

koketso growth

CULTURAL HERITAGE & TOURISM CONSULTATION & PLANNING



**Proposal for a Heritage Tourism Project focussed on
Battle Re-enactments and Cultural Festivals in Rural Areas
*Eastern Cape***

Presented by

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Introduction

Historical re-enactment is typically a scripted educational or entertainment activity in which participants follow a prearranged plan to recreate aspects of a historical event or period - often a military engagement or display. Re-enacted battles are usually carefully planned beforehand so that the 'actor-warriors' make the same actions that were taken in the original battles. They are often fought at or near the original battle ground or at a place very similar to the original and can vary in size from 100s to 1000s of participants. Such occasions are very successful and popular tourist attractions in the United States and Europe. Re-enactments in South Africa are mostly confined to the battlefields of the KwaZulu Natal Midlands.



Zulu dancing at the reenactment of the victory at the Battle of Isandlwana during the Anglo Zulu War of 1879. KwaZulu Natal.

Koketso Growth proposes that a dedicated South African Heritage Tourism Project is created to promote and operate such events as leading tourist attractions throughout the country. The battles depicted will encompass those of the Anglo-Zulu War, the Xhosa Wars (100-year wars of resistance), the Swazi resistance and many other conflicts of high historical importance. On specific holiday weekends re-enactors will put on the costumes and the clothing of other eras and step into the past. The undeniable heritage value is intertwined with entertainment, spectacle, culture and rituals. People from the various communities chosen to host the battles, and those from the surrounding areas, will be engaged by the relevant Municipal / local authority to participate in the events.

Potential Benefits to Communities and Municipal / Local Authorities

Economic impact

The re-enactments, proposed as taking place over a 2-day period, will be job creators for SMME's, crafts and trades people, and the youth. Such groups would gain employment from the need to produce weapons of battle (shields, sjamboks, spears, etc) and other necessary props. The production of such artefacts would be ongoing throughout the year, both for the use of the re-enactors and for sale to domestic and international tourists at the site. In addition there are the many avenues of revenue generation possible from the hosting of such an event by a specific community - tour guides, accommodation, food and beverage, transport etc.



Zulu warriors and dancers at a re-enactment of the Battle of Ncome (Blood River) of 1838. KwaZulu Natal

Clothing

The authenticity of the traditional dress, costumes, jewellery and other accessories is vitally important to the success of such spectacles. Carefully researched and designed period costumes or uniforms, headdresses, body paints etc can be produced by community initiatives throughout the year, for use during the re-enactments, to be worn by tour and site guides, and for sale to tourists. Apart from the obvious financial advantage such events will encourage a deepening of cultural and historical understanding from both community and visitors alike.

Tourism

The tourism benefits of battle re-enactments cannot be understated. These enactments and the festival that surrounds them, if well organised and produced have the potential to draw tens of thousands of domestic and foreign visitors to a specific region particularly if they are held at an optimum time of year.

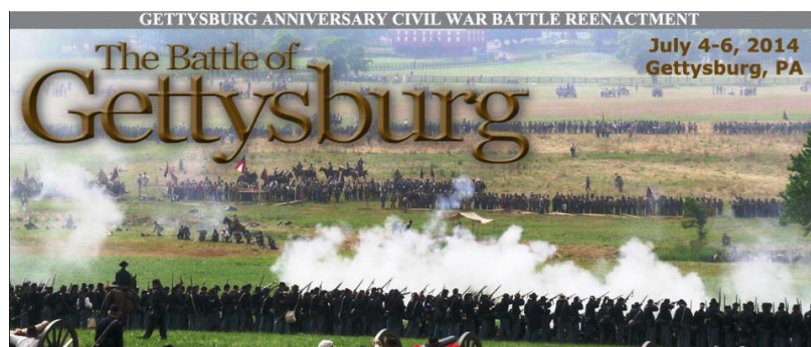


Tourists watching a re-enactment of the Battle of Grahamstown, Eastern Cape

International Examples

A good example of the power of re-enactments is to be found in the United States' Civil War cultural performances. Factors that make these re-enactments successful include:

- 95 % of the town's people spend the two days of the enactments in traditional Civil War dress;
- The re-enactors are formed into organised groups with a passion for military history, and the capacity to organise and produce goods for the re-enactment to the profit of their communities;
- The Hotels and tourist agencies are notified and cooperate in bringing tourists to the site;
- The local municipalities aware of the economic benefits both fund and promote the events on an annual basis;
- These events depicting military history are often used for purposes of commemoration.



There is a general awareness that the cultural performances and battle re-enactments are of significant value and that the ritual and public display increase cultural understanding and social cohesion. These enactments also engender cultural pride and are a digestible vehicle for the transference of historical and cultural information to the public.



Any such event is basically theatre and needs to be organised, rehearsed, produced and directed along the same lines. It is however also surrounded by pageantry, parades, and story-telling. It is also the opportunity for a Municipal / local authority and its citizenry to display local history and more importantly to participate in the telling of their own story in an entertaining, educating and economically profitable way.

Overall Economic Benefits

- Heritage Tourism brings serious visitor spend in a region through accommodation, sales of specially produced items, food and beverage, entertainment etc, and fosters cultural and historical understanding;
- Heritage Tourism has the potential to create thousands of jobs in a local economy;
- Commemoration of shared heritage is important in middle-class visitation and spend, as well as working class and SMME revenue earning and employment at site and in surrounding towns.



English Civil War re-enactment

Conclusion

Existing studies show:

- Visitors to well-organized battle re-enactment sites provide significant economic benefits to nearby communities;
- Educational and commemorative events and re-enactments attract additional visitors/tourists from other regions and provinces that can add significantly to the economic impact on the site and municipality;
- Heritage Tourism and battle re-enactment visitors are “high value” tourists with significant spend and disposable income;
- Many battlefields are located in rural areas where the economic benefits to nearby communities may be more keenly felt and of greater benefit than in urban areas. An appropriate example is the USA. In 2010 five States that hold battle re-enactments attracted:
 - 15 million visitors
 - \$442 million spent in communities close to the battle sites
 - \$151 million in income for local workers and business owners
 - 5,150 local jobs
 - \$248 million in value added to the local economy (including labour income, profits, rents and indirect business taxes);
- Tax revenues from visitors and tourists to battle re-enactments help pay for local services, including services that permanent residents use but visitors do not. In other words – visitors can help a community grow economically beyond what is possible from within itself;
- Hotels, restaurants and shops in the local area all benefit from significant increase in trade resulting in increased taxes collected by the local authority.

Benefits to the Municipal in / local authorities include:

- Economic benefits;
- Tourism promotion;
- Enhancing the national and international reputation of the area;
- Contributions to the public record of previously unknown African rituals, artefacts, history and traditional cultural practice;
- The annual commemorative nature of the re-enactment 2 day festival allows for continuous growth of events and the economic impact;
- High value domestic and international visitors who spend more than typical tourists - especially on cultural artefacts, for example, clothes, craft, weapons, books etc.

Way Forward

We propose an initiation meeting with yourselves and other relevant stakeholders to agree on the way forward and to commence formalising critical issues, some of which would include:

- Exact battles to be commemorated / re-enacted
- Sites and access to sites
- Budgets
- Event organisers
- Length of performance (two battles a day over two days)
- Costuming (community production/professional production)
- Marketing and communications
- Re-enactors, interpreters, guides, other staff
- Accommodation – hotels, guest houses, camping
- Salaries / contribution to costs
- Weapons (the mechanics of weapons handling)
- Municipal resources (police, busses, catering, logistics etc)
- Tourist traffic flow (how much tourism already exists)
- etc