

ETHICAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

SINACI MARIA¹, TRIFAN VANINA ADORIANA¹

¹"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad/Faculty of Economics/Romania

Abstract: *Tourism is one of the sectors that has experienced a particular development in recent decades, both as an investment option and from the point of view of the increase in the number of tourists. However, tourism does not only mean travel but also human behavior, social relations, and relationships with the environment. At the base of all these relationships, but not only, there must be ethics—rules that regulate the tourist's behavior towards himself and towards others. Rural tourism, through the numerous benefits it can bring, is important to be considered in the context of the sustainable development of rural areas. This paper explores the ethical aspects of tourism from the perspective of tourists' behaviors in relation to the environment. The impact of tourism on rural communities is additionally mentioned, based on the concept of sustainable development. In this approach, the Wine Road project in the Arad Vineyard is analyzed. The paper highlights the special economic and socio cultural impact of ethical and sustainable tourism in rural communities and at the regional level.*

• Introduction

The development of tourism with such a large influx of tourists has put a certain pressure on travel agencies and tourist destinations through overcrowding and, at the same time, through its particularly strong impact on the environment. In this context, a new concept has emerged - ethical tourism - which encourages the consumer and the tourism industry towards responsibility and a behavior that expresses awareness of its own consequences on the environment, people, and the local economy.

• Material and method

We employed the methodology of a literature review. The information utilized to present this research came from a variety of sources, including articles, reports, and other secondary sources of information.

• Results and discussions

Along the Wine Route, ethical behavior among tourists is promoted through panels and posters in the sense of protecting the environment and biodiversity. At the destination level, tourists are informed about the natural character of the area, cultural and landscape values. Advertising and information materials provided to tourists prior to the program also promote responsible tourism for a clean environment. The way in which ethical tourism is promoted at the destination and area levels can also have an impact on tourist behavior. In this way, the Wine Route of Arad's Vineyard is a tourist destination that encourages ethical behavior.

• Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that, in the context of the global expansion in the number of tourists, the health of the environment and biodiversity are threatened, among other things, by inappropriate tourist behavior. Another conclusion drawn from the case study is that it is critical to involve local authorities in projects to provide modern local infrastructure and other elements that allow transportation in order to achieve sustainable rural development in Romania through ethical tourism.