



GUIDING CRIMEAN GUIDES

In late March and early April 2010, the USAID Local Investment and National Competitiveness project (LINC) in conjunction with two Crimea-based companies carried out a training course in Best Practices in Practical Tourist Guiding for two groups of Crimean tourist guides, coaching them to the international guiding standards.



Tourist Guide Training Consultant Iris Barry instructs Crimean tourist guides in the classroom

In Yalta, the training took place from March 25-30, was delivered to twelve guides, and was supported by Yalta-based Select Black Sea Ltd. In Sevastopol, Ramoudt-Sevastopol-Tour cosponsored the course, which was carried out from April 1-6 for seven guides.

In every case, the trainer was Iris Barry, a tourist guide training consultant from the United Kingdom with a 30-year guiding experience worldwide.

The aim of the training was to familiarize Crimean active multilingual tourist guides with international guiding standards.



Identifying the top visual priority from the Best Western Sevastopol Hotel's balcony

Five days of intensive sessions deepened the trainees' knowledge of the tourist guide role and legal responsibilities, tourist guide associations and their functions, and tourist guide professional code of conduct. Ms. Barry coached the participants in how to select the top visual priority, guide on a moving vehicle, guide walking tours, guide inside a museum. She also gave recommendations on how to deal with sensitive issues, complaints, questions, and other.



Sevastopol guide Olha Bondarenko speaks at the communications workshop. Her speech is recorded to be played back later

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At the communications workshop, the trainees were asked to come to the front and make a two-minute presentation without use of notes. The presentations were recorded and then played back for constructive criticism by the audience. In this way the participants learned important communication do's and don'ts.



Yalta guide Alyona Prosyanyk uses her newly gained skills in the Livadia Palace in Yalta

Guide and interpreter from Sevastopol with a four-year practical guiding experience Maria Ivanova said she spent a great deal of her work time improving texts and searching for new events to present them to tourists. "As a rule, I don't have time to analyze my own work. This training gave me an opportunity to analyze my speaking style, my emotions and gestures during the talks. The most valuable thing for me is to receive feedback from Iris and my peers," said Maria.



Sevastopol guide Olena Kondratyeva presents the mint at the Chersonesos Archaeological Preserve in Sevastopol

The training courses included excursions to the Livadia Palace in Yalta and the Chersonesos Archaeological Preserve in Sevastopol, where participants practiced developing their skills in conducting a good guided tour. The speakers received feedback from both the trainer and the fellow participants in these field trips.

The training ended in written and practical examinations. All nineteen guides successfully passed the written examination. Two of the participants were assessed as “Not Yet Ready” in the practical part of the exam.

“I think that this training course will have direct benefits for Crimean tourism,” said Iris Barry. “The tourist guides who work with groups of tourists are interpreters of Crimea. If the guides do a good job then the guests will go back to their home countries, describe the wonderful holidays they had and you [in Crimea] will get new visitors and returning visitors. Nothing works better than a word of mouth for publicity.”

All the participants were offered to fill out a customer satisfaction survey questionnaire. The results showed that 100% of participants’ expectations of the training were met or exceeded.

LINC, through Iris Barry, is following up with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) on the possibility of certification of the successful participants as WFTGA Part I trained. So far, Ukraine has no WFTGA-certified guides.

Tourist guiding tips



Lead someone who is blind only after he or she has accepted your offer of help. Let them hold your arm. Be descriptive in your commentary; people with sight loss are usually good at visualizing things



Never underestimate the visitors’ intelligence. Never overestimate the visitors’ existing knowledge. But keep your story short and simple. Remember that humor increases learning by 18% to 20%



Talk only after you stop during the walking tour. Be aware of the limitations of group members and set the pace accordingly. Wait for the last person to catch up before you speak. Face the group. Often count the group (discreetly!)