Community Attitudes

Using the DIT-ACHIEV model to measure resident’s attitudes towards developing sustainable tourism

The DIT-ACHIEV Model is a tourism destination management tool designed to guide and encourage a destination towards true sustainability and avoid the negative impacts of tourism. One Irish destination chosen as a case study to pilot the model was Carlingford in County Louth, a small rural and relatively undeveloped tourism destination.

Since the success of the tourism industry depends greatly on the participation of the local residents, their support is essential for its successful development. Additionally, the understanding of residents on the importance of engaging in sustainable tourism development within the destination will ensure the longevity of tourism, providing benefits to community residents as well as to those visiting the area.

The results of a recent Resident Survey carried out as part of the ongoing DIT-ACHIEV Project show that residents in Carlingford have a very positive attitude towards visitors to the Carlingford and Cooley Peninsula.

In recent months, 482 residents of the Carlingford and Cooley area completed questionnaires for this survey and the findings are highly positive. Results show that residents feel tourism is a positive force in improving the quality of leisure and recreation facilities, encouraging participation in local cultural activities while also leading to the improved appearance of public places. One respondent stated that tourists ‘make a positive contribution to the local economy and it is only right that we share our beautiful area’.

Local awareness of amenities is heightened when residents see visitors arrive to experience the beauty of the area. The hospitality and friendliness of locals adds to the visitor’s overall experience so it is important that the residents are involved in the local tourism industry to ensure that it will continue to grow. As well as developing tourism in the area, residents also show a great deal of enthusiasm towards learning about other cultures and interacting with the tourists, valuing new ideas and friendships resulting from tourists coming to Carlingford & Cooley Peninsula.

‘I think it’s brilliant that we live in such a wonderful place that can provide lovely holidays. The tourists are always saying they hate to leave, but I never have to’.

The highly positive view of residents is exemplified in the following selection of findings: • 82% of residents state that locals and visitors have a positive relationship, while • 85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: ‘All things considered, visitors make a positive contribution to the quality of life in Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula’. • 93% of respondents state that tourism has a positive impact on the local economy and 83% claim that tourism has a positive impact local business development.

While a small number of respondents mentioned that tourism may cause increased levels of litter and traffic congestion, results generally showed few negative attitudes towards tourism in the area. Dr. Kevin Griffin, of the Dublin Institute of Technology stated that residents of Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula understand and appreciate the benefits of tourism to the area but also stressed the importance of local participation in ensuring its sustainability in the future.

This survey is part of an extensive three year research project which explores the sustainability of tourism management in Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula. This is the first of the research reports to be published and accurately represents the views of Carlingford Town and Cooley Peninsula residents.

The next stage of the project is a Business Survey which is being coordinated by the local committee in partnership with Dundalk Chamber of Commerce. It asks all businesses in the area about their interaction with tourism / tourists, and helps identify problems / pressures on tourism in the area.

More detailed findings of the Resident Survey are available locally from members of the Carlingford and Cooley Tourism Association, the County Council, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce and from the DIT team.

For more information on the project contact:
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At the recent launch of the Carlingford and Cooley Residents’ Survey. L-R: Mr. Michael McCabe (Louth County Council), Ms. Geraldine Boyle (Dundalk Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Gerry McGarrity (Carlingford Tidy towns), Ms. Jane Fitzgerald (DIT), Mr. Harry McCarthy (Carlingford and Cooley Tourism Association)

At the recent launch of the Carlingford and Cooley Residents’ Survey. L-R: Dr. Kevin Griffin (DIT), Dr. Sheila Flanagan (DIT), Mr. Michael McCabe (Louth County Council), Mr. Harry McCarthy (Carlingford and Cooley Tourism Association)
Mr Tim Fenn, Chief Executive of Irish Hotels Federation presenting Michael Brennan Perpetual Trophy to Jennifer Lewlor, for best result in Marketing on BSc International Hospitality Management.

Tony Lenihan, Head of Education, Fáilte Ireland, presenting Fáilte Ireland bursary award to Miccol Bolger, best overall student on final year of BA Tourism Management.

Tony Lenihan, Head of Education, Fáilte Ireland, presenting Fáilte Ireland bursary award to Catharine Keegan, best overall final year student, MSc Tourism Management.

Brid Grant, Director and Dean of College of Arts & Tourism presenting Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management prize to Simon Donnellan, best student on BA Leisure Management.

Brid Grant, Director and Dean of College of Arts & Tourism presenting MCD award bursary and trophy for excellence in placement to Reonan Mcnulty, BSc Event Management.

Alan Smullen, General Manager, Croke Park Hotel, presenting the Doyle Collection award to Reonan McNulty (accepting award on behalf of Rachel Mcnamara) best student on BA Hospitality programme.

Brid Grant, Director and Dean of College of Arts & Tourism presenting Bacchus Wines prize (decanter and two bottles of wine) to Annette Dorran, best student on Higher Certificate in Hospitality Services Management.

Ms Natasha Kinsella, Chief Executive, Irish Hospitality Institute, presenting the Irish Hospitality Institute Award Trophy to Helena Doody, for best dissertation on MSc Hospitality Management.