

THE IMPACT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM IN SUCEAVA COUNTY

Gabriela ARIONESEI

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229, Romania

gabrielag@seap.usv.ro

Livia-Elena VRANCIU

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229, Romania

lvvranciu2002@yahoo.com

Daniela-Mihaela NEAMTU

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229, Romania

danan@seap.usv.ro

Andrei-Alexandru MOROȘAN

Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229, Romania

alexandrumorosan@gmail.com

Abstract

In the context of knowledge economy, education is an important vector for creativity and innovation, to the extent that it is properly carried out on different levels, combining theory with practice. Nowadays, travel and tourism industry is, worldwide, the most dynamic sector and the most important generator of jobs. Since it creates an unprecedented number of jobs, tourism provides part-time and seasonal jobs for people looking for a flexible job. But lately, employers in the tourism field argue that one way to achieve sustained employment in this industry is implementing the "multiple qualifications" policy, meaning that they are searching for staff with several trainings. The link between sustainable development and education is complex, as recent research has shown that education is helping countries meet their sustainable development goals. Given the fact that sustainable development is related to training and providing qualified staff for the tourism field, we conducted in our paper a statistical survey that included: collection and observation of the statistical data on adult training in Suceava County (obtained from the Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers of Suceava County), in the period 2004 - 2013, systematization and processing of the data, analysis and interpretation of results and conclusions.

Key words: *adult education, sustainable development, tourism, training.*

JEL Classification: *I25, L83, Q01.*

I.THEME IMPORTANCE

Sustainable development, seen as an attempt of coexistence between the environmental protection and the economic development in a global and long-term optic, imposes an important condition for achieving its objectives, namely simultaneous progress in several dimensions: economic policies, education sector, environmental issues, investments, research and development, employment policy, health, etc. Moreover, sustainable development supports visions of progress that integrates immediate and long term needs of the entire local community, with screenings in all socio-economic, cultural and environmental areas.

Sustainable development is a concept difficult to define. The fact that it evolves continuously, adding new values, makes it twice as hard to define. In general, when we talk about sustainability we take into account three components: environment, society and

economy. Currently, the three areas are interrelated, so that we can not achieve a state of well-being in one of three areas without considering the others. For example, a healthy and prosperous society relies on a healthy environment which provides food, clean water, good air supply and resources for its inhabitants. Similarly, education, both formal and the informal, must be recognized as processes through which both human beings and societies can reach a maximum of potential. Training is regarded as the basis of action, an important tool for the enhancement of human potential and for the facilitation of achieving a sustainable world.

On the other hand, tourism and its analysis have become a relatively recent field of study among academics, researchers and commentators (Page, 2003, p. 4)

Tourism today is one of the world's largest industries, being made up of many segments, the principal ones being transportation, accommodations, food service, shopping, travel arrangement and activities for tourists, such as history, culture,

adventure, sports, recreation, entertainment and other similar activities (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1986).

Education and training are vital to the tourism industry in terms of providing (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004, p. 261).

- a foundation of knowledge and study for those young people who wish to enter the tourism industry as a career;
- continuing professional development for those already employed in the tourism sector.

Referring to the terms *education* and *training*, we must make several observations. The term *training* is generally seen as a narrower of the two, focusing on gaining skills which are specific to particular jobs. Traditionally, *education* is often seen as a broader matter, concerned with raising the general intellectual capability of the individuals. Education and training are relevant to all levels of employment within tourism, from routine operational work to high-level strategic management, being complicated in tourism since there are so many different sectors, with their own needs (airlines, hotels, retail travel, visitors attractions, tour operators and destination management). In our paper, we will use both terms *training* and *professional development* in order to describe the gathering of skills specific to certain jobs.

The close connection and familiarity with tourism, recreation, business and leisure equips one to pursue a career in a number of tourism-related fields. Even during times of severe economic downturn, tourism has performed well. Tourism skills and trainings are critically needed and there are many opportunities available in a multitude of fields.

Because tourism is very fragmented and each sector has many job opportunities and career paths, it is virtually impossible to list and describe all the jobs one might consider in this large field. However, the following areas might be taken into consideration when a person is interested in tourism:

- *airlines industry* – a major travel industry employer, offering a host of jobs at many levels, ranging from entry level to top management;
- *bus companies* – require management personnel, ticket agents, sales representatives, tour representatives, hostesses, information clerks, bus drivers etc;
- *cruise companies* – job opportunities include those of sales representatives, market research and recreation directors;
- *railroads* – hire passenger service representatives, sales representatives, reservation clerks, conductors, firemen and station agents;
- *rental car companies* – are becoming an important segment of the travel industry, requiring reservation agents, rental sales agents, service agents, mechanics and regional managers;

- *hotels, motels, lodges and resorts* – the range of jobs in hotels, motels and resorts is extremely broad. The following are representative: general manager, accountant, room clerks, front office manager, receptionist, lobby porters, doormen, maids, chefs, cooks, waiters, bartenders, maintenance workers, engineers, electricians, painters and laundry workers;
- *travel agencies* – range from very small to very large businesses. Job opportunities include: commercial specialists, domestic travel counsellors, international travel counsellors, accountants, sales personnel, tour guides, advertising specialists, computer specialists and other;
- *tour companies* – offer employment in positions as tour manager, tour planner, accountant, sales representatives, hotel coordinator, office supervisor;
- *food service* – many job opportunities are available in the growing food service industry such as: waiters, chefs, cooks, bartenders, restaurant managers, assistant managers, dieticians, menu planners, cashiers, kitchen helpers, dishwashers etc;
- *tourism research* – offers research jobs;
- *travel journalism* – provides jobs like editors, staff writers, freelance writers;
- *tourist offices and information centres* – include the following professions: travel editor, photographer, statistical analyst, marketing coordinator, communication specialist;
- *meeting planners* – provide jobs with responsibilities in arranging, planning and conducting meetings ;
- *other opportunities*, such as teachers, trade associations executives etc.

Following the relation adult education – tourism - sustainable development, the question we aim to answer in this paper is: *Why adult education and training in tourism for sustainable development?* Our case-study presents is represented by a statistical study conducted in a county of Romania, namely Suceava County, that included:

- collection and observation of the statistical data on adult training in Suceava County (obtained from the Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers of Suceava County), in the period 2004 – 2013;
- systematization and processing of the collected data;
- analysis and interpretation of results and conclusions.

II. ADULT EDUCATION IN TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Similar to other countries, in Romania the initiative of Education for Sustainable Development was made by institutions for other purposes than educational ones. Parameters for sustainable development that are discussed by ministries should be transposed into information that educators (both those in the formal and in the informal context) could further transmit in order to achieve public awareness.

Rapid changes in the economic and informational environment cause organizations to continuously adapt human resources to be able to face the challenges of the future. A flexible and adaptable workforce can be achieved through a continuous process of professional development of employees (Bocean, 2008, pp. 145).

The link between sustainable development and education is complex, as recent research has shown that education is helping countries meet their sustainable development goals.

In reorienting education towards sustainable development, the education programs developers must find a balance between future knowledge and traditional way of life. Often, traditional way of life surprises us with organic solutions to problems of resource use. Going back to a traditional way of life is impossible for those who lead an urban life, but the cultivation of traditional values can be a good support for the sustainable development of the 21st century.

However, tourism is the most important and enjoyable way to spend free time and holidays, weekends and vacations. In fact, tourism contributes to the enrichment level of training, knowledge of people, both tourists and host populations, through the contact with new cultures and civilizations.

Also, tourism is a major factor in promoting a peace climate, cooperation and understanding between nations. On the other hand, the contact between people from different regions of a country can lead to a better understanding of each different style of life and a better appreciation of the specific problems of particular regions. Therefore, tourism education is an important link to national education. Also, studies show that practicing various forms of tourism determines the development of positive behaviours, creative and innovative, which contributes to society development, in general. In this respect, occurs and develops a new form of tourism: educational tourism.

In Romania, the supply of tourism courses has grown considerably over the past two decades. Such growth has been fuelled by the rapid expansion of the industry and recognition by governments that tourism contributes significantly to local and national economies, fact proven by the record revenues obtained worldwide in 2012. According to a statement issued by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

last year, international tourism grossed 1.075 billion dollars (837 billion Euros), up 4% compared to 2011 when revenues were 1.035 billion dollars. Considering that tourism is a key area for many economies in the world, these results are a good report because it helps increase currency reserves and create jobs in tourism and related sectors (World Tourism Organization – www.unwto.org)

Tourism education and training are, in general, a relatively modern phenomenon reflecting the modern nature of the industry. However, some areas of tourism, notably hospitality, have a longer history of educational provision. Academic studies in tourism are undoubtedly a relatively recent issue.

III. ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ROMANIA

The learning system is the main subsystem of the education system. The structure of the education system in Romania includes: early childhood education and preschool, primary, lower secondary education (gymnasium), upper secondary (high school), vocational education (schools of arts and crafts, apprenticeship schools), post-secondary education and higher education (Education Law no. 1/2011).

Adult training or professional development, completed with qualification or graduation certificates with national recognition and/or certificate of professional competence, is a general interest activity that is part of the national vocational education and training (Law no. 167/2013).

Professional development is a form of adult learning. Because school system personnel are adult learners, staff development activities must utilize the basic principles that facilitate optimal learning and growth for them (Webb & Norton, 2009, p. 186).

Training is any procedure by which a person acquires a qualification attested by a certificate or diploma issued by law (Bocean, 2008, p. 154). Training of employees is organized for occupations, crafts, jobs and professions covered in the Classification of Occupations in Romania - COR, based on occupational standards and classifications developed by committees.

In Romania, adult education and training are regulated by Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult training, approved by Law no. 375/2002 and Law no. 167/2013, amending and supplementing Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult training. According to these legal documents, adult training includes initial and continuing education and training, achieved through different routes of the specific national education systems.

Initial training refers to training programs included in compulsory education and to those that graduates follow immediately after its completion,

which ensures the acquisition of professional qualifications.

Initial training in secondary education is done through: vocational education, secondary education and post-secondary education, higher education, providing initial training for the highest levels of skill. Continuous training is the procedure by which a person already having a skill or profession, acquires new skills cognitive and functional (skills).

Adult training programs are organized through initiation, training, retraining, perfecting and specialization programs.

Adult vocational training is organized in distinct levels of training, professions, occupations, crafts and specialties, taking into account the needs of employers, the basic skills of adults, the requirements of positions they occupy and their possibilities of promotion or employment, as well as labor market needs and aspirations of adults. In Romania, the embodiment of adult training comprises:

- a) courses organized by training providers;
- b) courses organized by employers within their own units;
- c) internship and specialization in the country or abroad;
- d) other forms of training.

Tourism creates an unprecedented number of services, with a minimum qualification for women and youth, and provides part-time and seasonal jobs for people looking for a flexible job. Lately, tourism employers argue that one way to achieve sustained and realistic employment in the industry is

implementing the policy "multiple qualifications". It is also a means to reduce the problem of recruitment. Multiple qualifications policy has always been practiced in small companies, but only lately has been given attention. As demand of general skills increased in both small companies and chains of hotels and restaurants and having developed adequate means of training for these skills, the importance of multiple qualifications in this segment has been acknowledged.

Thus, tourism is a key-domain in which professional development of adults is being realized in Romania.

IV.METHODOLOGICAL PART

The statistical research conducted in this paper included: collection (from the Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers located in Suceava County, subordinated to the Romanian National Qualifications Authority) and the observation of statistical data on adult training in Suceava, systematization and processing, analysis and interpretation of information necessary for understanding and formulating results and conclusions.

After summarizing statistical data collected from the Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers of Suceava, regarding adult training programs during the period 1st of January 2004 – 30th of June 2013, the following secondary data have been obtained (table no. 1):

Table 1 - Statistical data on training programs in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

Year	Total no. of sessions	Sessions in other counties	Total no. of graduates	Graduates under the age of 25	Total no. of women	Women under the age of 25	Graduates from other sessions	Total no. of graduates
2004	43	0	729	196	288	145	0	729
2005	131	0	2537	292	953	138	0	2537
2006	172	3	3381	358	1442	155	37	3418
2007	194	8	3651	937	1557	416	58	3709
2008	157	5	2775	544	944	202	52	2827
2009	139	4	2307	455	883	247	37	2344
2010	121	12	1745	316	596	120	56	1801
2011	128	11	1872	424	744	185	37	1909
2012	159	17	2337	670	1107	353	54	2391
2013	110	13	1641	544	721	289	41	1682
Total	1354	73	22975	4736	9235	2250	372	23347

Source: Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers of Suceava

It is noted that the range in which the largest number of training programs were held is that in the years 2007-2008. During this period a number of 6,536 people of the 23,347 graduates have attended, which represents a percentage of about 30%.

Tourism is an economic sector that generates many jobs, helping to reduce unemployment. Moreover, tourism is an economic activity which is characterized by a high labor turnover and low investment in training.

Thus, training in tourism has a number of functions, perceived as benefits for tourism labor market, namely:

- increasing competitiveness and innovation;
- improvement of strategic and critical thinking required of managers;
- increasing productivity;
- employee stability;
- lower personnel costs;
- reducing amateur management characterizing small businesses;

- creating clearly defined and delineated skills;
- improving employee experience;
- increasing professionalism;
- improving the quality of services;
- creating proximity to tourism sector needs by tourism training institutions;
- development and practice in the future of more responsible forms of tourism etc.

Referring to training programs in Suceava County in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants*, within the period 2004 – 30 June 2013, the situation is according to the table below:

Table no. 2 - Statistics on training in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants* in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

Year	Total no. of sessions	Sessions in other counties	Total no. of graduates	Graduates under the age of 25	Total no. of women	Women under the age of 25	Graduates from other sessions	Total no. of graduates
2004	7	0	147	137	103	86	0	147
2005	10	0	193	103	125	63	0	193
2006	13	0	210	96	147	57	0	210
2007	35	0	718	280	551	195	20	738
2008	22	0	378	111	281	75	8	386
2009	20	0	339	108	256	81	7	346
2010	15	0	214	52	136	28	10	224
2011	14	3	209	56	142	41	8	217
2012	23	2	362	168	253	104	8	370
2013	9	2	178	123	103	58	3	181
Total	168	7	2948	1234	2097	788	64	3012

Source: Authorization Commission for Adult Training Providers of Suceava

As we can observe in Table no. 2, there is also a peak number of sessions conducted on the total number of graduates to be recorded in 2007 and 2008, representing about 34%.

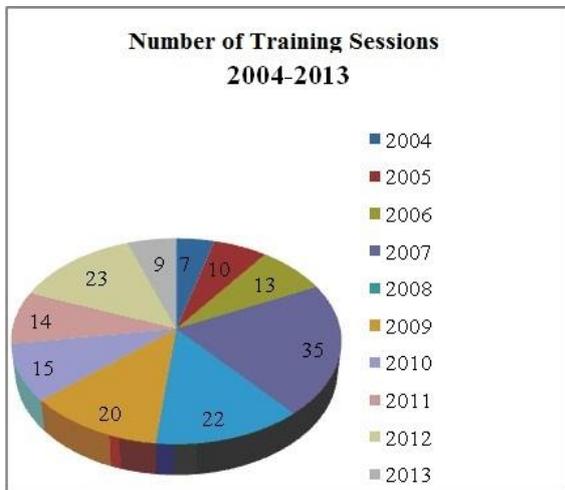


Figure 1 - Number of training sessions in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants* in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

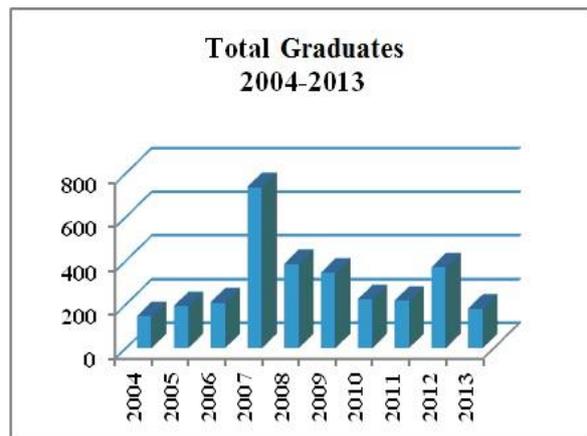


Figure no. 2 - Total no. of graduates in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants* in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

Figures 1 and 2 point out the fact that year 2007 represented the peak of adult training in Suceava, namely 35 training sessions took place from 1st of January to 31st of December 2007, with a number of 738 graduates in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants*, out of a 3709 graduates for all domains in Suceava County.

Training providers, public and private operators, conducted in Suceava County the following training programs:

- waiter;
- vendor in eating establishments;
- cook;
- administrator of accommodation unit;
- maid;
- hotel receptionist;

- manager in tourism activity;
- travel agent – guide;
- technician in tourism, hotel and catering.

The types of these programs are the qualification, teaching and training.

Analyzing the data presented in Table no. 2, one can observe that, out of the 3012 graduates, 1234 were under age 25 at graduation date, representing about 41 %, which indicates that young people are concerned about obtaining qualifications to allow access to the labor market, given the fact there was an increase in investment in tourism Structures in Suceava in that period.

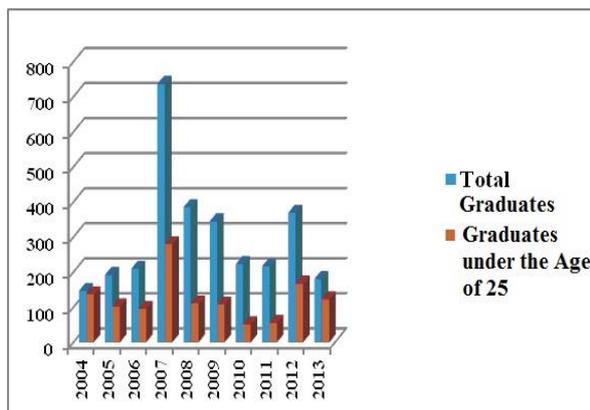


Figure no. 3 - Ratio of the number of graduates and graduates under 25 years old in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants* in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

Another interesting feature of the structure of graduates is the number of women participating in the training programs. It appears that for the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants*, out of the 3012 graduates 2097 were women (about 70 %), and among them 788 were at the time of graduation, less than 25 years old. It therefore confirms the major share of females employed, or pending employment in tourism (figure no. 4).

Tourism provides good opportunities for women, although they still often face discrimination when searching for a job or seeking promotion.

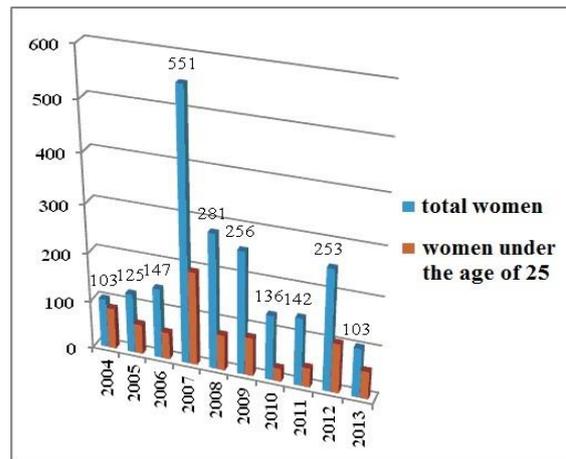


Figure no. 4 - Ratio of the total number of women graduates and women under 25 years old in the domain *Tourism, hotels and restaurants* in the period 1st January 2004 – 30th June 2013

An important aspect of sustainable development and sustainable tourism is linked, therefore, to training and providing qualified personnel for this field.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

We live in a world where sustainability is a paradigm in which the future is conceived as a balance between the environment, society and economy in order to develop and improve quality of life. There is an indestructible relationship between tourism education and sustainable development since sustainable tourism develops the idea of satisfying the current tourists and the touristic industry, and, at the same time, of protecting the environment and opportunities for the future. Satisfying all the needs in tourism sector, while maintaining the environment integrity, can be obtained only through education.

The tourism impact on economy increases the degree of attention paid to tourism sector, through raising living standards, in general, and providing jobs and expanded income for residents. Since tourism is a complex, diverse industry that offers a vast array of different types of jobs (operational and managerial), it is heavily dependent on the quality of its human resources.

Our research results show the fact that training and education in tourism is still relatively underdeveloped in Suceava County, despite the fact that years 2007 and 2008 were the peak of training programs in this domain. However, statistical data show the situation is changing slowly and adult education is gaining ground again after the major economic crisis.

Another conclusion of our study is that, in Romania, young people and women seem to see tourism jobs as very catching and are often attracted to

join this industry, with a multitude of job opportunities. Given that many tourism employees come from quite modest educational backgrounds, there is a need for wider opportunities for them, which can help improve their feeling of self-worth and their confidence levels. We consider this can be achieved through diversification of training programs and a higher degree of accessibility to education for all social categories of people.

As a general conclusion, we consider that the tourism industry has not been renowned for its commitment to training and education. This is a real problem because:

- the industry is constantly changing and staff need to keep up to date with developments;
- training and education are an essential part of making employees feel valued and increasing their job satisfaction.

Although there is a growing attempt in our country to encourage education and sustainable development, understanding the link between sustainable development, tourism and education remains limited in understanding it and needs elaborate research.

VI. REFERENCES

1. Bocean, C. (2008) *Auditul resurselor umane*. Ed. Tribuna Economică, București
2. Education Law No. 1/2011
3. *Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 for Adult Training*
4. *Government Ordinance no. 76/2004* for amending and supplementing Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult training
5. McIntosh, R. W., Goeldner, C.R. (1986) *Tourism. Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. Fifth Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, USA
6. Horner, S., Swarbrooke, J. (2004) *International Cases in Tourism Management*. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann Publication, Oxford
7. *Law no. 167/2013* for amending and supplementing Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult training
8. *Ministry of Education and Research*, www.edu.ro, accessed 27th of September 2013
9. *National Authority for Tourism*, www.turism.gov.ro, accessed 12th October 2013
10. Nistoreanu, P. (2006) *The Indestructible Relationship Between Tourism and Sustainable Development*. Turismul la începutul mileniului III. Provocări și tendințe. Ed. Sedcom Libris, Iași
11. Page, S.J. (2003) *Tourism Management. Managing for Change*. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann Publication, Oxford
12. *Romanian National Authority for Qualifications ANC*, www.anc.edu.ro, accessed 29th of September 2013
13. Webb, L.D., Norton M.S. (2009) *Human Resources Administration. Personnel Issues and Needs in Education. Fifth Edition*. Pearson Education Ltd., USA
14. *World Tourism Organization UNWTO* – www.unwto.org, accessed 1st October 2013
15. *UNWTO Barometer UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* <http://mkt.unwto.org/en/barometer>, accessed 21st October 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper has been financially supported within the project entitled „**SOCERT. Knowledge society, dynamism through research**”, contract number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/132406. This project is co-financed by European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013. **Investing in people!**