in the in-depth interviews with adult members of the community.

### **Community attitudes towards tourism**

Nkanyiso Dlamini grew up in Inanda and is now (at the time of writing) a third-year student in Cultural and Heritage Tourism at UKZN and a member of the outreach project. He recalls that he knew nothing about tourism when he entered the subject on his university application form. His parents have no concept of what tourism is and when asked what their son studies at university, they answer in vague general terms. His parents never travel anywhere, except for their annual trip 'back home' to the Eastern Cape, where they originally came from, to visit family. Explaining to them that they themselves are domestic tourists when undertaking this journey would be futile, explains Nkanyiso: 'They would never understand that' (Personal communication May 24, 2012). Nkanyiso's father, Jabulani Dlamini, a builder by profession, has seen tourists around Inanda, but knows little about what attracts them and almost nothing about the IHR development in general. He assures me that the majority of people in Inanda would know equally little – 'only doctors and teachers know about such things' (2012).

These snippets of conversation poignantly summarise what many others have expressed in different words. For people who have hardly any personal experience of leisure travel, it is difficult to understand tourists' motivations, needs and expectations. Lack of disposable income is the most obvious reason preventing members of the Inanda community from travelling and some of the (15 to 17 year old) Tourism Club members report never having been outside of Inanda in their life, not even in Durban, 25 km away. Of course, Robinson (2001:38) reminds us that by far the majority of the world's population are not in the position to travel for leisure purposes and are not familiar with the social construct of tourism. A more holistic understanding of the impact of tourism on host communities would benefit from more research, guided by critical theory and using innovative research methodologies, on issues of social exclusion, leisure disenfranchisement, and the marginalization of peripheral places and peoples (Pritchard and Morgan 2000: 884, Ateljevic, Pritchard and Morgan 2007).

In the Inanda community, one can easily understand that even where people can afford to travel, the specific concept of travelling for the purpose of leisure and recreation is not necessarily socially sanctioned and may be perceived within the family or community context as a waste of resources or a selfish escape from social duties and commitments (eg caring for sick relatives). Among more traditionalist members of the African community in South Africa, some parallels can be observed with Watkins and Gnoth's (2011) research into Japanese cultural values that impact on attitudes towards tourism, notably the association of individualism with selfishness and the normative concern for the well-being of the collective. Touristic behaviour is commonly linked to modernity or a 'modern mentality', individualism and certain other 'cultural trends', the socio-economic conditions prevailing in industrial or post-industrial society, and the development of service-based economies associated with the production of symbolic or cultural capital rather than material goods (Craik 1997: 113, Leiper 2004). Many of the factors that are widely agreed upon to 'generate the touristic impulse' (Nash 1977: 36) do not exist in Inanda.

However, the desirability and social acceptance of sightseeing and touring for pleasure, largely taken for granted in western societies, is certainly strongly emerging among the African working class. Conversations with learners and students of Travel and Tourism suggest that many of these young people chose to study the subject because they see it as an avenue for personal future opportunities to travel. However, 18 years into the democratic era, the DT notes that there is still a 'low culture of travel', as literally 'many South Africans do not know how to go on holiday' (DT 2012/13: 14). Interviewees in Inanda do not conceptualise themselves as tourists, as in their minds tourists are 'white people' or 'Asians', presumably based on their observation of tourism patterns in their community, but it confirms the DT's finding that generally the majority of South Africans view tourism as an activity for 'rich foreigners'.

Comprehension of the tourism phenomenon begins with understanding how a tourist is defined, but this is as much a matter of factual information, as it is about personal consciousness, subjectivity and conceptualisation of self, ie the recognition that tourists are not necessarily 'others'. Realising that oneself or one's friend has been a tourist on occasion (eg visiting family or undertaking a church-related trip), reflecting on one's own needs and expectations during that journey, and the impact that journey might have had on local economies is a first step towards understanding tourism. The

community's lack of comprehension of who tourists are, what they need, like and dislike, arguably limits their chances of identifying opportunities for benefiting economically from tourism and engaging with the sector more meaningfully.

### **Community attitudes towards heritage**

Improved knowledge about the tourism phenomenon and especially the niche area of heritage tourism requires not only a better understanding of the tourists, but also the attractions that generates the tourism. Observation, interviews with members of the community and tourist guides, as well as the results of the small survey indicate that many Inanda residents have never personally visited the core attractions of the IHR and tend to be generally disinterested in museums, monuments and heritage sites. Although the questionnaire did not specifically ask this question, the in-depth interviews and site observations confirmed that most of those who have visited any of the sites did so to attend community meetings, workshops, religious services and special events. It can safely be assumed that – apart from school groups on prescribed field trips – very few Inanda residents would have visited these places as heritage sites, to learn about local history, to pay respect at memorials or to appreciate the museum exhibits.

Of course, one must bear in mind that in South Africa and internationally, heritage generally does not appeal to younger audiences or poor people; cultural and heritage tourists tend to be older, higher educated and more affluent (Craik 1997, DT 2012: 33). Moreover, anywhere in the world, local people often feel no specific need to visit heritage sites and tourist attractions in their own neighbourhood, because one takes these sites for granted and 'knows about' them. However, many interviewees of this study are equally unlikely to visit museums and heritage sites at other destinations when they do have an opportunity to travel. This is clearly confirmed by research conducted in preparation for the 2012 National Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy (DT 2012: 32). It must be remembered that during the apartheid period, the black majority was socially and legally restricted from visiting museums and heritage sites; most museums used to display exhibitions that reflected the values, achievements and interests of the white minority. Despite much effort at transformation at multiple levels (human resources, acquisition, exhibition policies and general image), Dubin (2009) found that the majority still widely perceives museums as enclaves of white minority interests. In an attempt to attract new audiences,

many museums and heritage sites have initiated a host of creative strategies, on occasion turning their premises into functions venues for ‘exciting events’ or useful skills and information-sharing workshops, hoping that community participants will use the occasion to throw a glance at the historical displays and sign the visitor book. Similar measures have been taken at sites of natural heritage, such as game reserves and national parks to transform the demographic profile of the traditionally white-dominated visitor groups.

Moreover, one might surmise that local people shape their perceptions of particular heritage attractions on the basis of who they observe to visit. In the case of Gandhi’s Phoenix settlement, for instance, interviews conducted a few years ago with people living around the site established a lack of identification and perceived relevance. Several respondents expressed their sense of alienation with comments such as: The settlement is ‘a place for politicians and other important people’ or ‘a place for Indians only’ or ‘a place for educated people’ or ‘a place for visitors and other important people who drive beautiful cars’ (Marschall 2008).

When asked why Inanda residents hardly visit their local heritage sites, some interviewees responded that people don’t know enough about the existence and importance of these sites and that more awareness must be created. Thami Mdlalose, who has grown up in Inanda and now runs his own tour operating company, Madlula Travel and Tours, assures me that ‘90 per cent of people in Inanda don’t know about Gandhi or the history of John Dube and Ohlange’ (Personal communication, August 8, 2012). Several interviewees agree with this assessment, but some explained, on the contrary, that they ‘know about the history’ and therefore do not need to visit the actual place. Most respondents echoed retired school teacher Ester Phewa’s, comment: ‘They are simply not interested’ (Personal communication, June 13, 2012). ‘We don’t have that kind of enthusiasm’, says Humbulane Mbomame, a young technician living in Inanda (Interview, May 28, 2012). ‘It’s our culture’, says Mdlalose. ‘We are very ignorant about our surroundings’. ‘It’s a mindset’, adds S’bo Dladla, who lives near Ohlange and takes tourists on the local literary heritage trail. ‘You would get teased by your peers, because visiting a heritage site is considered something irrelevant’ (Interview, August 15, 2012). This is confirmed by respondents of the survey who said they could not see the importance of visiting the heritage sites or how this would benefit them in any way. It all comes down to poverty, explains Dladla, not in the sense that people can’t afford to visit

(after all, entrance is free and many people live in walking distance), but because visiting heritage sites does not lead anywhere in making money. People always want to get something tangible in return, comment Nkanyiso Dlamini and Xolani Magwaza, members of the outreach project who have grown up in Inanda. Curiosity about history and visiting historical attractions was often understood as an attribute of tourists, not shared by the local community. Clearly Franklin and Crang's (2001) 'cultural involution' has not yet occurred in Inanda.

The lack of interest in history and visiting museums and heritage sites is certainly not unique to Inanda or even South Africa and more research may be needed to investigate these attitudes of disinterest and reasons for scepticism. One can also argue that it is valid for local people to use the heritage sites in their midst in different ways to outsiders, but the point here is that a lack of knowledge and personal experience of what attracts the outsiders to these sites will hamper local people's ability to recognise the heritage site as a resource which can provide economic advantages for them. Discovering opportunities for offering products and services to tourists or to heritage conservation authorities requires some level of knowledge and personal engagement with the site, listening to the guide narrative, observing tourists, informally engaging with some, becoming aware of one's own niche areas of expertise. An elderly, unemployed, impoverished, illiterate person with rich memories or specialised cultural knowledge could theoretically present him/herself as a resident story-teller, initially perhaps on a volunteer basis, to offer visitors a unique cultural experience. Taking advantage of the opportunities that heritage resources offer does not always depend on formal education and investment capital, but it does require an interest in the heritage site, along with personal initiative and persistence.

Of course, one cannot ignore the pressures imposed by the socio-economic conditions in which the community lives, but, as mentioned earlier, not all people in Inanda are poor, uneducated or overwhelmed with meeting the challenges of daily survival. Davis and Prentice's (1995) research on the 'latent' museum visitor found that lack of 'museum socialization' is an important constraint and reason for not visiting heritage attractions. A similar point was made by Kay, Wong and Polonsky (2008) for non-attendance at arts and cultural institutions. Most black South Africans of the older generation have never had the personal experiences of having been 'socialized as children into the museum environment' (Davis

and Prentice 1995: 492) and are predictably not in the habit of providing this experience for their own children. Indeed, compared to developed countries, in South Africa one rarely observes black parents taking their children to a museum or adults explaining the significance of historical artefacts or a monument to youngsters. In many Western societies, school visits have played an important role in widening access to museums and cultural institutions; the future will tell whether this strategy will prove similarly successful in transforming museum audiences in South Africa. In the meantime, in a place like Inanda, the conventional pattern of museum socialisation might have to be reversed in that youngsters are taking their parents to visit local museums and heritage sites. This is one of the long-term aims of the community outreach project.

Although more systematic research would be needed in this regard, the interviews indicated that there may also be some culturally specific reasons for the lack of interest in visiting the Inanda heritage sites. This was particularly evident in the case of Ohlange, because the site contains actual graves. Zulu ancestral beliefs, traditional funeral customs and cultural norms and practices relating to the dead and the visit of burial sites widely prevailed among people across the ages. For instance, many believe that only family members should visit a burial place and that it is unacceptable to approach graves without prior authorisation. ‘A grave is like the home for a dead person and a stranger must not intrude there without permission’ (Humbulane Mbomame, Interview, 28 May 28, 2012). Even if a respected member of the Dube family publicly encouraged people to visit John Dube’s grave, the question remains why one would want to do so, as in Zulu culture, burial places are only visited to commune with one’s ancestors. Paying respect and remembering a person is done in other ways, not by visiting the preserved remains of their home or the grave. The thought of visiting a memorial for educational reasons, for immersing oneself in history, for experiencing the aura of the place, or for a sense of ‘having been there’, appeared to be foreign to many respondents.

Not all interviewees shared the same cultural beliefs about visiting a memorial. Some feel that there is a significant difference between the grave site of an ordinary person and an iconic leader and that the latter’s memorial can – and indeed should – be visited. Discussion with the members of the Tourism Club revealed divisions of opinions that confirm the influence of different value systems. It is important to promote, among the younger generation, an understanding of such heritage sites that does not contradict,

but rather balance the requirements of traditional cultural norms with those of tourists and international best practice models of cultural heritage conservation.

## **Conclusion**

As tourism is considered one of the most important economic growth sectors in South Africa, questions arise about how that growth is distributed and who benefits (Keyser 2009: 27). The equitable spreading of economic benefits, rather than the monopolising of wealth by a small elite, remains a key challenge in South Africa more generally, which the DT proposes to address, among other, by promoting businesses with a Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Scorecard (DT undated: 36, DT 2012). Tour operators like Thami Mdlalose remain highly exceptional and indeed most of his colleagues servicing the IHR are not from Inanda and often not African. This parallels Booyens's (2010) earlier mentioned findings for Soweto. Notwithstanding the important role of outsiders as cultural brokers, if township tourism is to be developed as a responsible tourism option and strategy for local economic development, it is essential that local ownership, entrepreneurship and participation initiatives are promoted (Booyens 2010: 283).

This paper argued that young people (both secondary school learners and university students) can play an important role in this process. In addition to imparting factual knowledge about tourism and heritage, it is suggested here that focussing learners and students on their immediate environment, providing role models from their own community, and fostering leadership thinking can lay solid foundations for the medium to long-term transformation of the heritage tourism sector. Moreover, it is hoped that seeds informally planted by youngsters among their families, friends and neighbours will create a sense of curiosity and awareness from the bottom up. This might in time change the dynamics of current community engagement processes, pave the way to taking more active control over heritage resources and assist in spreading the distribution of benefits. If more local residents were to visit the museums, learn about the history (as it is presented to outsiders) and begin viewing the attractions of the IHR from a heritage and from a tourism perspective, they might discover their value and usefulness as resources. Moreover, if it is true, as suggested above, that local people forge their perceptions of heritage sites on the basis of whom they observe to visit, a change in the demographics of museum audiences would in time have a self-perpetuating effect.

Much more effort is still needed from the municipality and local tourism authorities to market Woza eNanda and promote the IHR as a ‘must see’ attraction. The general infrastructure in Inanda needs further improvement, as well as the application of safety and security measures and the development of more amenities. New tour operators must be incentivised to take tourists to Inanda, currently still perceived as an economically marginal and high risk niche area product, and those already servicing the route must be persuaded (and perhaps shown how) to build more tourist spending opportunities into their itineraries. But ultimately, a successful and sustainable development of tourism in Inanda is just as much dependent on the tourists, as it is on the locals. As mentioned earlier, responsible tourism also entails local communities’ responsibility to involve themselves in tourism – and one might add, the management of their own heritage. This means not only a positive attitude towards tourism, as exists already, but far more decisive steps towards taking ownership of local heritage resources and being proactive about linking into the tourism phenomenon.

The community outreach project featured in this paper is only in its infancy and its lofty goals might never materialise, but it is argued here that there is room for new approaches to community engagement and that transformation begins in the mind, ie with a shift of consciousness. Preferably such consciousness formation, the planting of seeds and the nurturing of a passion for heritage and tourism should occur at a young age. If this occurs, transformation will not be dependent on government policies, BEE scorecards and training interventions, but in time take effect all on its own accord.

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