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FACULTY OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
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THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT APPROACH IN THE RURAL TOURISM IN SERBIA

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyze the process of application of the project approach in the development of rural tourism in Serbia, which has contributed significantly to the growth of tourism GDP in recent years and has great potential for further development. The potential value of rural tourism in Serbia is briefly described, followed by the methodology of the project approach to the development of rural communities through a concrete example. The paper presents a concise overview of the project study for the production of the development plan of the community of rural households in the municipality of Gornji Milanovac in the region of Central Serbia. The final remarks highlight the importance of the participation of the population in the development of development plans, which is one of the basic features of the applied method.

Key Words: *project planning, rural tourism, efficient management, strategic*

JEL classification: *L38, O21, P41, P43, P51, R58*

Introduction

Rural tourism is already present in some parts of Serbia, also diversifies the rural economy with good examples of the integration of rural tourism and agricultural products. The Tourist Organization of Serbia created products such as "Life in the countryside" and others such as "Cultural Tourism", "Nature and Country," which are highly correlated with rural tourism. (Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism of Serbia, 2011) The idea of a project approach to the development of rural

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communities in Serbia is limited by the lack of structural support and limited resources. We have been waiting for many years in the theoretical and practical approach to "integral rural development" for the countries of the European Community (Ulbricht, T. 1986).

Adverse demographic situation (depopulation and aging of the population is not only a problem of population policy, but a comprehensive development approach, whose basic postulates are natural resources and cultural heritage, population (lifestyle, standard, value systems) and economic activities based on them that will contribute to better quality (Barbič, A. 1992). The strategic approach to development presupposes interdisciplinarity, which requires the horizontal connection of different professions and experts in the project area, the vertical monodisciplinary of the relationships of certain professions, with higher levels of the social community, as well as their interdisciplinary harmonization at certain levels (Volker, K.1992). In this particular case, vertical connection with the Serbian Rural Development Strategy, alignment with the action plans of the Central Serbia region and horizontal connection with the Development Strategy of the municipality of Gornji Milanovac.

The first phase of each development project is the so-called "The project study," which identifies the situation and problems within these three basic project components (space, population, economic activities) and forms recommendations for future direction and removal / reduction of identified problems. In Serbia, there are many disparities in the value chain of rural tourism. Also, human resources are very limited in terms of both the need for capacity and the development of awareness, organization and management of rural tourism. The needs for structured and holistic products and experiences of rural tourism, which include activities, accommodation and created facilities (lack of created facilities providing an integrated tourist offer), were identified. There is a lack of international standards and quality guarantees, as well as the need for improvement, standardization and diversification of rural accommodation. Then, there is the need to develop synergies between the agricultural sector and tourism, including local crafts. High seasonality with low occupancy rate (average occupancy rate for rural units is 4% and 21% for other accommodation units). There is a need to improve local infrastructure (especially rural roads to rural resources).

Center for rural development in the region of Central Serbia - role and importance

The Central Serbia Region consists of 5 target municipalities: Valjevo, Ljig, Gornji Milanovac, Kosjerić. This region offers a variety of natural and cultural resources, such as the Valjevo mountains, the rivers of Ribnica, the mountains Rudnik, the Gradac river with a natural reserve, numerous monasteries, festivals and events. Valjevo mountains spread through 5 municipalities that form the target region of Central Serbia. The territory of this region is predominantly mountainous with green valleys and hills. Rural tourism already plays an important role in Central Serbia and already generates a significant part of revenues. Central Serbia has 5,600 beds (general and rural), of which 1,150 are rural. It is estimated that the total number of beds annually generates more than 305 million dinars from accommodation and contributes with around 297 million dinars of direct revenues to the tourism sector. The main drivers for the development of the region are the Valjevo mountains, although there are still parts of the region that are attractive for rural tourism (Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism of Serbia, 2011). In this paper, we will present an operational plan for the creation of the Center for Rural Development in the municipality of Gornji Milanovac, which in terms of its surface, geographical position, natural conditions, historical events and cultural heritage, with ecologically preserved environment, at created infrastructure and human resources, creates preconditions for serious and long-term tourism development (TO Gornji Milanovac Report, 2016). Bearing in mind that using tourism potentials is a strategic element of development and better life, the municipality of Gornji Milanovac established the Tourist Organization as a public service in 2000, which promotes, preserves, develops and protects tourist values, and in 2006 adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Development tourism of the municipality of Gornji Milanovac. The strategy, among other things, defines priority forms of tourism in this area, such as: rural tourism, cultural manifestations, hiking, hunting, sports-recreational, excursion, transit and similar. Thanks to the activities of the TO, the interest in categorizing households that want to engage in tourism increases, and the quality of accommodation is improved every year, and new categorizations are made, in addition, statistics on stay and nights are kept, growth is recorded up to 50% annually, with a noticeable increase in the number of foreign tourists.

Operational plan for creating a center for rural development

The Center for Rural Development is the result of a focused platform for improving the economic and social fabric of rural communities. It has a vital role in addressing key challenges such as international competitiveness, food quality, efficient education of young secondary vocational education and recognition of the need for lifelong learning, job creation, development of ethno-tourism, introduction to the possibilities of using new forms of energy and environmental protection. Through the employment and creation of the CRD program, it will become a powerful factor for the cohesion and economic integration of the region. "The project study", as mentioned before identifies the situation and problems, stakeholders, activity plan, evaluation and monitoring plan, and develops recommendations for future direction and removal / reduction of identified problems. The territory of the municipality of Gornji Milanovac includes 63 settlements, which are organized in 51 local communities, of which 1 are urban settlements, and 62 are rural settlements. The characteristic of the municipality of Gornji Milanovac is that it is valid for one of the most developed economies in the Republic of Serbia, where is the most common processing sector, and then trading and service activities. Based on the agro map this is the area characterized by natural characteristics for the production of fruit trees (with an emphasis on plum and apple cultivation) of potatoes and livestock production. Agricultural farms are fragmented, with outdated mechanization, low application of agro-technical measures and poor organization of agricultural producers. This region is recognizable as a mining region, it has many natural beauties, and the basic presumption of further development of tourism in this area is: preserved nature, rich cultural and historical heritage, good geographic traffic situation, developed infrastructure and traditional hospitality of the people of this region (Strategy development of the municipality of GM, 2011). With this project, the implementation team is able to provide basic guidelines in the field of rural development and should certainly be a tool for more efficient and successful management of the development of agriculture and rural areas of the municipality of Gornji Milanovac. For the needs of the development of the Center for Rural Development program as the first activity, the project team of the Center should make a WEB site in Serbian and in English and in all the languages of national minorities (Romanian, Italian, Slovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Roma...) The web site should enable all stakeholders to know about the existence of the center, and also to ensure active public participation and quality information exchange. Mobilizing key actors is

another important step in the project approach because it identifies individuals who are interested in this concept, they also control resources, have access to the decision-making process and all important information, and therefore can provide support for the success the project in the wider community. (Maksimović, S. 2016) The partners in the project would be, say:

- MZ _____ represents _____
- Foundation _____, it represents _____
- Forum for _____,
- Agency _____
- Fund for the upgrading of young farmers - _____,
- Representation of partners from EU _____

Partners in the project form a consortium based on the agreement of all representatives. The consortium management board consists of one representative of each organization and a representative of the municipal assembly. The Board of Directors approves each project. The project coordinator also enters the board. In addition to the project coordinator, the implementation team consists of representatives of the Tourist Organization of Gornji Milanovac and a working group. The next activity is the production of situational analysis, taking into account the specificity of the center zone. The synthesis and summary of situational analysis will be done according to the SWOT principle. This form depicts: strengths, weaknesses, business opportunities and dangers for the successful implementation of Rural Development Center projects. Then it follows: defining the basic CRD mission, action planning and preparation of monitoring documents. For the purpose of drafting this planning document, it is necessary to organize the following workshops:

Table 1: *Activity plan*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Creation of a WEB site
Workshop 2. SWOT analysis of stakeholders
Workshop 3. Defining the mission, vision, values and goals of all levels
Workshop 4. Action Planning
Workshop 5. Preparation of documents and monitoring plan

Each of these workshops should provide the collection of a large number of data and information needed for the development of this project. Team leaders were identified during the third workshop, and during the fourth

workshop the action planning which defined basic program objectives and concrete projects. The fifth workshop aims to produce documents and a monitoring plan, since all in the work team have been past previously all project phases

Project link with the Rural Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and the rural development policy of the European Union

During the development of program activities and projects of the Center for Rural Development, it will be taken in accordance with the Rural Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia. The account will also be taken of the basic guidelines given in the Rural Development Program 2014-2020 approved by the European Commission (www.seerural.org/wp). In the strategic analysis, a particular attention is given to the priority areas of development according to the LEADER approach:

- Use of know-how and new technologies to improve the competitiveness of product-services,
- Living conditions in rural areas,
- Added value for local products and market access,
- Use of natural and cultural resources.

EU rural development policy for 2014-2020 focuses on three thematic areas (known as "axes"). These are:

- Improving competitiveness in the agriculture and forestry sector,
- Improving the quality of the environment,
- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging the diversification of the rural economy.

The European rural development model is based on the "top-up" approach (bottom up), respecting local specificities and establishing local development partnerships (local action group) in which representatives of all three sectors participate in the development and implementation of a local development strategy. The strategy is implemented through the implementation of projects aimed at solving specific local issues.

General Objective of the Project - Center for Rural Development "Gornji Milanovac Area"

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the successful implementation of the EU agricultural policy in the National Agricultural

Program by establishing the Center for Rural Development of the Gornji Milanovac area. The main mission of the project is to improve the quality of the rural population in the region. In order to realize the project, it is necessary to provide leadership that stimulates innovation: in economic development, in promoting competitive agriculture, in food processing, in the use of renewable energy sources, in the preservation of the environment. Data types for estimating the local economy:

- Demographic (population, education, age),
- Economic and social (employment, skills, pre-qualification readiness),
- Environment suitable for business development,
- Solid and soft infrastructure
- Sub-regional, regional and national ties

It is necessary to establish a model of local self-government for the purposes of space design. The so-called village workshops could shape the vision of local spatial development. In them, the inhabitants would with the help of experts, introduce high-quality spatial solutions and form awareness of the importance and value of space. (Vukajlović, Đ., Stamatović, M., 2013.) In order to successfully solve the problem of spatial planning, it is necessary for each spatial type to prepare recommendations for encouraging agricultural production while preserving the ecological balance, recommendations for building typical objects of different purposes with the features of rural culture and appropriately presenting and popularizing them.

Strategic analysis

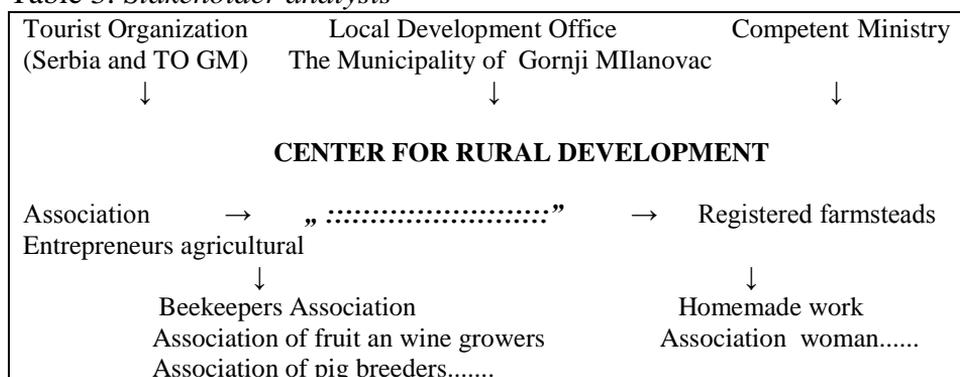
For the purposes of strategic analysis, familiar techniques of strategic management will be used, where the following questions need to be answered:

Table 2: *Situation analysis*

Where are we now?	Situation analysis, PEST analysis / SWOT analysis	Strategic analysis
Where do we want to be?	Vision, mission, values Strategic goals, Special, basic and specific goals	Formulating strategy
How are we going to get there?	Action Plans (with goals, results, activities, deadline of the strategy) Projects	Implementation of the strategy
How will we measure success?	Monitoring and evaluation based on defined (quantified) strategy indicators when formulating a strategy)	Evaluation strategy

The largest part of the territory is occupied by villages in which 50% of the total population of Gornji Milanovac municipality lives. The exceptional natural and landscape features, the relatively developed infrastructure, the economic and ecological potential of this region, as well as the interest of the population for this type of activity, represent an excellent resource for the development of rural tourism. At present, 83 categorized households I and II categories, with a total of 600 beds, are engaged in rural tourism. (Municipal Development Strategy, 2011).

Table 3: Stakeholder analysis



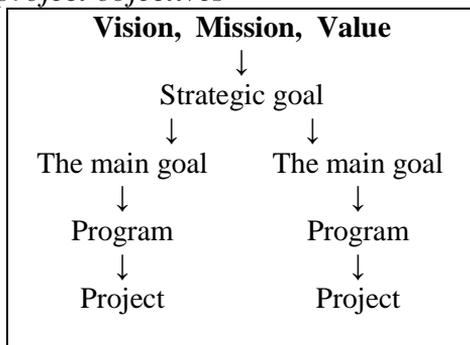
Program objectives and activities

The main goal of the Center for Rural Development is to improve the conditions for comprehensive development and quality living in rural areas through the improvement of professional and practical knowledge on networking and partnership creation. CRD provides the opportunity to live in a creative way, that means the reconstruction of the rural region, where traditional architecture will be respected, and the specific experiences of the rural environment and the orientation towards nature will be promoted (Stamatović, M., Vukotić, S., 2009). The strategic goal is the long-term goal that the Rural Development Center wants to achieve. Specific (basic and specific objectives) describe in more detail the way in which achievement will be strategically and in general.

The opportunities offered by natural and cultural heritage are very little exploited. First of all, it would be necessary to encourage private initiative and high standards to ensure the quality of the tourist offer that is competitive with other forms of tourist offer (Tourism Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, 2005). All the advantages of natural and cultural

heritage should be exploited, local rural and apartment tourism developed. Considering the low standard in Serbia, it is possible to assume that the financial possibilities of domestic guests will be reduced. Therefore, as one of the strategies for further development of tourism, the tourist offer should be focused on cheaper programs, which will attract adequate profit by attracting more guests at lower prices.

Table 4: *Defining project objectives*



VISION: Rural area with satisfied population, capable of adjusting on changes: "Our village" - an oasis for enjoying in healthy food, quality home-made win, with fragrances of field flowers, mowed hay.

MISSION: Promoting according to the principle of "small scale of large scale", the project will support specificities, based on an initiative that will contribute to development in terms of improvement of individual and collective development and support of local cultures and capacity building with whom the rural population taking responsibility for improving there own development.

VALUES: The values that the Center for Rural Development will respect in their work are: Team work; Mutual respect; Resourcefulness; Continuous training; Energy; Openness; Commitment; Reliability; Accuracy.

Overview of strategic and basic goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - Strategic Objective 1.

Rural areas in Serbia can achieve sustainable development primarily through the improvement of human resources. There are constant migrations, especially of young people. It is important that this process is

reversed and a certain future for the next generations is ensured (Maksimović, S. 2008)

Basic Goals for - Strategic Objective 1.

SO 1.1. Increasing the level of education of the rural population

SO 1.2. Increasing employment to 15% by 2020

SO 1.3. Increase in the number of inhabitants, i.e. Positive natural increase

Table 5: *Activities for the Strategic Objective 1.*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Working with focus groups in order to determine the existing educational structure
Workshop 2. Educational seminar
Workshop 3. Study trips in accordance with defined human resources requirements

DEVELOPMENT OF LEADER - Strategic Objective 2.

Rural areas can not progress without well-informed and effective leaders.

Basic goals for - Strategic Objective 2.

SO 2.1. Monitoring and analyzing the rural development policy, and proposing measures for their improvement through concrete planning documents. The inclusion of local experts in the development of strategic documents and their implementation.

SO 2.2. Promote innovative approaches, new knowledge and good practices from home and abroad.

Table 6: *Activities for the Strategic Objective 2*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Creation of strategic documents for the area "Gornji Milanovac"

DEVELOPED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING - Strategic Objective 3.

One of the biggest challenges for integration in the EU is the ability of agriculture to compete in the global marketplace. The Regional Center should encourage entrepreneurial spirit among the population and the formation of clusters without which there is no sustainable rural development.

Basic goals for - Strategic Objective 3.

SO 3.1. Association of agricultural producers for better placement of products,

SO 3.2. By 2020, over 30% of commercial households with standardized and certified production.

SO 3.3. Incentive of organic agriculture

Table 7: *Activities for the Strategic Objective 3*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Education of the population about the possibilities of organic food production
Workshop 2. Education of the population about the possibilities of organic food production
Workshop 3. Possibilities for creation of branded agricultural products
Workshop 4. Study tour / fair of agricultural mechanization and others

DEVELOPED RURAL TOURISM - Strategic Objective 4.

The Center will promote local attractions, and will support development initiatives and eco / cultural tourism.

Basic goals for - Strategic Objective 4.

SO 4.1. Increase the living standard of the locals

SO 4.2. Increase the quality of the tourist offer

SO 4.3. Identification of tourist zones with the construction of the necessary tourist infrastructure

Table 8: *Activities for the Strategic Objective 4*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Education of the local population about the way of organizing local events
Workshop 2. Standardization of rural households for the needs of tourism
Workshop 3. Souvenir school
Workshop 4. Study Tours / Kosjeric is the first village in Serbia with a tradition of dealing with rural people (over 30 years etc.).

ENERGY PRODUCTION - Strategic Objective 5.

The Center will promote the production of electric and thermal energy based on renewable energy sources (wind, sun) which is in line with environmental protection measures.

Basic goals for strategic goal 5.

SO 5.1. Spacious and spacious, attractive and ecologically sound and clean environment.

Table 9: *Activities for the Strategic Objective 4*

Activities:
Workshop 1. Possibilities of using renewable energy sources in rural areas: - collection of waste materials from agriculture for the purpose of exploitation for energy purposes - heating of rural areas using biomass
Workshop 2. Possibilities of distribution of energy obtained from biomass to another area

An Example of defined programs and projects for specific strategic goals:

Strategic Objective 1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Program – Promotion of human resources

- Project - Database for situational analysis
- Project - presentation of vocational schools
- Project - Job Fair
- Project - Re-qualification of labor force according to needs
- Project - Encouraging the creation of cooperatives

Strategic Objectives 2. DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

Program – Education

- Project - Maintenance of seminars for agriculture
- Project - Organization of study tours and visits to the areas
- with developed rural tourism

Strategic goal 3. DEVELOPED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING

Program – Improvement of technology of production and preparation of all types of fruits

- Project – make fruits nursery area of 1 ha.

Program – Improving the rating veterinary production

- Project - Mechanization of work processes in agriculture
- Project - Organic food production

Strategic Objectives 4. DEVELOPED RURAL TOURISM

Program – Developed ethno tourism offer

- Project - Info base of tourist offer
- Project - Vocational training for rural tourism
- Project - Souvenir School
- Project - Branding wine
- Project - Promotion of tourist sites (website, brochure...)
- Project - Cultural manifestations / promotion of local customs

Strategic Objectives 5. ENERGY PRODUCTION

Program – Possibilities of using a renewable energy source

- Project - Production of pallets based on bio-mass
- Project - The Sun Energy through the use of solar panels

Action plans are defined separately for each strategic goal and are tools for implementing program activities. The action plans defined for each project are - the necessary funds, partners in the implementation, duration (start date and end date - planned), current situation; desired situation. The Action plan involves defining a team for each individual project, both in preparing and developing the project, as well as in monitoring its implementation. The Rural Development Team team provides a standard application form for the project, with the necessary economic indicators and positive effects for the community. Action plans define daily activities, motivation and education of participants, how to conduct meetings and compilation of minutes (necessary elements), and how to monitor costs.

Implementation of strategy - responsibilities and roles

The consortium shall be formed on the basis of the agreement of all representatives:

Team Coordinator:

- Coordinate and organizes the work of groups and ensures the flow of information
- Controls how the group achieves the goals
- Promote the center
- Uses the potentials of each individual in the team

Team Lead:

- Arranges, direct, coordinate the work of members
- Manages the work of the group
- Helps members of the team

- Responsible for the realization of the project
- Scheduling appointments
- Coordinator of reporting

Members:

- Realizes the tasks that the team leader gives them
- They are responsible for the accuracy and correctness of the data
- Proposes correction, monitoring the implementation of tasks

Moderators:

- Provide proposals for project implementation
- Participates in monitoring

Interested parties are the main bearers of the effective implementation of CRD's program activities. Already in the introduction of the project as the first activity, we listed the creation of a WEB site. Namely, CRD should have an attractive visual identity. The website also aims to exchange information and practical knowledge with other similar centers from the country and the region. The project team should regularly update this page (Stamatović, M., Vukotić, S.,2009).

The LOGO should be in line with the values that are prioritized and the designer should have clear directions when it comes to colors, dimensions, fonts, etc.

PRESENTATION MATERIALS - should be in electronic form.

PRESENTATION FACILITIES - as a communication session should be uniform, recognizable and contain basic materials in a harmonized form. It is necessary to identify the media (local, national, general, specialized).

MATERIAL FOR LOBBING - Creating an exclusive folder only for influential groups. Then, protocols, press conferences, materials, work on branding, etc. should be made.

Monitoring and evaluation

For each operational objective, the monitoring time should be clearly defined. Depending on the goal, you clearly define the reporting periods. It is necessary to define the monitoring of costs, funds, as well as time and work. A team for risk monitoring should be identified, as well as monitoring of the satisfaction of the population in the observed area

(Stamatović, M. 2012). Evaluation- A short, unique evaluation report should be made, the content of which contains:

- Introduction
- The objective of the evaluation
- The ways you use the evaluation
- Types of evaluation
- Time frame for evaluation
- Current situation
- Collecting, checking and arranging data
- What is done
- The degree of achievement of objectives
- What has not been done - reasons (lack of financial resources, unrealistic plan, non-compliance with deadlines)
- How to overcome?

An analysis of the situation in the field of economic and social development shows that, on the whole, the municipality of Gornji Milanovac is above the republic average. This means that its development possibilities have been successfully used so far, but that it needs an incentive in the form of professional and financial assistance, in order to facilitate the upgrading of existing economic trends with propulsive programs of tertiary activities based on natural beauties and tradition based on preconditions for exceptional development.

In the West European countries, we must at first to see the development and introduction of new technologies, and at the same time in including regional specificities that should be sought in technological traditions, as well as in the natural advantages and cultural heritage, so on basis of that is formed a bid in response to the demands of developed markets. (Stamatović, M., Makismović, S., Tornjanski, A, 2016.) Such envisioned development can be successful if it is based on the harmonization of spatial advantages and limitations, human potentials, as well as existing and planned economic activities.

Conclusion

Before we take out the concluding observations, we would like to emphasize that the presented development study can be the basis for developing an operational plan of any municipality in Serbia, which should not be a wish list, but a cross-sector coordinated development

document with identified stakeholders. The paper presents the analysis of experts, without the involvement of local stakeholders with the data from the existing strategic documents, and above all it is a conceptual framework that defines the intervening factors in the project approach to the development of rural communities. Aspects, which should be understood as a long-term development orientation, are primarily the reduction of the outflow of the young population and in that relations material, organizational, advisory and all the other assistance with those individuals who, with their various but developmentally indisputable programs, remain in their areas, and at the same time recruited a new workforce. A growing decline in living standards almost precludes an increase in birth rates, so it is certainly justifiable to think about all aspects of the disappearance, although in today's situation, the lack of financial resources seems difficult to achieve. A growing decline in living standards almost precludes an increase in birth rates, so it is certainly justifiable to think about all aspects of the birthrate politics, although in today's situation, in short of financial resources so it seems to be difficult to achieve it. In fact, we are turning more in closed circles of negative demographic trends with insufficient economic and social development. In this paper, we are talking about rural tourism, and the fact is that settlements where only old people are left is very difficult to revitalize. For starting the changes is to be need the concrete programs that will enable the employment and increase of the individual social standard. In this context, there are small rural households that will use their natural resources (such as beekeeping, fruit processing according to traditional recipes, local crafts, souvenirs...), then joint offer, more efficient organization and management, exchange of experience, special measures of protection and maintenance of a healthy environment, improving tourism infrastructure... as well as gradually aligning with european and international standards, it is quite possible to achieve a synergistic effect between agriculture and tourism and take advantage of the opportunities offered by rural tourism. Certainly, the main development potentials are the inhabitants of each settlement, as well as members of different interest communities who have to show their interest and tradition and experience in the process of reviving traditional activities, but also in the process of introducing new, modern production, such as organic agriculture, or bio-agriculture, the development of rural ethnological, or recreational tourism. The conditions for success are securing the necessary technical infrastructure (fruits, wineries, dairies...), then the appropriate legislation that will enable and encourage investments in new programs (credits, tax reliefs, expert assistance...), but also the education of all who decide for

dealing with these activities and professional supervision of their work. It is also important to encourage amateur cultural activities, as well as visits by well-known artists, or, for example, traditional organizations such as art colonies...

In the case of a rural tourism development project for the municipality of Gornji Milanovac, aspects can be seen through four “E” - ecology, economics, aesthetics and ethnology, with ethnological heritage as a development potential and a component of local identity. We conclude that any development project of this type should, in fact, be a monographic study of the local area, which consists primarily of collecting concrete data, then analyzes of the concrete situation that is the basis for concrete projects and measures depending on the defined goal with the active participation of the local population. The role of experts, both local and external, is limited to proposals for expert solutions and counseling.

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