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AGRITOURISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRNJAVOR MUNICIPALITY

SUMMARY

The research aim of this paper was to identify the potential of the development of rural and agritourism in the municipality of Prnjavor. The basic methods used during the research were survey, tourist potential mapping, mapping of tourist actors and statistical methods. The aim was to identify tangible and intangible capital, but also to find out the views of the local population on rural tourism. The results of the research showed that the municipality of Prnjavor has the potential to engage in rural tourism, ie agritourism. The awareness of the population, however is not developed when it comes to rural tourism and the opportunities it provides. The recommendation of the research for local authorities is the re-formation of a tourist organization, which would promote the tourist offer of the municipality of Prnjavor and thus attract a larger number of tourists.

Keywords: agritourism, development, potentials, local community

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is most often defined as tourism that takes place in rural areas. It is related to the natural resources of a certain place and includes a large number of activities, such as hiking, hunting and fishing, swimming, cycling, participation in farm work and other activities. Specific characteristic of rural tourism is that there is an interaction between tourists and hosts. Different definitions of rural areas affect different definitions of rural tourism.

Rural tourism can be a complementary activity, but it can also be a professional activity in rural areas (Baćac, 2011). A narrower term than rural tourism is village tourism, which is related to the ambience of the village and various activities, such as: agriculture, gastronomy, various events and manifestations.

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Agrotourism is a narrower term than village tourism and represents an additional activity on an agricultural farm that is engaged in a certain type of agricultural production.

Šehić-Kršlak (2018) states that the concept of rural tourism refers to a form of development policy that seeks to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of society in terms of short-term, medium-term and, above all, long-term well-being.

Rural tourism takes place in the countryside, and agritourism is rural tourism that takes place on farms. Lane *et al.* (2013) in their paper state the reasons why this definition is inadequate:

1. Urban or resort tourism is not limited only to urban areas but through excursions, employment and shopping, it also spreads to rural areas,
2. Rural areas are difficult to define in themselves and the criteria for determining them vary greatly from nation to nation,
3. Not every tourism that takes place in rural areas is strictly "rural" - it can be urban in shape, and completely located in a rural area.

Brščić *et al.* (2010) define agritourism as a land-based activity, shows growth and contributes to rural development and depopulation reduction by attracting and developing new services in rural areas, opening employment opportunities, creating new infrastructure and the possibility of achieving additional sources of income.

Some authors define agrotourism as a type of tourist rural family farm in which the main activity (activity) is agricultural production, while tourist accommodation and catering services are an additional activity (Baćac, 2011). In addition to the basic catering services of accommodation and food, other tourist services (activities, service packages) can be organized on the farm, which aim to provide guests with the possibility of active vacation, ie to make the most of the tourist potential of the farm.

One of the characteristics of agritourism is that it provides tourists with the opportunity to get acquainted with the life and work of the population in rural areas, as well as their customs and culture. It is very important that the development of rural or agrotourism preserves natural potentials and uses them rationally, so that there are no negative consequences for rural areas. According to Despotović the benefits of the local community from agri-tourism development include better social infrastructure (schools, libraries, health care institutions, etc.). Furthermore, agritourism initiates better valorisation of natural resources of rural communities (Despotović *et al.*, 2017).

The aim of this paper is to identify tangible and intangible capital, and above all the natural potential and cultural and natural heritage for the development of rural tourism in the municipality of Prnjavor, but also to find out the views of the local population on rural tourism.

In the introductory part, the theoretical setting of the problem of valorization of territorial capital is explained and the link is given to the territorial capital of the municipality of Prnjavor, and its tourist potentials. The results of the

applied methodology for assessing the tourist value of internal and external factors, as well as the total tourist value of the destination are presented and discussed in the context of the case study of Prnjavor municipality. The second part of the paper presents an analysis of the attitudes of potential providers of rural tourism in order to assess the level of awareness of the benefits of rural tourism and agritourism. In conclusion, the results of the research are summarized and recommendations are given for improving the tourist value of the destination.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material for the preparation of this paper consists of data obtained by various research methods, as well as from the collected literature. The following methods were used in this paper:

- Description method used to describe the existing available resources in the municipality, ie mapped attractors during the research;
- Mapping of potentials or attractors in the municipality included the identification of all natural and cultural attractions (natural beauties, architecture, customs, events, etc.),
- Mapping of actors in the field of rural tourism in the municipality included the identification of existing and potential actors, ie agricultural farms and rural households, but also representatives of the public and civil sector who are active or potentially active in the field of tourism and rural tourism;
- Statistical methods, ie the method of descriptive statistics for data processing, their presentation using graphs and tables.

The survey was conducted on the case study of the municipality of Prnjavor. The survey included following respondents: 170 agricultural holdings and rural households, as existing and potential service providers, Mountain association "Step higher", Women's Association "Tkanica" and Department for Local and Economic Development and Social Activities of Prnjavor municipality. In this part of the research, a structured questionnaire was used, which includes three chapters, which actually refer to the set of hypotheses:

- hypotesis 1. The municipality of Prnjavor has the potential to engage in agritourism;
- hypotesis 2. In the area of the municipality of Prnjavor, there is a possibility of connecting agrotourism with agriculture;
- hypotesis 3. Actors in the field of rural tourism in the municipality of Prnjavor are aware of the advantages and limitations for the development of rural tourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a predominantly rural country with 57.3% of the rural population according to the latest census, and with an average population density of 68.9 inhabitants per km² (BiH Agency for Statistics, 2013). The total area of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 51,222.84 km², and the size of the rural territory is not accurately determined due to the fact that BiH does not have

an established official definition for the delimitation of rural areas. Out of a total of 6141 settlements, 6020 of them are rural, so it can be assumed that most of the territory of BiH is rural. The provision of accommodation services in rural households falls into the group of "resorts and similar facilities for short vacations" which participate with 1.6% in the total overnight stays of tourists in BiH (Agency for Statistics, 2021). An entity-level analysis for Republika Srpska shows that the share of rural accommodation in total private accommodation is 10% and rose from 12 bed units in 2011 to 490 bed units in 2020 (Agencies for intermediary, information and financial affairs, 2020). Tourism is one of the three major sectors in rural areas in EU, together with agriculture and forestry. According to Eurogites, the offer within rural tourism in Europe is about 500,000 units, 5-6.5 million beds, of which 20% are units categorized as agritourism (Eurogites, 2016). Although the number of accommodation capacities in the countryside is constantly increasing, it is still not at a satisfactory level. The reason for that is the low level of awareness of the local population about the place and role of tourism in sustainable development, the lack of tradition, the rather low level of infrastructure and superstructure, the modest tourist product and poor marketing (Ministry of trade and tourism).

The municipality of Prnjavor is located in the northwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the entity of Republika Srpska, in the part that gravitates towards Banja Luka. Administratively, the territory of the Municipality covers an area of about 630 km² or 63,000 ha. The city area of Prnjavor covers an area of about 5.5 km². The censuses conducted so far have recorded that a multinational population (19 nations and nationalities) lived on the territory of the Municipality, and still lives today. Due to all the above, the name "Little Europe" can be rightly said and accepted for the area of the municipality of Prnjavor (Mandić, 2019). In the last twenty years, there have been significant changes related to the population of the municipality of Prnjavor, as shown by the preliminary results of the 2013 census, according to which a total of 38,399 people were registered in 12,220 households. Available information indicates that the largest number of inhabitants in the municipality live in rural settlements, but recently there has been a noticeable trend of demographic depopulation, especially settlements further away from the municipal center. Of the total area on which the municipality of Prnjavor is spread, agricultural land covers about 68.7%. According to the degree of importance for the development of the local economy, agricultural activity is dominant source of income.

The municipality has favorable natural conditions for the development of agricultural production, mainly livestock and farming, which are precisely the most developed branches of agriculture in the municipality of Prnjavor.

It is estimated that close to 30,000 people live in the rural part of the municipality. According to the Farm Register data, over 1,700 agricultural farms are registered in the municipality.

The municipality of Prnjavor has the potential to engage in agritourism. This hypothesis was confirmed through the mapping of natural and cultural

attractions in the municipality of Prnjavor, as well as through the evaluations of the survey results.

All surveyed groups, ie agricultural holdings, associations/societies and the Department for Local and Economic Development and Social Activities evaluated the supply factors (natural and social attractions, traffic connections, supply in rural tourism, tourist mediation and support in the municipality). The highest score of 4.7, is recored for the landscape and the connection of the municipality with the highways, while the lowest score of 1.8 is given to the existence of a tourist organization and association.

Table 1. shows the average ratings of natural attractions in the municipality of Prnjavor and the average deviation of all individual ratings. The highest average grade is given to the landscape (4.7), and the lowest grade (2.7) to the development of organic agriculture. The average grade for all natural attractors is 3.7. This corresponds with another research supported by SWG for the regiona of South East Europe, where the average assessment of natural attractors is 3.5, with small variations around this value among the countries/territories. (SWG, 2020). As the most valuable natural attractions, most respondents stated the following: Banja Kulaši, Ljubić Mountain, Lake Drenova and Stud farm Vučijak.

Table 1. Assessment of natural attractions in the municipality

Natural attractions (mean value of rated elements of natural attraction)	Average grade	Standard deviation
climate	4,1	0,80
hydrographic elements (rivers, lakes)	3,9	0,77
landscape	4,7	0,63
flora and fauna	4,3	0,67
natural rarities	2,8	1,34
developed agriculture	3,9	0,99
developed ecological (organic) agriculture	2,7	1,05

Table 2. shows the average ratings of social attractions in the municipality of Prnjavor, as well as the average deviation of all individual ratings. The best rated, with an average score of 4.2, is "Expressed hospitality and positive attitudes of the local population towards tourists", while "the rural lifestyle" is rated with an average score of 3.3. The average numerical evaluation of cultural attractors in SWG study is 3.7 wich is exact the same as in the case of Prnjavor municipality (SWG, 2020). Respondents listed the following as the most valuable social attractions: Log cabin church, Stuplje Monastery and Festival of National Minorities.

The traffic connection with the municipality and within the municipality was rated with high scores. Road infrastructure in rural areas has the lowest average score of 3.5, which is actually one of the problems in rural areas. The connection of the municipality with highways was rated the best, with an average

grade of 4.7. The average grade is 4.1 and it is above average evaluated for South East Europe countries where only 2.4 grade is evaluated (SWG, 2020).

Table 2. Assessment of social attractions in the municipality

Social attractions (mean value of rated elements of social attractiveness)	Average grade	Stanadard deviation
rural heritage (traditional architecture, history, castles, churches, villages)	3,7	0,89
rural way of life (local events, gastronomy, agritourism, traditional music)	3,3	1,07
pronounced hospitality and positive attitudes of the local population towards tourists	4,2	0,84
existence of conditions for recreation, leisure and sightseeing	3,6	1,08

According to research results the current offer in rural tourism is low, with “the existence of accommodation facilities in rural areas” rated the lowest, only 2.3 points. Also, offer of catering services, offer of rural products and activities in rural areas was rated very low. On the other side safety and free movement of tourist is appreciated as very good. The average grade assessed is 3.1 wich is lower in comperisson with SWG studies, where these man-made attraction have been rated with 3.5 (SWG, 2020).

Table 3. Assessment of traffic connection of the Prnjavor Municipality

Traffic connection with the municipality and within the municipality (average value of the assessed elements of natural attractiveness)	Average grade	Standard deviation
road infrastructure in rural areas	3,5	0,98
connection of the municipality with highways	4,7	0,57
close to the airport	4	1,08
proximity to major regional centers	4,2	0,68

Together with law offer, also tourist mediation and support was rated quite low. Such low grades were caused by the non-existence of a tourist organization in the municipality, as well as poor information of the population about the very concept of rural tourism, as well as the state of tourism in the municipality. The average grade of these factors is only 2.05 and it is again lower in comperisson with SWG study where services in general have gained 2.4 in total numerical evaluation (SWG, 2020).

According to Demirović and Radosavac (2018) rural tourism sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina has an abundance of natural resources and special attractions. However, ancillary services and facilities are very limited and this may affect the reduction of attractiveness, and the possibilities for the sector to highlight its potential.

Table 4. Offer in rural tourism in the municipality

Offer in rural tourism (average value of rated elements of natural attraction)	Average grade	Standard deviation
existence of accommodation capacities in a rural area (on farms, motels, hotels, boarding houses, camps ...)	2,3	1,24
existence of catering facilities in the rural area (restaurants)	2,9	1,29
offer of rural products (agricultural products, handicrafts, etc.)	3,4	1,19
offer of activities in rural areas (agricultural activities on the farm, horseback riding, cycling, fishing, hiking, water sports)	2,8	1,16
price level of products and services	2,8	1,37
the possibility of free and safe movement of tourists	4,5	0,74

Table 5. Tourist mediation and support in the municipality

Tourist mediation and support (mean value of assessed elements of natural attraction)	Average grade	Standard deviation
the existence of travel agencies	2,5	1,49
the existence of tourist organizations	1,8	1,54
the existence of tourist associations and unions	1,8	1,16
existence of marketing and promotional activities related to rural and agritourism	2	1,26
existence of strategies and plans for rural and agritourism development	2	1,21
existence of financial and professional support for the development of rural or agritourism	2,2	1,35

Gilbert (1992) remarks with respect to rural tourism, also stress the problem of low standard on supply side: The existing supply is sometimes lacking in basic amenities and a minimum level of comfort. Other research also point out that an assessment of the development of rural tourism during the nineties betrays a virtually complete lack of planning in both private and public action (Nacher, 1997) which implies the level of tourism development in Prnjavor municipality comparable with the situation existing in western European countries in the 90-ies. Analysts of the problem, therefore, appear to agree that this form of tourism needs to evolve, to be seen as a business and to be managed as such (Garcia and Grande, 2005). The same author considers it as essential that any action should be undertaken by private initiative, and based on market principles. According to Bojnec (Bojnec, 2010) the supply of rural- and farm-based tourism in most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is determined by demand-side factors, but also by entrepreneurial spirits in rural areas, farm diversification and even farm specialization into farm or agro tourism due to new marketing opportunities, farm-employment, income and similar reasons.

Demand factors in the municipality of Prnjavor

Average ratings of demand factors in the municipality of Prnjavor are shown in Table 6. The highest score of 3.9 was given to the increase in the level of education, and the lowest 2.8 to the increase of free time followed by the increase of disposable income.

Table 6. Assessment of demand factors in the municipality of Prnjavor

Demand factors in the municipality of Prnjavor	Average grade	Standard deviation
The need for a better environment	3,7	0,69
The need for authenticity	3,4	0,91
Increasing the level of education	3,9	0,87
Increasing interest in heritage	3,5	1,17
Increase in free time followed by increasing disposable income	2,8	1,50
Raising awareness of the importance of health	3,6	1,08
Better equipment for outdoor activities	2,9	1,37
Growing interest in traditional and special food types	3,7	0,83
Growing interest in environmental issues	3,4	0,97
Peace and tranquility as a motive for tourist demand	3,6	1,08
Age as a motive for demand (active aging)	3,4	0,81
The need for "real" travel (in which interaction with the local population takes place)	3,1	1,51
The rise of individualism (avoiding mass in favor of alternative tourism)	3	1,32

Agritourism or farm holidays are increasingly in demand in Europe and result in being a successful example of sustainable tourism that has gained importance over the years (Streifeneder and Dax, 2020). Based on literature review of Pesonen *et al.* (2011) show that rural tourists have several similarities: they are most often motivated by opportunities to learn and explore nature or different cultures, participate in outdoor activities, search for peace and solitude. They may expect family togetherness, peace and quiet, friendly reception, change from routine and good food. Beautiful landscapes, opportunities for outdoor activity and hassle-free environments tend to attract rural tourists. But also differences can be found especially in relation to expectations towards farming activities, heritage or other destination attributes.

Table 7 shows the benefits of rural tourism rated by the respondents with average scores of 3.6 to 4.1. The benefits of rural tourism are numerous, and the respondents' assessments depend primarily on how familiar they are with the concept of rural tourism and their attitudes related to rural tourism.

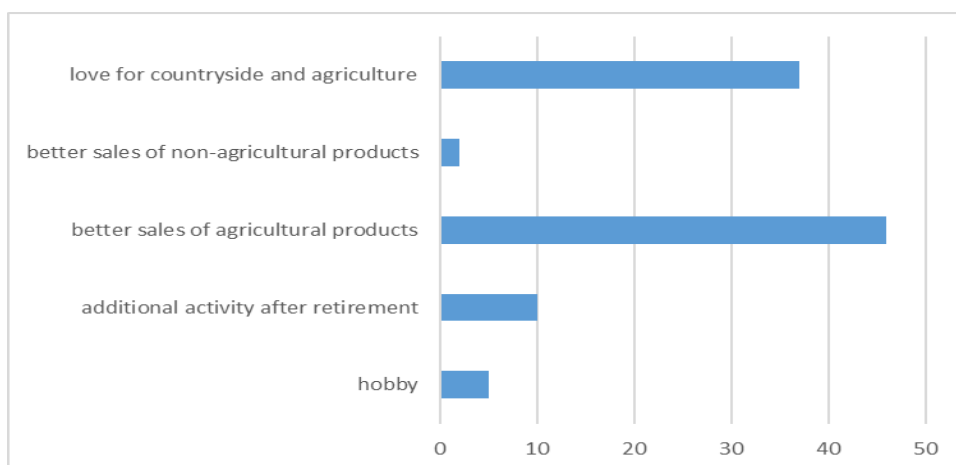
The research of Popović and Lazarević (2021), Nagaraju and Chandrashekara (2014), Irshad (2010) but also Sharpley (2000) confirm that rural tourism is making a valuable contribution to rural economies. Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms, but also in terms of jobs, contributions

towards funding conservation, encouragement to the adoption of new working practices, and the injection of a new vitality into sometimes weakened economies.

Table 7. Estimates of the benefits of rural tourism

Benefits of rural tourism	Average grade	Standard deviation
To keep existing and create new jobs	3,8	1,09
To acquire additional sources of income through the sale of products (food, wood, etc.)	4,0	0,94
Opportunities for young people	3,7	1,17
Acquisition of new skills and knowledge	3,8	1,01
The sense of pride of the rural community is being revitalized	3,9	1,08
Preservation of rural culture and heritage	4,1	0,95
Sales of arts and crafts are increasing	3,6	1,14
Preservation of the natural environment	3,8	1,10
Improving life and work (asphalting of rural roads, etc.)	4,1	0,98
Preservation or restoration of the historical environment	3,6	1,31

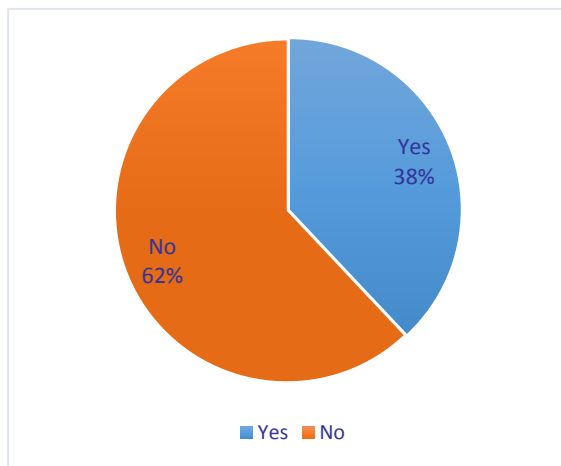
In the area of the municipality of Prnjavor, there is a possibility of connecting agritourism with agriculture. This hypothesis was confirmed on the basis of the conducted questionnaire, i.e. the attitudes of the respondents, 97% of which believe that in the municipality of Pranjvor it is possible to connect agriculture and agritourism. Farm holders who are interested in agritourism are motivated in most cases by better sales of agricultural products and love for the countryside and agriculture, which they want to share with guests.



Graph 1. Motives for agritourism as business activity

Although farmers believe that it is possible to connect these two activities, more than half of the respondents are not interested in starting

agritourism. The reason for that is ignorance and uninformedness, but also the fear of failure.

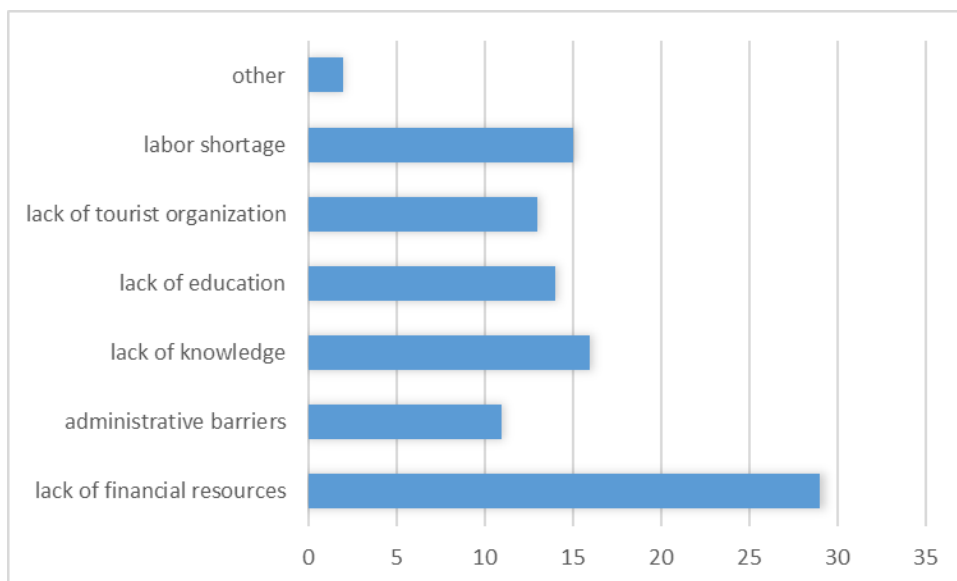


Graph 2. The interest of farm holders in agritourism

Agricultural farms in the municipality are mostly adequately equipped with infrastructure, the hosts are natives of the village, have a well-developed and diverse agricultural production, many farms are inhabited by young and educated people, these are some of the prerequisites for starting and developing agritourism and rural tourism.

Actors in the field of rural tourism in the municipality of Prnjavor are aware of the advantages and limitations for the development of rural tourism. This hypothesis was rejected based on research results. The awareness of the population about rural tourism and the opportunities it provides is not at an enviable level. Only 10% of respondents are familiar with the legislation related to rural tourism. The majority of respondents, 77% of them, have never participated in lectures/trainings on rural tourism. Respondents who participated had different opinions, more than half of them were not satisfied with the number of lectures and the information provided. When it comes to support for the development of rural tourism by the competent institutions, 43% of respondents stated that support exists and 57% that it does not exist. Respondents who stated that there is support said they were generally dissatisfied, believing that the competent institutions should be more supportive of the development of rural tourism.

Many respondents believe that the municipality of Pranjvor has nothing to offer to tourists, which means that they are not aware of the value of the potential that Prnjavor has. Although they stated that they are familiar with the concepts of agritourism and rural tourism, most respondents are not interested in engaging in this activity.



Graph 3. Barriers to engaging in rural tourism

That the awareness of rural tourism is not sufficiently developed is also shown by the fact that in the area of the municipality of Pranjvor, one rural farm is engaged in rural tourism. This farm is engaged in tourism and agriculture. They have the most guests in the summer and they are mostly children, i.e. excursion and school groups. The service provided by this farm is a picnic area, and as an additional activity on the farm they provide observation of production of crops and livestock breeding.

Other research also identify similar barriers to participate in tourism as limited knowledge about tourism, lack of capital, lack of information about tourism development, limited incentives or support from the government for tourism development (Velnisa et al, 2014, Saufi et al 2014, Tosun, 2000). According to Cigale and others, lack of experiences, knowledge, and skills negatively affect ability of farmers to adapt their offer to the demands of tourism market in Slovenia (Cigale et al, 2013).

The municipality itself, i.e. the local government, does not support rural tourism, which greatly influences this result of the research and the thinking of the population. The lack of a tourist organization in the municipality has a great impact on the level of tourism development, and thus on the attitudes and information of the local population about tourism. According to the European Commission reports, lessons learned in the period of 2007-2013 in regard to support for rural tourism record unevenly applied strategic approach(as), which are sometimes even missing (EC, 2013). According to this report national authorities opting for global approaches instead of specific local targeting. It is also noticed the tendency for rural tourism to be identified only with tourism accommodation, which affects policy orientation and narrows the investment

options. Sanchez argues as urgent to incorporate participatory methodological tools designed for the rural sector in the elaboration of diagnoses for the formulation of productive projects that, through links between agriculture and tourism, strengthen countryside and thereby improve the quality of life of the rural family (Jarquin Sánchez *et al.* 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

In the area of the municipality of Prnjavor, the most important natural resources are agricultural land and forest wealth, which represents a significant potential for the development of rural tourism. The problem is the migration of the rural-urban population and the age structure of the population in rural areas. The majority of the population are middle-aged and elderly, after which the farms remain deserted, the young population mainly moves closer to the city or to the job market.

One of the solutions to these problems can be rural tourism, or agritourism. Rural tourism would revitalize rural areas through the employment of the local population, and thus the retention of the younger population in rural areas. Rural tourism has economic and social significance, and in addition promotes environmental protection, as well as the preservation of traditions and culture characteristic of a particular rural area.

By starting rural tourism, i.e. agritourism, agricultural producers would market their products more effectively and by merging farms, the offer of agricultural products would be more diverse, which would further affect the development of agriculture and agritourism.

As mentioned earlier, the municipality of Prnjavor does not have a Tourist Organization, and the Department of Local and Economic Development and Social Activities has taken over these tasks, which is actually the biggest shortcoming when it comes to the development of any type of tourism. Through marketing activities, the tourist organization would promote the tourist potentials of the municipality of Prnjavor and in that way encourage the local population to engage in some kind of tourism. Certain lectures and trainings for the local population on rural tourism and agritourism would be of great importance, the population would be acquainted with the opportunities offered by this activity, but also with the potentials that Prnjavor has and thus would influence the awareness of the population on tourism potentials.

Rural tourism provides rural communities with the opportunity to promote and protect the environment, i.e. natural and cultural heritage. The development of rural tourism has a minimal impact on the environment and local culture, and at the same time provides an opportunity for the development of a particular area, an opportunity for additional income, new investments and the like.

The problem is in the underdeveloped awareness of the population about rural, i.e. agritourism and the opportunities it provides. By joint efforts of the competent institutions and the population, having in mind the potentials that the municipality of Prnjavor has, rural tourism could become one of the important

activities in the municipality, which provides new jobs and additional income, thus affecting the development of villages and the local community.

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