THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM FORCHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SCHOOL CAMPS A CASE STUDY: CHEVEREŞU MARE, TIMIŞ COUNTY

MEDIUL RURAL ŞI TURISMUL PENTRU COPII ŞI TINERET ÎN TABĂRE – STUDIU DE CAZ TABĂRA CHEVEREŞU MARE< JUDEŢUL TIMIŞ

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Abstract: *The village is a settlement whose population focuses on agriculture; it is the place of the ethno genesis of a people. The types of tourism which are practiced in this environment are multiple. However, relaxation and recovery of physical and psychical capacities represent the main motivations of potential tourists. It is well known that both obtaining high grades at school and students' evolution depend on the intellectual effort and on their concentration ability. Holidays are temporal sequences for recreation and rest and, consequently, school camps in the rural environment could represent the ideal place. These school camps support children's growing and social development with other children in a natural environment*

Key words: *rural environment, tourism for children and youth, school camp*

INTRODUCTION

When we refer to the rural space we have in mind the areas outside the urban agglomerations and the overweight of the agricultural production. The village is the human settlement less developed from an urban point of view and whose population mostly works in agriculture. In Romania the rural space takes about 90% of the country's area, and the percentage of people living in the rural space amounts to 47,3% of the total population. The rural environment still keeps the culture, customs and traditions, crafts, gastronomy of the place. This environment can provide sufficient and various natural and anthropic tourist resources capable of attracting potential tourists.

Through tourism we valorise the natural beauties of our country, we show the significance of some sights, bringing about the formation of feelings, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, elements that contribute to the formation of modern people, the components of a modern society, present and future.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

When classifying the types of tourism according to the participants' age, we also identify the tourism for children, pupils and youth.

The school camps represent the target of the parent in order to help the child in the growth and development of relations with other children and nature. These are recreational, surprising, dynamic, educational and entertaining.

The winter camps (ski and snowboard) or the summer camps (in the mountains and agro tourism) have as object the education for nature protection and waste recycling, the animal and environmental protection, the prevention against damaging vices (tobacco, drugs).

The principles camps are based on are: development of the drive ability, learning through practice, development of abilities, team work, development of the individual character, trust in one's own forces, development of vanquishing spirit, gestures easiness, releasing the psychical tension and surpassing physical obstacles make up the self-knowledge direction and communication and development of team work. All these components help the formation of a free and independent spirit.

Practising various types of tourism is conditioned by the quality of life of the members of society, according to which differentiated forms of tourism are approached. Of course, the most attractive activities are the ones organized in the geographic areas with well-known tourist traditions, the ones that offer high quality services and various possibilities of practising sports or other types of activities the pupils are interested in. Education through movement outdoors, even at smaller dimensions, must be part of the permanent concern of head teachers, sports teachers or other teachers, intensively valorising the natural framework existent in the activity area of each school unit.

The urge to accomplish these activities arises from the National Programme „Movement for health" adopted by the Romanian Government

on the 24th of March 2003, that stipulates: „All pupils shall participate in at least one tourist activity and/or tourist orientation every year." Along the years the school camps have functioned in compliance with governmental laws or decisions. The National Agency of Camps and School Tourism is organized according to the Government Decision 2137/2004 and functions as public institution with legal personality, under the administration of the National Authority for Youth. Another Decision (no. 753/2005) was taken in favour of this agency, which lead to the establishment of county directorates for youth. This agency has its headquarters in Bucharest.

The organizational structure of this agency can be noted in figure 1.

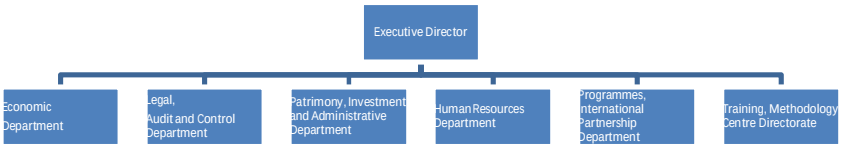


Fig.1. Organization Structure National Agency of Camps and School Tourism

The purpose of the Agency is to organize public interest activities with cultural-educational character for children and youth and with social character for various socio-professional categories.

The objectives of the National Agency of Camps and School Tourism are:

a) the application of the Government policy in the tourism field for children and youth;
b) the initiation, application and support of activities with cultural-educational character for children and youth and/or with social character;
c) the initiation, development and support of partnerships in the tourism field and education for children and youth and of social

programmes with other authorities and public institutions, as well as with other Romanian or foreign natural and legal bodies;

d) the elaboration, support and implementation of the law in the tourism field and education for children and youth and of social programmes;
e) the certification of the activity of public institutions, Romanian or foreign natural or legal bodies that develop activities in the tourism field for children and youth on educational-cultural, holiday and free time themes;
f) the maintenance, improvement and development of the heritage under its administration and/or on its property.

In order for the tourist activities to be efficient, the following aspects must be taken into consideration:

- the establishment of homogenous groups regarding the pupils' age and the level of physical training;
- the establishment, in agreement with all the participants, of the purpose of the organized action;
- knowing the health status of the participants;
- identifying pupils with qualities for becoming group leaders;
- in the case of some thematic tourist actions: with sportive, artistic purpose etc., the pupils who participate in the action, regardless of age, must have abilities, concerns, interests and knowledge specific to the profile for which the collective respective action is organized;
- taking into consideration the season the tourist action is organized in, the climate characteristics, the difficulties of the journey, the duration of the day, the light, etc.;
- knowing the particularities offered by the area where the action takes place and, according to them, taking decisions, especially in the mountain areas, at the seaside or in the Danube Delta, thus preventing the occurrence of accidents;
- assessing the quality of the means of transport used for the journey;
- providing a thorough training regarding labour protection and elaborating a protocol;
- establishing a climate of sincere communication between the group leader and the pupils in all circumstances.

The organizational system of this type of school tourism is made of

the National Agency of Camps and School Tourism, with its subordinates the Territorial Agencies of Camps and School Tourism located at county level. All these institutions function according to specific rules that allow the provision of quality services for specific activities, regarding their spreading in the fields: arts, sports, language learning, winners of school competitions, etc., case in which the cost of the organization of the camps is made from budget subsidies. In the same category we find the camps for pupils with special needs (with handicap, orphanages, etc.). Here we can add the camps with international participation.

The activities in the camps are led by chaperon teachers (one teacher/10 pupils), whom are offered gratuity, one principle, and trained persons, called holiday animators, whose attributions we will present further on. The school camps in the A.N.T.T.S. take place in their own spaces, providing services for pupils and students during the school holidays and also other periods of the year if there are requests, on periods between 1 and 10 days.

The organization of camp activities is made according to their specificity, as we shall see further on. The camps where the main purpose is active rest, recreation and intellectual recovery are known as recreational camps.

The responsibility for providing the organizational, material and educational framework for the accomplishment of these targets falls on: the camp director, chaperon teachers, holiday animators and camp administrator.

At national level the evolution of camps was a decreasing one, in 2010 their number was 92 as we can notice in table 1.

Table 1

The evolution of the number of beds in camps

Year	Camps (number)	Accommodation (beds)
1990	203	47000
2000	172	29426
2010	92	16874

Source: National Statistics Institute, 2011

The decrease of the number of camps was evident (111 camps have closed in 20 years) and was due to the lack of interest of the authorities, but also to the decrease of the incomes of the population (parents).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the Timis County there are camps for children and youth in the rural environment even if the relief is mostly plain.

The County Directorate for Youth Timis has its headquarters in Timisoara and is subordinated to the National Authority for Sport and Youth.

Within this directorate there are several offices dealing with recreational, leisure and sport programmes for children and youth.

In the Timiş County there are two locations, camps, also named recreation centres, one in Chevereşul Mare and the other one in Poieni Strâmbu.

The number of beds in these units is 107 to which 20 more beds in lodges are added during the summer.

Table 2

The number of beds in school camps in the Timis County

Camp	Number of rooms	No. of beds
Chevereşu Mare	17	54
Poieni Strâmbu	15	53
Total	32	107

The public institution that administers the two recreational centres is the County Directorate for Youth Timis.

The recreational centre in Chevereşu Mare

Chevereşu Mare is situated at the northern limit of the Bacova forest. Chevereşu Mare is located in the central – south part of the Timis County where three plains meet: the plain of Gătaia through the Vucova field, the Lugoj bay and the low plain of the Timis River 30 km away from Timisoara.

Access ways:

- by road - E70, Timişoara – Chevereşu Mare + 7 km forest road;
- by railway - CFR Timişoara, 29km.

The location of the camp: Bacova forest on the south banks of the

Timis River. The accommodation is done in pavilions with bedrooms, bungalows and season lodges. The dining room has a capacity of 100 beds with its own sanitary facility. This location is also equipped with a conference room of 40 seats, computers room, table tennis, volleyball field, multifunctional sports field with artificial grass and nocturne, playground, open air amphitheatre, miniature golf field.

The structure of the accommodation:

- 21 beds in the pavilion in 7 rooms with their own sanitary facility;
- 32 beds in 2 bungalows of 16 beds each (8 rooms with 4 beds each) and 4 sanitary facilities;
- 20 beds in 8 lodges (4 lodges with 2 beds and 4 lodges with 3 beds)

The 7 rooms in the pavilion each have their own sanitary facility with shower and toilet, in the bungalows there is one sanitary facility with shower and toilet for 2 rooms, and for the lodges there are separate sanitary facilities.

The recreational centre functions with 53 permanent beds, the rest of 20 beds are during summer.

There is the possibility to visit the Arboretum in Bazoş, the spa resort Buziaş, the Stud Farm in Izvin.

CONCLUSIONS

The Romanian rural environment can be the perfect location for the provision of children's recreation, and the camps for children and youth are the best option. At national level, unfortunately we have observed the progressive decrease of the camps and of the places offered.

Despite the fact that in the Timis County the landscapes are not extraordinary, because of the predominant plain, there are 2 camps that provide a reduced number of places. From the aspects presented above the percentage of the camps in the Timis County is 2,17% of the total number of camps in Romania, and the percentage of the places existent in this county is 0,63% of the total existent places.

In Chevereşu Mare the existent camp offers decent conditions and leisure possibilities.

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