

CULTURAL EVENTS AS TOOLS OF DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS – THE CASE OF SEVNICA IN SLOVENIA

Jasna POTOČNIK TOPLER

University of Maribor, Faculty of Tourism, Cesta prvih borcev 36, 8250 Brežice, Slovenia
e-mail: jasna.potocnik1@um.si

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to identify cultural tourism as one of the best practices that can help in the implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism (2017 - 2021) and to examine the role of cultural events as tools for the development of sustainable tourism. The latter is one of the main trends in the tourism sector, at least in the European context and also in Slovenia as a member country of the European Union. The challenge of developing sustainable tourism destinations is considerable in rural areas, where local communities must be closely observed and by all means included in the decision-making process on future tourism development. This is of the utmost importance as tourism is much more than an economic activity. Therefore, key decision-makers need to be aware that tourism activities affect all local people and many areas of their life and that the role of tourism in rural areas is to improve the quality of life of the local population. Since at least some form of culture can be found in every village, small (rural) tourist destinations often find important opportunities for sustainable tourism development in organizing cultural events, which lead to greater community visibility, cultural branding of the destination, which is significant and also several business opportunities. On the case of Sevnica, this article aims to demonstrate that there is great potential for further development of cultural tourism and its subtypes in Slovenia by further developing cultural tourism and various tourism products based on rich cultural heritage.

Keywords: cultural events, cultural tourism, sustainable tourism, preserving heritage, local stakeholders, Sevnica, Slovenia

EVENTI CULTURALI COME STRUMENTI DI SVILUPPO DEL TURISMO SOSTENIBILE NELLE AREE RURALI – IL CASO DI SEVNICA IN SLOVENIA

SINTESI

Lo scopo del saggio è identificare il turismo culturale come una delle migliori pratiche che possono aiutare nell'implementazione della Strategia per la crescita sostenibile del turismo sloveno (2017 - 2021) ed esaminare il ruolo degli eventi culturali come strumenti per lo sviluppo del turismo sostenibile. Quest'ultima è una delle tendenze principali nel settore del turismo, almeno nel contesto europeo e anche in Slovenia come paese membro dell'Unione europea. La sfida dello sviluppo di destinazioni turistiche sostenibili è considerevole nelle aree rurali, dove le comunità locali devono essere osservate attentamente e con tutti i mezzi incluse nel processo decisionale sul futuro sviluppo turistico. Ciò è della massima importanza poiché il turismo è molto più di un'attività economica. Pertanto, i principali responsabili delle decisioni devono essere consapevoli del fatto che le attività turistiche influenzano tutta la popolazione locale e molte aree della loro vita e che il ruolo del turismo nelle aree rurali è quello di migliorare la qualità della vita della popolazione locale. Poiché almeno una qualche forma di cultura può essere trovata in ogni villaggio, le piccole destinazioni turistiche (rurali) spesso trovano importanti opportunità per lo sviluppo del turismo sostenibile nell'organizzazione di eventi culturali, che portano ad una maggiore visibilità della comunità, al marchio culturale della destinazione, che è significativo ed anche diverse opportunità di business. Nel caso di Sevnica, il presente saggio mira a dimostrare che esiste un grande potenziale per un ulteriore sviluppo del turismo culturale e dei suoi sottotipi in Slovenia, sviluppando ulteriormente il turismo culturale e vari prodotti turistici basati sul ricco patrimonio culturale.

Parole chiave: eventi culturali, turismo culturale, turismo sostenibile, preservazione del patrimonio, stakeholder locali, Sevnica, Slovenia

INTRODUCTION

Cultural events can represent an excellent opportunity for the destination and its development, especially when it comes to cultural events representing unique heritage and culture, which can be successfully used as a means of positioning and marketing a destination (Vitić-Četković et al., 2020) and have an outstanding role in the development of the local community (Negrusa et al., 2016). Despite some negative impacts, such as too many tourists at a small destination and their indecent behaviour (Postma & Schmuecker, 2017), changing of the image of a destination – not necessarily in a positive way (Richards & Wilson, 2004), trivializing local culture (González Reverté & Morales Pérez, 2017), etc., events contribute to the formation of the affective and cognitive destination images (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2018). Many authors believe that events can be employed as tools to implement specific strategic goals of destinations (Hannigan, 2003; Gibson & Stevenson, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Colombo, 2016; Koščak & O'Rourke, 2019). What is more, local communities and small villages away from the busy tourism centres are very important for hosting small events despite the fact that in the past tourism managers often forgot about these stakeholders (Koščak & O'Rourke, 2019). Buhalis (2000) also points out that the competitiveness of a destination depends on the ability to develop and project a unique and recognizable brand. And this is exactly where the involvement of small local communities can contribute to the creation of unique tourism experiences. In addition, without the inclusion of the locals in the development of a destination, in local fairs, festivals and cultural events, these events and destinations will not be successful. The success of any sustainable destination is crucially dependent on the acceptance of events and tourist-related plans by the local communities (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016), which further on depends on the balance of perceived costs and benefits (Bimonte & Punzo, 2016; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). Getz (2008, 403) sees events as “an important motivator of tourism”, which “can lead to regional development” (Skoultzos & Tsartas, 2009, 293). As positive wider effects or the so-called legacies of cultural events, very often opportunities for local business and developing talent of the locals are identified (Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016). Visibility of local businesses can be increased, and collaboration among local businesses and organizations as well (O’Callaghan & Linehan, 2007; Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016). Irshad (2011, 1) argues that “events and festivals tourism is one of

the fastest growing forms of tourism”. Especially in Europe, cultural events tourism is on the rise, which also supports the popularity of the project European Capital of Culture, which has become a significant generator of tourism (Liu, 2014). Especially popular among tourists are music, film, theatre and culinary festivals, such as the famous Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, the Venice Carnival, Oktoberfest in Munich, the Slovenian Lent in Maribor, *Kurentovanje* in Ptuj, or the Pippi Longstocking festival (*Pikin festival*) in Velenje. In tourism, however, also small daily cultural events have been gaining popularity, especially after the changed circumstances and safety measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alves et al. (2010) argue that the number of various cultural and other events has multiplied many times over in the 1990s and 2000s. As a popular segment of tourism, event tourism has gained a lot of research interest. Ritchie (1984) and Hall (1989) discussed mostly hallmark or big events, which are, for example, “major fairs, festivals, expositions, cultural and sporting events which are held on either a regular or a one-off basis” (Hall, 1989, 263). But in the tourism sector not only big events, but also small-scale events, in our case, cultural events matter. Many different activities may be described as events – from the Olympic Games to small regional or village festivals (Irshad, 2011). Culture and cultural heritage are recognized as important tourism and also event resources. In Slovenia, the Grossmann film & wine festival in Ljutomer is a good example of a small, but successful cultural event, attracting international tourists. In a small village of Kotlje beneath the Uršlja mountain, a festival called *Festival solzic* (“solzica” is a flower called “Lilly of the Valley” in English), celebrating literary heritage of the local author Lovro Kuhar – Prežihov Voranc (1893–1950), is held every year. Ethnological events, such as Shrovetide carnivals, fairs and events presenting National Costumes and Clothing Heritage also play an important role of presenting the local traditions to visitors and tourists. Tourism has been recognized as a significant tool not only for presenting, but also for preserving tangible and intangible heritage. Where cultural tourism acts as a tool for developing tourism in rural areas, the main objective is usually “to maintain or improve the quality of life of the local people” (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999, 199) since tourism helps create business opportunities, jobs, and consequently raises the standards and overall quality of living (Fleischer & Felsenstein, 2000; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). On the other hand, if tourism is not managed well and if the locals and experts are not actively involved in its strategic planning, it can also bring many

negative impacts – from heritage sites turning into theme parks that are overrun with tourists (Koščak & O'Rourke, 2019), devaluation of heritage, loss of authenticity, to pollution, loss of peace, loss of well-being and even criminal (Rangus et al., 2017).

Culture in its broadest sense, where “*shared practices*” (Welsch, 1995, 43) are found and where “*people interact in groups*” (Rathje, 2009, 40), is very often recognized as a primary motivation for tourists to choose a destination, but even when culture is not a primary, but a secondary motivation, it is vital for tourism. Also, because the UNWTO's (2018) estimation show that cultural tourists account for around 40 % of all tourists. Thus, cultural experiences are definitely “*one of the most important elements of tourism production and consumption*” (Richards et al., 2020, 1). Since Pine and Gilmore (1999) published their work on experience economy, also tourism saw the increasing number of studies dealing with (cultural) tourism experiences.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The main purpose of the research presented is to emphasize the significance of the heritage and traditions of a small rural area community in the development of tourism according to the state-of-the-art principles and tools. Its main objective was to analyse the role of small local cultural events in attracting tourists to rural areas away from the most desired tourist attractions. The research is based on literature review on cultural and heritage tourism and on a case study of a rural tourism destination of Sevnica, where the author actively participated in the preparation of the tourism development strategy and several projects on sustainable cultural tourism. Also content analysis is employed and the use of semi-structured interviews with tourism stakeholders (the mayor, three local business owners, two employees of the public institution responsible for tourism development in the municipality (*Javni zavod za kulturo, šport, turizem in mladino Sevnica*), and two locals who are not actively involved in tourism. The purpose of the interviews was to get an insight into the attitudes of the locals towards tourism initiatives, locals' expectations and plans related to the future.

CULTURAL TOURISM

Culture as defined by Welsch (1995) and Rathje (2009), which is the essence of cultural tourism, may be consumed and experienced in numerous ways and in many different places. Thus, cultural

tourism is a type of cultural consumption that is growing also because in the recent decades it has been divided into a large number of subtypes or niches - from heritage, art, gastronomy, film to creative tourism (Richards, 2018). In the tourism literature we find the term niche tourism. Research on the experience of culture has been on the rise since the emergence of the so-called experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), and it is cultural experiences and cultural events that are increasingly perceived as the essence of tourism (Ritchie et al., 2011). What counts in tourism are “*unique and unexpected personal experiences*” that are different from the experiences of other tourists (Park & Almeida Santos, 2017, 16). This is exactly where the concept of local has its opportunity to contribute to tourism, and local communities have many possibilities to enrich the existing tourism offer, especially for tourists who are seekers of novelty (Larsen et al., 2019) according to the traditional tourist role theory (Cohen, 1972; 1979; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). Cornelisse (2018) argues that tourists are in search of authenticity and authentic experiences, which are always very personal, and “*are experienced by engagement on an emotional, physical, mental and/or intellectual level*” (Cornelisse, 2018, 98). In a recent research by Seyfi et al. (2020), it was established that cultural tourism experiences are affected by the following six key factors: 1 prior perceived significance of the experience, 2 authenticity, 3 engagement, 4 cultural exchange, 5 culinary attraction and 6 quality of service.

Given the broad concept of the term culture which presupposes that culture is “*a system of knowledge, beliefs, procedures, attitudes, and artefacts that is shared within a group*” (Gill, 2013, 71), it is not surprising that definitions of cultural tourism differ (Aluza et al., 1998), but there is a consensus that cultural tourism is a phenomenon in which tourists consume culture (Richards, 1996).

It is essential to point out that cultural tourism has been conceptualized from different perspectives and, thus, we come across several definitions (McKercher & DuCros, 2002). For the purpose of this article, the definition by McIntosh and Goeldner (1990) is adopted, recognizing cultural tourism as a form of special interest tourism where culture forms the basis of either attracting tourists or motivating people to travel. The plan for the future development of cultural tourism in Slovenia ONKULT (2017, 8) summarizes the definition of the European Travel Commission, which divides cultural tourism into external and internal circles. The inner circle represents the primary elements of cultural tourism (this includes heritage tourism and art tourism), and the outer circle

represents the secondary elements of cultural tourism (this includes lifestyle with tradition, cuisine, customs, etc. and creative industries). Defining cultural tourists is challenging as well, as motives for travelling and the understanding of culture among people differ (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002).

For many tourists, cultural tourism is travelling with the aim of experiencing a foreign culture. They enjoy a variety of new attractions, voices (languages, dialects, etc.), tastes and smells (dishes, drinks, open markets, woods etc), while researchers and marketers define cultural tourism as a special category of tourism products that differs from other tourism products and activities (Hall & MacArthur, 1998; Leask & Yeoman, 1999; Richards, 1996). According to the diversity of activities within cultural tourism, as well as according to the behavioural patterns of tourists, there are several types of cultural tourists. Silberberg (1995) identified 4 types of cultural tourists – from extremely motivated to accidental (accidental cultural tourists, adjunct cultural tourists, in part cultural tourists and greatly cultural tourists). Stebbins (1996) believes that cultural tourists are divided into 2 types, namely general and specialized tourists, and McKercher & Du Cros (2002) distinguish 5 types of cultural tourists according to the motive and depth of experience: 1) The purposeful cultural tourist - cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination and the tourist has a very deep cultural experience. 2) The sightseeing cultural tourist - cultural tourism is a primary reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is more shallow. 3) The serendipitous cultural tourist - a tourist who does not travel for cultural tourism reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience. 4) The casual cultural tourist - cultural tourism is a weak motive for travel and the resulting experience is shallow. 5) The incidental cultural tourist - this tourist does not travel for cultural tourism reasons but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences. According to specific interests, cultural tourists could be divided into numerous types, but it is essential to be aware of two principal categories as Stebbins (1996) suggested. Also the European Travel Commission, whose typology has been adopted by the creators of the Slovenian cultural tourism development plan ONKULT (2017, 9), divides tourists into those for whom culture is the primary motive for visiting, and those for whom culture represents one of the motives of the visit. Both categories are crucial for the further development of cultural tourism in Slovenia.

HERITAGE AND HERITAGE TOURISM

Heritage is an important resource of cultural tourism and often in the professional and scientific literature we also find the term heritage tourism for this subtype of cultural tourism, for which many different definitions derived from different understandings and definitions of heritage exist (Agarwal and Shaw, 2018). One of them is that heritage is “*the contemporary use of the past [...] the interpretation of the past in history*” (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996, 105). However, cultural heritage based tourism, which is generally not focused on mass culture (Álvarez-García et al., 2019), is significant type of tourism.

Poria et al. (2000, 1047) state that heritage tourism is often defined and understood as tourism that is focused on what we have inherited, which can be anything from historic buildings to works of art and beautiful views, which, in their opinion, can be problematic, so they propose to treat heritage tourism according to the motivation and perception of tourists instead of the attributes of individual locations, thus distinguishing (2000, 1048) three types of heritage tourists: 1) tourists visiting a location considered part of their heritage, 2) tourists who visit a site that they consider to be heritage, even though it is not related to their heritage, and 3) tourists who visit a heritage site that is specifically marked as a heritage site, even though they are not aware of that designation. Perception of heritage is crucial, as the behaviour of those tourists who perceive heritage as part of their own heritage is different (Poria et al., 2003).

The locals, who are recognised as the bearers of cultural heritage and culture, have a crucial role not only in the management of cultural heritage, its preservation and promotion, but also in the planning of tourism strategies, where local people and local communities are of the utmost importance. The case study findings by MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003) indicate that 1) the development of cultural tourism in rural areas provides a potential economic tool for communities in rural areas, 2) that cultural tourism can be a tool to identify distinct communities in the rural areas as places or destinations for entertainment, education, and some sort of enrichment for visitors and tourists, and 3) that cooperation, networking and partnerships in developing cultural tourism are significant for achieving the goals of the rural communities. Cooperation with local stakeholders is one of the foundations of sustainability and tourism managers should be well aware of that. Often discussing and planning tourism with the locals is extremely demanding, but involving also local entrepreneurs, farmers, associations, village or district

Table 1: Benefits of cultural events (adopted according Colombo (2016) Cultural Impact Perception Model).

BENEFITS	
<i>Impact</i>	<i>Items</i>
Information about culture	Exposure to a variety of cultural experiences through the community festival Shared experience
Preservation of cultural traditions	Revitalisation of traditions Traditions preserved
Construction of cultural identity	Validation of community groups Impacts on the region's cultural identity Building of community pride Opportunity to develop new cultural skills and talents Celebration of community Impacts on the local character of the community Increased local interest in the region's culture and history
Integration by cultural effects	Community pride and integration Cultural integration
Social cohesion by means of culture	Opportunity for intercultural contact Community groups work together to achieve common goals through the festival Variety of cultural experiences

representatives, initiatives, schools, etc. and not only policy-makers is what brings success in the long run. Constant communication with all the local stakeholders and paying attention to the locals' interests in the process of preparing a tourism strategy and also later when the tourism strategy is put to practice is not only essential, but one of the conditions of developing successful sustainable destinations. A recent research carried out in Spain argues, for example, that shared values of tourists and hosts contribute to successful tourism and, further on, that cultural tourism "*promotes happiness*" (Sanagustín-Fons et al., 2020, 15), which is easily associated with attending rewarding cultural events.

Through cultural events, which are of numerous types (Snowball, 2008) and have become a commonly used instrument for sharing local culture with tourists and visitors (Christou et al., 2018), tourism attracts not only tourists but also investments (Getz, 2008). The economic aspect of events is important and has often been researched (Crompton & McKay, 1994; Dwyer et al., 2006). Alves et al. (2010, 33) argue that even in small areas events "*can lead to several benefits*". Not only economic, but also social and cultural aspects

matter, such as raising cultural awareness of local traditions (Stankova & Vassenska, 2015), enhanced sense of place of the locals, improved inclusion and improved quality of life (Robertson et al., 2009; Colombo, 2016; Žilič Fišer, & Kožuh, 2019), enhanced happiness and well-being among the locals and tourists (Ateca-Amestoy et al., 2016). Colombo (2016) proposes the Cultural Impact Perception Model (Table 1) and enumerates five beneficial impacts of cultural events: information about culture, preservation of cultural traditions, construction of cultural identity, integration by cultural effects and social cohesion by means of culture. As far as the event management is concerned, Alves et al. (2010) research indicates the significance of measuring the impact of events, i. e. establishing some methodology to get information about the return of the investment, impacts on the community (Alves et al., 2010) and visitor's satisfaction.

Events, according to Irshad (2011) bring tourists to less visited places, spread the seasonality of tourism in a region, distribute the flow of money in a region, increase the possibilities for full time employment, increasing the stay length of visitors, increasing the expenditure of visitors in the region,

improving awareness of a destination, and increasing the solidarity of the community or civic pride. Further on, events are a tool for promoting tourism, and destination or attraction managers use them as part of their marketing strategy (Irshad, 2011).

Festivals have direct and indirect impacts on their communities through the opportunities they provide for; participation, skills development and volunteering. They can also have environmental and political impacts. (Irshad, 2011, 4)

However, to forecast and predict the demand for events can be very difficult and demanding (Getz, 2008; Mules & McDonald, 1994). Since events also have negative impacts (crowds, noise, pollution, etc.) and never everyone in the local community is happy with the tourism development plans, it is recommended that events are well received among the locals even before their promotion is extended to tourists. That is why it is advised – based on the conclusions of the study in Sevnica where the most widely known traditional events are *Blaufränkisch Wine Festival*, *Salami Festival* and *Traditional grass cutting in Lisca* – that cultural tourists in heritage destinations are invited to events with a long tradition that are well known and well received among the locals.

THE CASE OF SEVNICA IN SLOVENIA

The Slovene town of Sevnica, which is branding itself under the slogan “Sevnica – the Treasury of Adventures”, is, also due to the fact that the First Lady of the United States of America Melania Trump originates from this small rural town, an emerging Slovene tourism (micro-) destination.

In 2018, the municipality joined the so called Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (in the Slovene language: *Zelena shema slovenskega turizma*), which is a tool and certification programme developed at the national level that brings together all efforts directed towards the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia with the strategic objective to bring sustainable models to both tourism service providers and destinations in Slovenia (slovenia.info). The locals of Sevnica support moderate development of tourism that will protect the nature and heritage, enhance the usage of natural materials, enhance job opportunities and green mobility, while the municipality’s tourism strategy addresses all sustainability principles: environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development (UNWTO, 2021). The town and its surroundings are suitable for the development of cultural tourism along with biking,

hiking, fishing, photographing etc., but the most important and most visited attraction in Sevnica is well preserved hill-top medieval castle.

Sevnica (Picture 1) has a long history. The first settlements in the area date back to 5000 years B. C. (Peterle Udovič, 2015), and as such Sevnica was an interesting place not only for settlers, but also for craftsmen, visitors and tourists. In the oral traditions of the locals exist stories about tourists coming to Sevnica because of the curing climate already in the 18th century. Some say that Sevnica was far away enough from Zagreb that some things that happened in Sevnica stayed there. Despite the fact that Sevnica has some tourism attractions, the beginnings of tourism in this area are not officially documented. However, the recent story of more engaged and strategically planned development of tourism in Sevnica began in 2016, when Sevnica started appearing in the world media, and when a great number of media representatives expressed interest in Sevnica due to the fact that Donald Trump’s current wife Melania originates from Sevnica. In the beginning of media intrusion into the calm countryside town, the community of Sevnica felt pressured by this sudden intrusion of journalists who were wandering around, asking questions and wanting to know unusual things about Melania, her family and the town itself. Some locals felt they lost their peace and anonymity, and even that the well-being of the locals and of the local community was threatened (Milano et al., 2019). Eventually, the community tried to be supportive to the media, and it saw reporting of all the world’s most important media (Reuters, ABC, BBC, CNN, NBC, Washington Post, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung etc.) about Sevnica as an excellent opportunity to push their tourism forward, but still, some of the members of the community started to point out the negative effects of Sevnica’s exposure in the media. What is more, later on, especially the tourism stakeholders, saw the necessity of employing not only traditional, but new media as well, which turned out to be imperative for developing the offer, new products and future tourism (especially outdoor and cultural tourism) in terms of sustainability. It is the new media and new technologies that enable information transfer in the first place, and thus, tourism branding, tourism marketing, recommendations, feedback, keeping it up with recent trends etc. (Potočnik Topler, 2019).

According to the semi-structured interviews on tourism development and cultural tourism in Sevnica with the emphasis on the topics of tourism, heritage, culture and sustainability, Sevnica has recognized tourism as a tool for the devel-



Image 1: Sevnica – old town and castle (Wikimedia Commons).

opment of the municipality and for the heritage preservation. Indeed, the potentials of tourism development in the region exist, with the tourism stakeholders focusing mainly on cultural, and heritage tourism offering many cultural events in the Castle Sevnica and in the centre of the old town of Sevnica. The most outstanding cultural events, where the locals of Sevnica play a central role, are the Salami Festival (*Salamiada in Slovenian*), the Blaufränkisch Festival (*Festival modre frankinje*), Grass Cutting in Lisca (*Košnja na Lisci*) and lately Summer Castle Adventures, which feature various cultural events through the summer time.

These events keep and present local traditions, give the locals opportunities to get more connected to the community, to express creativity, present and sell Sevnica's local products, etc. This contributes significantly to the locals' identity development, provides opportunity for development of new partnerships and enhances business opportunities (selling of local products, for example, Picture 2). Since the Municipality of Sevnica also acts in the role of a heritage manager in case of the Sevnica Castle and some other properties in the municipality, it expects to use increased economic

activity in the municipality as a source to maintain heritage properties. In the period of the last four years there has been progress in Sevnica's overall development: greater business initiative resulting in new products (cake Melania, Presidential hamburger, new brand First Lady etc.), reopening of a hotel and a hostel, more journalists, tourists, and students visiting Sevnica, tourism stakeholders starting to work together, and the municipality officials supporting tourism initiatives also by intensively working on tourism development strategies, building a new stadium, organizing more cultural and sporting events, etc.

Data show that the most attractive tourism site in Sevnica is the castle. However, events also attract visitors. Significant numbers of visitors buy swimming pool tickets and visit the local tourist agency Doživljaj (Table 2).

The table confirms that cultural events attract visitors and are thus also significant generators of tourism, enhanced community visibility and a preservation tool of traditions in Sevnica.

There has also been a change in the ways Sevnica presents itself on the Internet. What is significant, tourism stakeholders in the Municipality of Sevnica have become aware of the fact



Image 2: Sevnica's local products (Photo: Jasna Potočnik Topler).

that new media are essential tools for branding of the destination and their products, and further on for the development of the tourism in the municipality and the region as well. To encourage the development of sustainable tourism further it is significant that, in the future, tourism plays an active role in supporting the local community to engage in the sustainable or at least more sustainable business practices also with engaging new media to employ various ways of promotion and to inform the locals and tourists as well about preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the Sevnica Municipality.

Another aspect that is essential is cooperation of local businesses and organizations. Someone, who is offering accommodation should also recommend good restaurants and confectioneries, sights, attractions, suggest activities, offer special discounts. Hospitality – taking care for a guest from the first hello to final goodbye - is significant.

DISCUSSION

According to Getz (2008), event tourism represents an area or as Getz (2008, 422) puts it “*discourse with both academics and practitioners contributing from two main poles (tourism/ events) and many specific event types (conventions, sports, festivals, etc.)*”, where “*the driving force is clearly tourism, because it is the travel dimension and tourism impacts that bring these otherwise diverse communicants to the same table*”. Research by Rangus et al. (2017), carried out in the Slovenian Municipality of Brežice, showed as follows: a) that the locals have a positive attitude towards tourism when they see some tourism benefits, b) that it is significant that the locals and local businesses are included into planning of sustainable tourism development, and c) that strong cooperation among tourism stakeholders is essential. Ramirez (2001) argues that the process of planning tourism development and creating

Table 2: Statistic data (source: table prepared based on data provided by KŠTM Sevnica, 8. 9. 2020).

	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Castle						
All castle visitors	3.889	4.180	4.012	6.465	5.242	3.263
Foreign castle visitors	418	234	419	571	653	349
KŠTM						
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM - Castle	3.950	3.670	5.010	5.452	3.295	3.919
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM – Culture hall	1.340	1.030	0	400	0	390
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM - Sports hall 1	754	4.490	3.280	5.010	4.440	3.820
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM – Sports hall 2	780	420	0	1.160	200	0
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM – Tourist agency	11.290	11.160	9.375	8.037	10.124	8.688
Number of event visitors organized by KŠTM – Youth centre	1.823	680	4.219	4.393	4.094	3.778
Sum	19.937	21.450	21.884	24.452	22.153	20.595
Pool						
Number of sold tickets at the pool	6.196	9.452	6.855	8.676	7.142	6.717
Tourist Agency Doživljaj						
Number of visitors of the tourist agency Doživljaj	1.893	2.405	2.671	2.855	2.540	2.384
Foreign visitors of the tourist agency Doživljaj	122	81	89	227	258	157

tourism development strategies is a demanding task because stakeholders have different interests. For the sustainable tourism sector and for the satisfaction of the local people it is significant that the locals have the opportunities and are willing to participate in the development (Chiun Lo et al., 2014). When tourism in rural areas is discussed, extra care and sensitivity are essential in the protection of the resources needed in order to prevent too great negative impacts of tourism on the environment. O'Reilly (1986) argues that the tourist carrying capacity, which is the extent to which destinations can successfully cope with tourists and visitors, should be observed, and in a more recent research Hall (2019) supports this by stating that the growth in tourism should be limited. The debates about the positive and negative effects of tourism, sustainability issues, responsible development and active participation of the locals so that the consensus about tourism development is reached are very relevant. What

is more, they have informed academic researchers as well as on the ground practitioners that planning and shaping sustainable tourism is an ongoing process (Milano et al., 2019).

The goal of cultural heritage tourism is to maximize benefits for the local environment, for the local culture and heritage, and to minimize negative impacts. Heritage managers around the world are aiming at exploiting tourism revenues to maintain heritage properties. Also the Municipality of Sevnica acts in the role of a heritage manager in case of the Sevnica Castle and some other properties in the municipality, and as such expects to use increased economic activity in the municipality as a source to maintain heritage properties.

CONCLUSION

As various research show, even small cultural events, such as Sevnica's castle concerts, the Blaufränkisch Festival or Grass Cutting in Lisca, have

impacts on the community. Cultural events can be an excellent opportunity for the area and its development. They help generate cultural, social and economic benefits, cultural events can help foster urban or rural regeneration, they can influence the area's image and foster its visibility, as long as the number of visitors and tourist does not exceed the destination carrying capacity. Along with economic benefits (tourism expenditures, increased tax base, employment opportunities, possible investments), cultural events help celebrate and spread regional culture, participate in the events and help visitors interact with the locals, enable people, artists and visitors to express their views on wider cultural, social and political issues. They do not need fixed infrastructure and may make good use of the existing space. Further on, many more or less innovative tourism products may be designed and introduced. Cultural villages presenting traditional architecture and ethnobotany, for example, could be established in some of the artists' birthplaces, which could be used as platforms for exposing tourists to Slovene traditions, heritage, creativity, and language. Since there is a very thin line between valuing and devaluing cultural heritage, in the process of interpreting heritage not only locals, but also experts should be actively involved. Various performances could be held in such villages

and then accompanied by discussions, workshops, conferences, concerts, festivals, etc. During the summer holidays, adults' and children's festivals (involving children's workshops and activities suitable for children and inspired by literature, history, etc.) could take place. Besides its value as a significant tourism resource, culture is often considered as one of the tourism tools for the redistribution of tourists from crowded tourist centres to less visited cultural attractions, sights, and events, such as smaller museums (that are managed as divisions of bigger regional museums), exhibitions, concerts, typical buildings, gardens, concerts etc. The challenge at many destinations is how to create attractive and interesting cultural events that are accessible and distributed around some tourism underdeveloped areas to avoid over-tourism in some areas and encourage the development in the others. By promoting the stories of rich cultural heritage in Slovenia through tourism development, the importance of Slovene culture is further promoted, and by it also creativity, reading, literacy, well-being etc. Cultural tourism with its many subtypes can undoubtedly be an important tool for branding tourist destinations in Slovenia. By promoting their cultural heritage through organizing cultural events, Slovene destinations can be positioned, promoted and distinguished.

KULTURNI DOGODKI KOT ORODJE RAZVOJA TRAJNOSTNEGA TURIZMA NA
PODEŽELJU – PRIMER SEVNICE V SLOVENIJI*Jasna POTOČNIK TOPLER*Univerza v Mariboru, Fakulteta za turizem, Cesta prvih borcev 36, 8250 Brežice, Slovenija
e-mail: jasna.potocnik1@um.si

POVZETEK

Članek osvetljuje kulturni turizem kot eno najboljših praks, ki lahko s kulturnimi dogodki učinkovito pripomore k razvoju trajnostnega turizma. Ker je vsaj določena oblika kulture prisotna v vsaki vasi, majhne destinacije pomembne priložnosti za razvoj trajnostnega turizma iščejo v organizaciji kulturnih dogodkov, kar vodi ne zgolj k večji opaženosti skupnosti, in znamčenju kraja kot kulturne destinacije, ampak v nadaljevanju tudi do različnih poslovnih priložnosti in splošnega razvoja lokalnih skupnosti. Cilj članka je na primeru Sevnice, ki je primer podeželske destinacije v slovenskem Posavju, pokazati, da je v razvoju kulturnega turizma na osnovi kulturne dediščine veliko priložnosti. Prav kulturni dogodki namreč v Sevnico privabljajo obiskovalce in so zato tudi pomembni generatorji turizma, večje prepoznavnosti skupnosti in orodje za ohranjanje tradicij v Sevnici. Pomagajo ustvarjati kulturne, družbene in gospodarske koristi, lahko pomagajo pospeševati obnovo mest ali podeželja, imajo potencial vplivati na podobo območja in njegovo prepoznavnost. Seveda pa je treba, ko gre za razvoj turizma na podeželju, z naravnimi viri in danostmi ravnati posebej skrbno. Ob tem je pri oblikovanju razvojnih strategij ključno sodelovanje lokalnih društev, podjetnikov, kmetov, kulturnih ustanov in lokalne politike ter upoštevanje medsebojnih želja in potreb, kar prispeva k razvoju takšne vrste turizma, ki je v interesu večine, turisti pa se med domačini počutijo dobrodošle. Vloga kulturnih dogodkov se kaže v tem, da turiste pripeljejo v manj obiskane kraje, širijo sezonskost turizma v regiji in po njej razporedijo denarni tok, povečajo možnosti za polno zaposlitev domačinov, podaljšajo bivanje turistov na destinaciji, povečajo potrošnjo obiskovalcev v regiji, izboljšajo ozaveščenost o destinaciji in okrepijo solidarnost skupnosti ali državljanski ponos. Med drugim so tudi orodje za promocijo turizma, upravljavci destinacij ali posameznih znamenitosti pa jih uporabljajo kot del svoje tržne strategije. Seveda pa je vedno in povsod nujno upoštevati, da mora tudi razvoj kulturnega turizma težiti k povečanju koristi za lokalno okolje, lokalno kulturo in dediščino ter k zmanjšanju negativnih vplivov, saj v nasprotnem primeru ne moremo govoriti o trajnostnih oblikah turizma, ki so edine sprejemljive za slovenske podeželske destinacije, kakršna je Sevnica, ki jo v članku analiziramo.

Ključne besede: kulturni dogodki, kulturni turizem, trajnostni turizem, ohranjanje dediščine, lokalni deležniki, Sevnica, Slovenija

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