

## Voluntourism for Preserving Heritage: An Initiative for Safeguarding and Developing New Gurna in Egypt

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### Abstract

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This study presents voluntourism as an innovated type of tourism that can effectively contribute in conserving architectural and cultural heritage sites at risk. In this vein, it highlights the outstanding value of New Gurna in Egypt as a valuable site currently in danger and needs immediate attention. Consequently, the study provides a practical proposal for safeguarding and developing New Gurna through voluntourism. Moreover, it suggests incorporating creative tourism within the tourist practices in New Gurna for sustaining its cultural, social and economic development. Finally, it proposes some strategic tips to help succeed in applying both voluntourism and creative tourism in New Gurna.

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**Keywords:** Voluntourism; Creative tourism; Heritage; Safeguarding; New Gurna.

### 1. Introduction

Despite the financial benefit that various countries gain from the tourism industry, certain places need more than just money. They need the help and contribution in developing their culture and community by building schools; learning skills and languages; resolving health issues and preserving the environment and heritage sites. Voluntourism have emerged to help in this field. It has started as a niche tourism undertaken by a small number of tourists and expanded to be one of the fastest growing forms of responsible tourism in the travel market (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, & Clemmons, 2012; McGehee, 2014; Sin, Oakes, & Mostafanezhad, 2015; Tomazos & Butler, 2009). Voluntourism now involves "people from all age and social classes traveling globally to give aid to communities in need and intimately experience the culture" (Travel Sense Organization, 2016).

Thus, it enriches the local community while offering the tourist a more profound travel experience (Everingham, 2015; Wilson, 2015). Most volunteer tourists travel from developed countries to developing countries to participate in community development initiatives, scientific research and ecological and cultural restoration projects (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King & Smith, 2014). The later projects encompass volunteering in heritage preservation to help save some of the historical and architectural sites that narrate the story of nations, communities and historical events. These sites may involve ancient buildings, monuments and even old villages. The UNESCO World Heritage List is one of the main sources for exploring heritage and historic preservation volunteer opportunities available in different countries (Go Abroad, 2016). The village of New Gurna in Egypt is one of the good candidates that can benefit from voluntourism in safeguarding it. This model village that was built by the well-known architect Hassan Fathy (Fathy, 1989; Pyla, 2009; Taragan, 1999). The theories and methodologies that he applied in building New Gurna, especially relying on local materials in construction, has led to the evolvement of sustainable architecture (Architecture In Development, 2011; Pyla, 2009; World Monuments Funds, 2011). Unfortunately, this tremendous project is currently at a great risk due to the neglect it suffered over decades and it needs immediate attention and preservation to save it. In the meantime, New Gurna has been placed on the 2010 World Monuments Watch List for the 100 most endangered sites in the world and awaits a quick action plan to save it (WMF, 2011).

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Currently, there is a substantial amount of researches offering sufficient information about voluntourism, its advantages and disadvantages, volunteer tourist motivations, the role of voluntourism in the development of different communities and the relationship between volunteer tourists and the host community (Brown, 2005a; Guttentag, 2009; Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2015; Ong *et al.*, 2014; Somphet, 2013; Wearing, 2005; Weaver, 2015; Lupoli, Morse, Bailey & Schelhas, 2015) however, none of these researches proposed the utilization of volunteer tourism as means for sustainable tourism and proactive planning.

The current paper differs from previous investigations in introducing voluntourism as an essential type of responsible tourism that can be employed efficiently in reviving and safeguarding heritage places, featured in the village of New Gorna, from the very early stages of its conservation. Furthermore, it highlights the role of another form of responsible tourism, creative tourism, in maintaining sustainable tourism practices within the village. Finally, it suggests some strategic tips that can help in succeeding in the tourism development of New Gorna during and after the conservation process.

## **2. Voluntourism Overview**

There has been a rise in 'volunteer tourism' or 'voluntourism,' as a form of responsible tourism in recent years. It is characterized by the integration of travel and volunteering in social or economic development or conversation oriented projects, hence, it involves combining leisure and voluntary work through travelling within certain period of time (Andereck *et al.*, 2012; Ellis, 2007; Luh, Oakes & Zhad, 2015). International voluntourism has only been prominent since 2000 in response to the growing social and environmental issues in developing countries and disasters in developed countries like earthquakes, hurricanes and The Tsunami. It requires the volunteer tourist full engagement with time and hard work and not just funding (Benson, 2015; Somphet, 2013).

Thus, voluntourism is "a form of tourism that make use of holiday-makers who volunteer to fund and work on social or conservation project and aim to provide sustainable alternative travel that can assist in community development, scientific research or restoration" (Somphet, 2013, p.2). Some advantages of voluntourism include: satisfying altruism and constructing self-identity on behalf of the volunteer tourist and achieving his demand for authenticity, community interaction and intellectual experience. In addition, it can play a valuable role in the development of communities, environmental and heritage conservation, especially, in under-developed areas and when vital projects are challenged with few or lack of resources (Brown, 2005a; Guttentag, 2009; Kirillova, *et al.*, 2015; Ong *et al.*, 2014; Somphet, 2013; Wearing, 2005; Weaver, 2015).

In addition to the travel supply chain counterparts, airlines; accommodation; tour operators and travel agents, voluntourism involves the volunteer tourists, the host community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions. Certain projects may involve The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization [UNESCO], community welfare initiatives, social and environmental research investigations (Andereck *et al.*, 2012; Morgan, 2009; Ong *et al.*, 2014). Voluntourism focuses on a wide variety of areas with a great range of possible destinations and activities involving education, agriculture, health, housing, construction, community development, environmental protection, heritage conservation and research (Brown, 2005a; Luh *et al.*, 2015; Travel Sense Organization, 2016).

Volunteering in heritage conservation helps save some of the greatest architecture, aging buildings, monuments and old villages that are in great need of restoration. Most of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and other historical preservation projects around the world depend on voluntary support to maintain their needs (Go Abroad, 2016). In Egypt, voluntourism can be witnessed in Habiba project in Nuweiba for organic and desert agriculture and community development; and Baladna project in Al Quseir for environmental conservation, health and child development (Baladna Red Sea Organization, 2016; The Habiba Organization, 2016). New Gorna can be the first heritage restoration project in Egypt that relies on voluntourism to sustain its needs as a vital heritage location that needs urgent help with the endorsement of both the UNESCO and The World Monuments Funds [WMF].

## **3. New Gorna**

The village of Old Gournas was located within the boundaries of the ancient Theban necropolis on the Western bank of the Nile opposite to the modern city of Luxor (Bertrand, 1848, p.76). In the late 1940s, the architect Hassan Fathy was assigned by the antiquities Department to build a new village for its residents in order to put an end for their robberies of the ancient tombs at the Theban necropolis by relocating them away from their old village (Fathy, 1989; Pyla, 2007; Taragan,1999). The location of the new village was chosen carefully. It lied across the two main paths leading to the Valley of the Kings, tombs of the nobles and temples located at the Theban necropolis, Besides, being very close to a small train station which made it accessible (Fathy, 2016a; 2016b). In designing New Gournas, which was announced as a model village later, Hassan Fathy tried to restore the local culture and traditions including building techniques; materials and forms. He depended on local material, mud-brick, to maintain culture and reduce costs at the same time (ALHasani, 1996; Fathy, 1989; Porter,1998). He blended Mamluk Cairene style with the Nubian techniques for architectural beauty (Rabbat, 2011). Moreover, he embraced some architectural elements from Old Gournas such as the pigeon towers, the *Maziara* that holds earthen water jars and the external staircase of the mosque minaret (Fathy, 1989). The main plan of New Gournas divides the village into four quarters separated by a group of main wide streets connecting the complex of public buildings, the khan, the mosque, the theater, the village hall, the two primary schools, the clinic, the market place, and others, meeting at the central square of the village (Fathy, 2016b). In his designs, Hassan Fathy was much concerned with the public schools and the public buildings area to serve the Gournis quite well and give them a sense of happiness. Some of the buildings were completed while others were not such as the Turkish baths, the Coptic church and the country club.

Moreover, he built a school for handicrafts to provide the Gournis with a new source of income (Fathy, 1955; 1989; Nobbs-Thiessen, 2006). Over time, New Gournas confronted severe deterioration due to several factors. In 2009, the UNESCO launched an initiative to safeguard New Gournas. A scientific committee was established to investigate the causes of New Gournas's deterioration and determine solutions to rescue it. The efforts of this committee demonstrated the main damages in New Gournas including the destruction of original buildings as a result of the rising levels of subterranean water after the construction of Aswan High Dam and the lack of a proper sewage and waste water disposal system (WMF, 2011). Besides, the residents' use of concrete for constructing new additions and modifications to the original buildings that they considered as old fashioned. In addition to the misuse of some public buildings like the Khan which is used at present as a parking lot and the collapse of major buildings as a result of the lack of maintenance (WMF, 2011). Above all, the lack of awareness of the worthwhile value of Hassan Fathy's pioneering work in this project.

#### **4. The Role of Tourism in Reviving New Gournas**

Tourism development in New Gournas was originally a part of Hassan Fathy's vision to improve its economic conditions. His thought was that New Gournas could become a main location for tourists visiting the Valley of the Kings and Queens, especially if a hotel would be constructed there, as New Gournas is closer than Luxor to the majority of the important monuments (Fathy, 1989). On the other hand, tourism has been mentioned in various sections in the UNESCO initiative (2011) for the development of New Gournas. Instead of considering a tourism type that can help in safeguarding New Gournas and ensure the sustainability of the tourism development in it, the main focus was on the eco-tourism development in the vein of Hassan Fathy's Gournas Tourist Project of 1970, however, the new eco-tourism project would not interfere too heavily with the village life and its community. Obviously this project cannot be applied in the village with its current state or condition.

It was even mentioned in The UNESCO initiative that "the possible development of ecological tourism in New Gournas is to be very carefully evaluated" (UNESCO, 2011, p.p. 50, 55). Furthermore, according to the conclusions of the First Scientific Committee meeting "tourism would not be the main focus of the Safeguarding Project in New Gournas" (UNESCO, 2011, p.55). The possible development of tourist activities in the area is aimed to achieve the following: Maximizing the community benefit of the expected tourists' activities and minimizing their negative impact; Emphasizing the value of Hassan Fathy's heritage and sustainable architecture; Improving the site's overall physical conditions and accessibility to cope with the expected level of tourism development; Improving existing services and introducing new facilities to provide an acceptable level of service accommodating the tourists' needs.

The availability of information on the site, its values and its historic development through tour guides' training, brochure production and onsite interpretative signs. The current study contradicts with the above mentioned aspects in various points: First: It does not view eco-tourism as a good option for the tourism development in New Gournia in the time being. Second: Applying an eco-tourism project away from the village life and community does not fulfill the new tourists' need and desire to spend an authentic vacation where they can experience the daily life of the host community and interact with local people within the destination. Third: It disagrees with the statement saying that the tourism development would not be a main focus of the safeguarding project in New Gournia as certain types of tourism such as voluntourism can actively and positively play a vital role in every step taken in implementing the safeguarding project of New Gournia. Fourth: All the objectives assigned to be achieved through tourist activities can be accomplished through the development of certain responsible and sustainable tourism practices that can not only achieve these objectives but raise and maximize the socio-economic development of the host community, raise cultural and educational awareness among the local people, raise awareness about tourism as a main economical and developmental source for New Gournia, assist in the restoration and conservation of the village, employ and reuse the village's buildings to serve the tourism development and activities, assist in providing methods for enhancing tourism practices and activities in future within New Gournia.

In light of the most recent studies describing the current condition of New Gournia (Abdel Tawab, 2014) and the information gathered from Egyptian experts that dealt closely with New Gournia in recent research, in addition to the UNESCO initiative (2011) and the WMF report (2011) for the development of New Gournia, this study provides a proposal or an approach for how voluntourism can actively assist in the conservation of New Gournia. The following proposal was introduced to eleven voluntourism organizations and six academic professors for assessment and recommendations. Concerning the voluntourism organizations, it was chosen to contact firms specialized in arranging and implementing voluntourism programs. Search engines, Yahoo and Google, were used to bring up the names and websites of these firms. After navigating the websites to ensure that these firms have a great experience in the voluntourism field, twenty organizations were chosen and were contacted through e-mail asking them if they would be interested in assessing the current initiative or proposal for safeguarding New Gournia. Eleven organizations replied and showed their interest. The proposal was sent to these organizations by e-mail. All of them confirmed the clarity and reliability of the proposal and the possibility of implementing it.

The academic professors who were interested in assessing the proposal were five professors specialized in the field of voluntourism from the USA and one professor specialized in the Egyptian modern history and architecture from Egypt who has dealt closely with New Gournia in previous research. E-mail was used for all correspondence, sending the safeguard proposal and receiving the professors' reply and suggestions. All six professors declared that the proposal encompasses a worthy, novel idea proposing the utilization of volunteer tourism in New Gournia as means for sustainable tourism and proactive planning and added that it is considered inspiring and significant. In addition, they all stated that the proposal and strategic tips are clear and concise and agreed on its validity and relevancy. The proposal and the strategic tips presented below in this paper have been refined to take their final structure according to the suggestions and recommendations of the voluntourism firms and the academic professors. These suggestions involved the role that the local community could play in this development approach and the strategic location of Gournia on the western bank of Luxor being a big asset that works in its favor due to its proximity to the major tourist attractions there.

## **5. Voluntourism for Safeguarding New Gournia**

In 2008, an international association concerned with the preservation of the works of Hassan Fathy was established. The association contacted the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the World Monuments Fund [WMF]. Both organizations initiated a dialogue in 2009 regarding the safeguarding of New Gournia village. Subsequently, New Gournia was included in the 2010 World Monuments Watch List, as mentioned previously, and two studies were conducted on the village; the first is an architectural study and the second is a socio-economic study (Abdel Tawab, 2014; Lewis, 2008; UNESCO, 2011; WMF, 2011). The main objectives that these studies reached which are related to the current study can be summarized in the following points (Abdel Tawab, 2014; UNESCO, 2011):

- The conservation and restoration of the remaining buildings built by Hassan Fathy according to the original design and earthy materials.
- The adaptive re-use of the buildings designed by Hassan Fathy such as the market place, the Khan and the theater.
- The establishment of the International Center for Sustainable Architecture [ICSA] to serve as an academic research center for sustainable architecture and become the main contributor concerned with the conservation work in the village.
- The socio-economic development of the village including agricultural activities and tourism development.
- The completion of the village construction according to the spirit and the feeling of the architect Hassan Fathy.

Furthermore, the UNESCO encourages interested institutions and potential partners to join the project and support the conservation activities (Abdel Tawab, 2014; Lewis, 2008; UNESCO, 2011). The following section emphasizes how voluntourism can assist in achieving all the previous objectives through the contribution of all associated parties in the project.

### **5.1 The Restoration of the Remaining Buildings Built By Hassan Fathy**

According to the World Heritage Center's study, there are around 60 buildings from the original buildings in New Gournia among them are the mosque, the theater, the Khan, Hassan Fathy's house and some of the residents' houses. The public buildings, except for the Mosque, have lost their original function. Some buildings such as the Crafts Center, boys and girls schools and the water distribution points or Sabils do not exist anymore. It is suggested that priority should be given to the Khan, Hassan Fathy's house and the theatre (Abdel Tawab, 2014). Volunteer tourists can contribute in the restoration of these buildings according to the guidelines of the conservation master plan. This may include repairing, rebuilding, maintaining and painting (Volun Tourist™, 2016).

### **5.2 The Adaptive Re-Use of the Buildings Designed By Hassan Fathy**

The public buildings and spaces designed by Hassan Fathy can be used after restoration to serve their original function. Besides being the major focal points of the village that show the outstanding value of Hassan Fathy's architecture and the authenticity of his design. The current condition of these buildings is as follows (Abdel Tawab, 2014; UNESCO, 2011):

- The Mosque: suffers from some structural damage but still one of the most maintained structures in the village.
- The Khan: lost its original function.
- The marketplace: lost its original function.
- The house of Hassan Fathy: needs maintenance.
- The Theater: in a good condition since its restoration in the 1980s, however, it is unused and closed to the public.
- The Crafts Center: a significant part of the building was destroyed and replaced by two modern buildings.
- The boys and girls schools: do not exist anymore.
- The Sabils: lost their role, and most of them are used for storage by residents.

Voluntourism can assist in the restoration and maintenance of these public buildings according to the adaptive reuse plan to retrieve their role in serving the community and the potential tourists in future. Thus, The Mosque can maintain its function and serves as an authentic master piece and a focal point in the village. The house of Hassan Fathy would exhibit documents and materials concerning the projects and master plan for New Gournia. The Khan can recover the functions of the handicraft exhibition hall and the market place would feature a public open space for different uses and for people's gathering (UNESCO, 2011). It can also encompass some small shops for souvenirs and grocery, in addition to restaurants for homemade and traditional dishes. The Theater would be an entertainment and cultural space for people and visitors' gathering. The Crafts Center would serve as an educational center for teaching oriental art and craft skills, sewing costumes and culinary art. Some of the local people would be the tutors in the center teaching residents and tourists.

Thus, restoring and reusing the Craft Center is crucial for creative tourism development and the socio-economic development of the village. The boys and girls school after being rebuilt can serve even as educational centers for after school activities and learning. Volunteer tourists can come all year round to teach in these schools other languages to the local children while some of the creative tourism guests can come to learn cultural aspects and Arabic language from local tutors using the same facilities. The Sabils, when restored and their role is retrieved, serves as a master piece of authenticity and beauty for both the host community and the potential tourists.

### **5.3 The Establishment of the International Center for Sustainable Architecture [ICSA]**

This is considered one of the sustainable socio-economic development of New Gournā. Its role is to promote earthen architecture and Hassan Fathy's principles and knowledge in architecture, in addition to encouraging the exchange of experience among architects and heritage experts. The centre should host researchers and students from all over the world, besides providing employment and training for the local community. The construction of ICSA would include small hotels and guest houses for teachers, scholars and students (Abdel Tawab, 2014; UNESCO, 2011). This accommodation facility can be enhanced to provide as well lodging for volunteer tourists and creative tourism guests.

### **5.4 The Socio-Economic Development of the Village**

*First, the tourism development:* Tourism development and the possibility of New Gournā becoming a main tourist area next to Luxor is seen as an economic opportunity for the village, if planned and structured appropriately with the involvement of the local community. "The need to find a form of tourism compatible with rehabilitation, enhancing the economic level of the community while respecting its lifestyle. Tourism development should be controlled, and it must not be allowed to cause pressure on the urban development of New Gournā or on the nature of the community" (UNESCO, 2011, p.17). In response to that, the current study suggests voluntourism as a main responsible type of tourism followed by creative tourism to ensure the sustainable development of New Gournā, promoting it as a tourist destination for the niche tourism market, helping and involving the host community, preserving and respecting the place authenticity and lifestyle and at the same time not causing any pressure on the place development or its community.

Some basic structures already exist that with some improvement can serve both local residents and tourists such as two hospitals, three schools, a ferry within a walking distance, running water, garbage disposal and cell phone coverage (Abdel Tawab, 2014; UNESCO, 2011). *Second: the agricultural development:* New Gournā used to have a significant number of trees, in open space and in the market place. This has completely gone and needs to be replanted on a sustainable base (Abdel Tawab, 2014; WMF, 2011). Voluntourism can help in this environmental and agricultural mission. *Third: General Health:* Children in New Gournā suffer from sewage exposure, scorpions and snakes (Abdel Tawab, 2014; WMF, 2011). Volunteer tourists can help in cleaning and clearing the area to ensure environmental and general health safety for the local community.

### **5.5 The Completion of the Village Construction**

In more progressive stages, New Gournā can start receiving volunteer tourists to assist in the completion of the village according to its master plan and early sketches inspired by the spirit and the feeling of Hassan Fathy (Abdul Tawab, 2014). Volunteer tourists can contribute in constructing, painting and furnishing new buildings and related projects.

## **6. Strategic Tips for The Conservation of New Gournā Through Voluntourism**

The following strategic tips can help in introducing and establishing voluntourism in New Gournā.

### **6.1 Invite Major Players in Voluntourism to Contribute in the Safeguarding Project of New Gournā**

On top of these contributors is the UNESCO, specifically, the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative [WHV] launched in 2008 within the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme.

The WHV aims at involving young people and youth organizations in World Heritage preservation and promotion.

The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service [CCIVS] is the responsible regional coordinator for the WHV projects in Africa and Arab countries. Secondly, the ministries and governmental institutions with direct relation to the project are another partners involved, especially the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and the Supreme Council for Antiquities [SCA]. Other partners would include The Scientific Committee; local non-profit organizations [NGOs]; international volunteerism organizations specialized in the field of heritage conservation; the tourism supply chain with travel agencies, tour operators, accommodation and transportation involved and the host community (Farmaki, Constanti, Yiasemi & Karis, 2014; UNESCO, 2011; 2016; WMF, 2011).

## **6.2 Identifying the Role of Each Contributor**

The UNESCO's role for example would be to lead the overall coordination with the government. The governmental institutions would assist in improving the infrastructure such as the sewage system (Abdul Tawab, 2014). The scientific committee would give advice for the implementation of the conservation strategy (UNESCO, 2011). The WHV, the international voluntourism organizations and tour operators would promote the project as a voluntourism opportunity and provide volunteer tourists to the project from all over the world (Somphet 2013). Travel agents can help in setting up voluntours and activities for the tourists' free time (Travel Sense Organization, 2016).

The WHV in cooperation with the international voluntourism organizations can also organize action camps for the volunteer tourists and even for the local people. These action camps would involve informative and educational sessions on issues related to the conservation of the site and its benefits to the local community; workshops and practical activities to teach them some preservation and conservation skills; orientation and follow-up activities with the volunteer tourists and local people to ensure that both sides are fully prepared and guarantee the work sustainability (Ellis, 2007, Guttentag, 2009; UNESCO, 2016; Wearing, 2005; Yousfi, 2016).

## **6.3 Assigning the Action Plan**

Following the guidelines of a well designed action plan, counting on a risk management strategy and safety procedures, troubleshooting possible problems and constant monitoring and evaluation assures safety and quality in all stages of the project (Benson, 2015).

## **6.4 Flexibility in Task versus Time or Vacation Duration**

The project tasks vary in terms of their duration, volunteer tourists can choose trips encompassing small tasks that can range from a week to several weeks such as painting and building desks or benches for schools and some can choose major tasks lasting for several months including reconstruction and restoration of buildings. Focusing on the long volunteering duration in the first stages might be preferable. However, every progress no matter how small it seems helps the project and its cultural, social and economic development (Guttentag, 2009; Morgan, 2009).

## **6.5 Post-trip evaluation**

This step is very useful and can be done by travel agents and tour operators for assuring the tourism development sustainability in New Gurna. Requesting the volunteer tourists' feedback at the end of their vacation helps in measuring their satisfaction, eliminating negative impacts and improving the experience in future. Keeping connected with the volunteer tourists who spent their time and effort in any of the project stages providing them with up-dated information about what has been achieved, gives them a positive feeling and raises their self-esteem that they were a part of this success. This encourages return visits in more progressive phases of the project and even attracts more volunteer tourists to participate as a result of the positive reviews and opinions they have heard about the project and the authentic experience the previous tourists have lived (Lynch, 2015). After conservation, a second phase for establishing a sustainable tourism development in New Gurna is to start providing other responsible types of tourism depending on a balanced tourism product that focuses on culture, heritage and the development of the host community. Creative tourism would be a suitable contributor with voluntourism at this stage to achieve this goal (Farmaki *et al.*, 2014).

The following section demonstrates how tourism can be sustained in New Gournia after its conservation, especially, through creative tourism.

## **7. Creative Tourism for Future Tourism Development in New Gournia**

Creative tourism is a form of responsible and sustainable tourism that focuses on the intangible culture of a certain place rather than its tangible history. It gives the tourist the chance to get engaged with the real cultural life of the host community (Chang, Backman & Huang, 2014; Tan, Luh & Kung, 2014; UNESCO, 2008). The Creative Cities Network endorsed by UNESCO agreed on the following working definition of creative tourism: "Creative Tourism is travel directed towards an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place. It provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture" (Creative Cities Network, 2006, p.3; Tan *et al.*, 2014, p. 249).

Creative tourism provides the tourist with an authentic holiday that encompasses more participative, learning and interactive experience helping in his personal development. It also assists in the socio-economic development of the host community and in promoting its socio-cultural aspects (Raymond, 2008; Salman & Uygur, 2010; Tan *et al.*, 2014). The active role the tourist plays in creative tourism is to participate in creative experiences through workshops, sessions and events. Besides that, creative tourism requires active participation from residents as it is based on the involvement of the local community to communicate the intangible culture to the tourist and build up a relationship with him. This occurs through the participation of some local residents in workshops as instructors teaching tourists craft and culinary skills and traditional aspects and costumes, selling crafts and artworks to tourists in markets and participating in the organization of events and markets (Hertel, 2008; Richards & Wilson, 2008).

Thus, the host community's involvement in New Gournia through this phase is crucial as the local community is the core intangible heritage that creative tourism relies on. Exploiting creative tourism specifically in New Gournia will serve the tourism development of the place without the need for relocating its residents. On the other hand, the New Gournia's residents themselves do not only want to stay in the village, but also to contribute to its improvement. Their willingness to be an essential partner in the village renovation will serve both the tourism development of the place and the social and economic development of the local residents (WMF, 2011).

Hence, involving the community in the planning process to feel ownership over the future plans for New Gournia and preparing and training local people for creative tourism is essential (Farmaki *et al.*, 2014; Underberg-Goode, 2014; WMF, 2011). Creative tourism concentrates on educating both local people and tourists things related to the cultural and traditional aspects of the place, through sessions, workshops and courses, to ensure the survival of its traditions and history and at the same time to offer the local people economic and social sustainability through their work either as teachers of traditional skills or sellers of traditional artworks and local goods (Edwards, 2012; Hertel, 2008; Paschinger, 2013). Some of the tourism activities generally and the creative tourism activities specifically that can help in the tourism development in New Gournia are explained below. Arts, crafts, folk arts, design and gastronomy are assigned by the Creative Cities Network as essential fields of products' excellence in creative tourism (Creative Cities Network, 2006). New Gournia have all these fields and can employ them in the following tourism projects:

### **7.1 The handicraft center**

The center can be used for teaching arts, crafts, sewing, traditional costume design and culinary art for creative tourism guests. Some local women already make a living through sewing scarves and selling them to the tourism market through middle men and other house wives are experts in baking in mud ovens and making traditional dishes and cheese (UNESCO, 2011; WMF, 2011). All these local women have the chance to get involved in the tourism development and have a better quality of life. They can work as tutors to the creative tourism guests interested in arts, crafts, design and gastronomy, besides selling some of their creative stuff to the tourists directly at the market place and the khan.

### **7.2 The boys and girls school**

As mentioned before, they can serve as educational centers for learning exchange between tourists and local people; local people would work as tutors for creative tourism guests and volunteer tourists would perform as tutors for local children and residents, thus, intercultural learning becomes reciprocal rather than one way (Everingham, 2015; UNESCO, 2011).

### **7.3 The Crafts exhibition hall, the marketplace and the theater**

All can be employed in organizing tourist events and festivals demonstrating folk art and crafts and displaying souvenirs featuring a main component of creative tourism. In addition to the above projects, other locations and ideas can be employed for the development of tourism in New Gournah:

### **7.4 Hassan Fathy's own house in New Gournah**

To be converted into a museum demonstrating his work, old documents and pictures for New Gournah and its history and architecture. Currently, two local men maintain house museums about Hassan Fathy (UNESCO, 2011; WMF, 2011). These men and others can have a good opportunity of employment and involvement in the tourism development project if Hassan Fathy's house becomes a recognized museum.

### **7.5 The mosque, the Sabils, some residential and public buildings**

Especially those restored according to the original design and earthy materials would serve the sightseeing component in a tourist trip.

### **7.6 The lodges for the ICOSA**

As mentioned previously, these potential lodgings can be enhanced to accommodate volunteer tourists and creative tourism guests staying and working in New Gournah.

### **7.7 The location of New Gournah**

The unique location of New Gournah is considered a big asset that works in its favor as a suitable site for tourism development and tourist activities. New Gournah is located in one of the World Heritage Sites in Egypt, Ancient Thebes, on the Western bank of Luxor. One of the key tourist destinations in Egypt that encompasses major must-see attractions such as Ramaseum, valley of Kings, Memnon colossi, Deir Al Bahry temple and others (Abdel Tawab, 2014). Tour operators and travel agents can organize quick trips and same day excursions from Luxor to New Gournah to help promote the village to the international and domestic tourists. Excursions can even be integrated to New Gournah in all inclusive tours that encompass Luxor and Aswan. These quick trips may involve "mini-mission or mission lite" (Brown, 2005b, p.1) that gives the tourist the opportunity to participate in a small volunteer task or a quick creative tourism workshop or even interact with the local people.

## **8. Tips for succeeding in the tourism development of New Gournah after conservation:**

This may involve:

- The public sector support and active community participation are essential for developing all these types of tourism in New Gournah (Underberg-Goode, 2014).
- Marketing efforts for voluntourism in New Gournah, should also focus on other benefits and play on tourists' motivations other than the development aid, putting into consideration that some volunteer tourists have other desires that need to be fulfilled besides their intention to assist (Brown, 2005b). Here comes the importance of promoting other activities that can be practiced in New Gournah beside voluntourism such as creative tourism, the authentic experience, the engagement and intercultural communication with the host community.
- Local tour operators and travel agents can play an apparent role by planning tours to New Gournah; arranging quick trips and excursions; assisting in the organization of creative tourism activities or workshops and in festivals and events to help the host community in promoting and implementing them (Brown, 2005b).

## 9. Conclusion

Voluntourism plays a vital role in culture and heritage preservation projects. It is an effective method that can help safeguard cultural and historical sites at a great risk of diminishing. The village of New Gournā illustrates a good example for those places that lost their spark and currently experience total neglect and deterioration. Its present condition needs immediate action to save it. This study presents a proposal or an approach for safeguarding and developing New Gournā through voluntourism guided by the UNESCO initiative (2011) for the development of the village. It explained how choosing the type of tourism to be considered and applied in New Gournā is crucial. Consequently, it emphasized how voluntourism is the most responsible tourism form applicable to the New Gournā's state and condition. Then, it explained how other types of responsible tourism, creative tourism specifically, can contribute in later stages for the development of New Gournā and its host community after restoration. Opinions of voluntourism organizations and academic professors in the voluntourism and the Egyptian modern history fields affirmed the clarity and relevance of this proposal.

Limitations of the current study include the small size of voluntourism organizations participating in the assessment of the safeguard approach. This was due to the small number of firms with high experience in organizing and implementing voluntourism programs, in addition to the limited number of firms that showed their willingness to participate in the assessment process. Future studies may involve other types of tourism that can be implemented in New Gournā, especially after its restoration. Future studies may also investigate employing voluntourism in restoring and conserving other heritage sites and buildings in Egypt that suffer from maladaptive use or wide neglect.

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