

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE IN RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM**

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### **Abstract**

*Rural tourism and agro-tourism are functional systems well connected in which each component (human resources, natural tourism resources, entertainment, local resources) has its own role, dynamics and evolution. Of all the components of rural tourism and agro-tourism, the human resource has the highest sensitivity and responds most rapidly to external stimuli.*

**Key words:** rural tourism, human resource, labor force

### **INTRODUCTION**

In rural tourism and agro-tourism, the human resource doesn't only represent the quality of services, but it is also responsible for the way other rural resources come to life to become tourist attractions.

In Romania, the human resource in rural tourism and agro-tourism faces a series of challenges that are determined by the state of the Romanian rural area, the daily rural life aspects and the poor economic development in rural areas.

In the field of rural tourism, human activity will increasingly rely on competence, increased individual accountability and high efficiency. The agro-tourist system involves decision-making and placement of responsibilities as close as possible to the place of productive-peasant farms (Nicoleta Bugnar).

The success of a tourist activity in the rural environment is very dependent on the human resource because it must be complex, efficient and dynamic. The physical and intellectual capacities of the farmer turn to advantage the peasant farm, which will later be transformed into a tourist accommodation space.

In order to be able to conduct tourist activities in their own household, the village people have to change their life style, aspect they don't always agree because the value system in rural areas is totally different from the urban environment (the tourists' environment).

Compared to mass tourism in rural tourism and agro-tourism, the human resource doesn't always have special qualifications but has moral values through which it can interact and socialize with tourists. Lack of qualified labor is a disadvantage in the practice of rural tourism.

The relationship between rural tourism and human capital can lead to the development of rural space, the local community, and especially the peasant household by raising the peasant's standard of living.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The human factor best knows the vibration of rural space, having a great capacity to adapt to situations very various and spirit of initiative, while being an excellent preserver of local identity, habits, traditions and customs. In turn, the development of rural tourism generates a number of benefits for human resources in rural areas, expressed by: job creation, diminishing local population migration with the possibility of re-population of rural areas, increasing the living standard of the population, training and professional development, increasing social interaction.

A study on the potential of people employed in subsistence agriculture for practicing rural tourism in Bihor County highlighted a number of issues.

In the study were included owners of subsistence farms from the localities with tourism potential (Borod, Remetea, Bulz) and which own households that can be arranged for inclusion in the circuit for practicing rural tourism.

The persons included in the study corresponded to a series of requirements, of which the most important are:

- the age category between 19 and 59, with professional training,
- benefit of extensive agricultural areas with sizes of 5-10 ha;
- the majority grow at least one animal species which allows them to obtain a wide range of agro-food products;
- earn income from marketing agro-food products, salaries and / or pensions.

The study was realized on the basis of a questionnaire consisting of 25 questions, structured in four phases (family, household activities, household endowment and rural tourism - promotion and development) to which 35 respondents answered.

The series of family-related questions allowed the identification of the characteristics of the population employed in subsistence farming (eg 16% of the surveyed have 8 grades, 18% have vocational school, 42% have high school, 24% have university education).

The series of questions related to highlighting the main activities carried out within subsistence farms have highlighted rural activities in the practice of rural tourism services (eg 12% have as destination of the agricultural products their own consumption, 86% are destined for marketing and consumption, and 2% have as the main destination only marketing).

In order to evaluate the potential of subsistence farms for practicing rural tourism services, the questionnaire included a set of questions that provide information on household endowment (eg 78% of those surveyed have the sanitary group inside the house and 22% in the household yard).

About the practice of rural tourism we can say that 90% of interviewees prefer organized participation and 10% prefer individual participation.

Following the study of the results we can highlight:

- 90% of those surveyed intend to open a business in the field of rural tourism;
- 85% consider rural tourism a chance for growth and economic development of agricultural households;
- about 75% of those surveyed may offer minimal accommodation comfort to potential tourists;
- most of those surveyed participated in vocational training courses (courses not only for improving rural tourism).

## CONCLUSION

If rural tourism and agro-tourism are designed, developed and carefully managed, they can bring substantial benefits to local communities, offering the opportunity to support jobs, improve the demographic structure of rural areas, diversify and expand existing businesses (eg farms) to stabilize income levels, improve the environment and local infrastructure, attract investment or funds, increase the level of preparedness of the local population, encourage arts, local crafts and specific cultural manifestations.

View through the prism of rural tourism, the human resource is the main beneficiary of valuing ecosystems, natural resources, but at the same time the main disrupter of nature's balance. Human resource management must be handled so that its impact on the environment, by exploiting natural resources, to be minimal.

Rural tourism contributes to the salvation and maintenance of agricultural holdings and then constitutes a prerequisite for ensuring socio-economic development at local and regional level.

Rural tourism is an economic activity complementary to farming and not just an alternative.

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