

Improvement in Professional Education and its Impact on Sustainable Tourism

Mirjam Dibra¹, Alkida Hasaj¹

¹Department of Tourism, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Albania. The direct, and indirect contribution of this industry to Albania's economy during recent decades has been high. The development of sustainable tourism is also a key to success that requires a great deal of responsibility, careful planning and competence to achieve. For this reason, the Albanian government is investing in creating improved environmental conditions through legal policy, investment in infrastructure and the preparation of qualified human capacities for tourism, etc.

Given that many elements impact a well-functioning tourism sector, one of the most delicate issues remains human resources. The special importance of qualified human resources in tourism, the lack of culture inherited from the past in the hospitality sector in Albania, as well as globalisation, brought the necessity to develop a better education system, which is designed and orientated toward one purpose; that of sustainable tourism. Professional education and training of human capacities are a strong link in the chain that keeps all tourism sustainable. Given that among other things every tourism enterprise (but not only) aims to maximise revenue, human capacity normally plays a crucial role in ensuring success.

There has been a return from professional education in Albania in the last decade, but much remains to be done. The main research questions are: Is it essential to adapt curricula regarding professional education for tourism to the conditions offered by the labour market in the tourism sector in Albania? Do students leaving professional schools meet their expectations? Do they meet the actual requirements of work?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To conduct this study, secondary and primary data were used. Secondary data result from a review of wide-ranging and generally current literature, related to the research topic. Primary data are acquired using qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative data are obtained through the instrument of a focus group held with students who attend professional education in hotel tourism. Quantitative data are obtained using two questionnaires, compiled by teachers and tourism businesses in Albania. The questionnaires contain open and structured questions and are self-administered by the respondent. The scientific method has been used for data collection, and the paper can be reproduced by other researchers.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide interesting evidence of the problems and challenges of professional education for tourism, and its connection with tourism businesses. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed, highlighting what still needs to be done to further improve professional education for sustainable tourism in Albania.

DISCUSSION

This paper has a contribution on the government level. As the Albanian government is investing in developing professional education, they need to consider the efficiency of their strategies and where they need to invest in the future. This paper can help a business to understand the positive impact of collaboration with a professional school.

KEYWORDS: Professional education, Sustainable tourism, Curricula, Professional practice, Human resources