

## ANIMATOR IN CULTURAL TOURISM AS A MANAGER OF EXPERIENCE

### *ANIMATOR KULTURNOG TURIZMA KAO MENADŽER DOŽIVLJAJA*

ROMANA FRANJIC, Veleučilište VERN, Zagreb  
romana.franjic@vern.hr

**Abstract :** *In accordance with the stipulations of sustainable cultural tourism there is a strong need to create a balance between satisfying the interests and desires of visitors, providing the requirements for the economic and social development of local communities and the need to increase the attraction of a cultural heritage without endangering the resource itself. Starting from the premise that the local community is crucial to the interpretation of cultural heritage in a sustainable tourist offering, it will be shown that it is necessary to create a sustainable system of its interpretation. By doing this we will emphasize the importance of tourist and cultural animation in the creation of this system and how the typology of this interpretation is dependant on the typology of the local community.*

*Due to the nature of the cultural tourism product, which is created at almost the same time it is consumed, during a tourist experience, the development of a new tourism product must be considered not only a controlled process, but also as a cultural synthesis which allows us to transmit knowledge about the specific culture and tourism market and to understand how to keep pace with cultural and ideological changes.*

*Cultural tourism doesn't use only what it can sell. It also demands organization, networking, the continued renewal of material and immaterial culture, promotion and human creativity. It is therefore necessary to state the demand for a new profile of cultural tourism workers, and especially for culturally sensitive managers and marketing experts who understand the influence of a national culture on human interaction, communication and traveling standards. This work points out the special value of animation in cultural tourism as a special form of communication with the tourists. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to bring out the conclusions about the possible implications of personality traits in the development of new products in transmodern cultural tourism.*

**Keywords:** *cultural tourism, interpretation, tourist product, animation, personality traits*

**Apstrakt:** *U skladu sa postavkama održivog kulturnog turizma, postoji snažna potreba da se ostvari ravnoteža između zadovoljenja zanimanja i užitka posjetitelja, zahtjeva za ekonomskim i društvenim razvojem lokalnih zajednica te potrebe za povećanjem privlačnosti kulturne baštine, a ipak bez narušavanja samog resursa. Polazeći od postavki da je u održivoj turističkoj ponudi lokalna zajednica ključna za interpretaciju baštine, pokazati će se kako valja izgrađivati održivi sustav njene interpretacije. Pri tome će se istaknuti koliko je turistička i kulturna animacija bitna za izgradnju tog sustava te koliko je tipologija interpretacije zavisna o tipologiji lokalne zajednice.*

*Zbog prirode kulturno turističkog proizvoda, koji se gotovo istodobno proizvodi i troši u turističkom doživljaju, razvoj novog turističkog proizvoda valja smatrati ne samo upravljačkim procesom nego i kulturnom sintezom koja nam omogućuje prenošenje znanja o tržištu kulture i turizma te spoznaju kako održati korak sa kulturnim i ideološkim promjenama. Kulturni turizam ne koristi samo ono što može prodati, već zahtijeva organizaciju, povezivanje, kontinuiranu obnovu materijalne i nematerijalne kulture, promociju te ljudsku kreativnost. Stoga se nužno postavlja zahtjev za potpuno novim profilom djelatnika u kulturnom turizmu a posebno za kulturno osjetljivim menadžerima i stručnjacima za marketing koji shvaćaju utjecaj nacionalne kulture na interakciju među ljudima, na komunikaciju i na standarde putovanja.*

*Ovim radom ukazalo se na posebnu vrijednost animacije u kulturnom turizmu kao posebnog oblika komunikacije s turistima tako da je cilj ovog rada izvući zaključke o mogućim implikacijama osobina ličnosti za razvoj novih proizvoda u transmodernom kulturnom turizmu.*

**Ključne riječi:** *kulturni turizam, interpretacija, turistički proizvod, animacija, osobine ličnosti.*

## 1. Theoretical Framework

Seeing as in many transitional economies the net income from tourism is a crucial factor in the stability of the balance of payments (Jovančević, 1998, p. 397-424), the organizing of the tourist offering on the principles of the economy of experience can be seen as a form of state regulation whose purpose is to lessen negative externalities linked with uncontrolled growth of tourist traffic (Stiglitz, 2000) through the preservation of the resource basis and through maintaining the quality of life of the local population. Tourism is much more than just a product intended for consummation, because the consumers/tourists are more and more looking to achieve meaning and well-being through different experiences and their connected images (Firat and Dholakia 1998). In a postmodern sense, tourism should be understood as something that is intended for play, as something which consumers can use in innumerable ways in order to improve their lives and lifestyle and to develop the awareness of their own value and identity.

An experience in tourism is created through animation and its programs. From a tourism standpoint, animation is an element of a destination product equal to food and lodging and is a part of the total tourism offering. We could even say that animation is a form of internal marketing or marketing within a hotel, seeing how the organization of a cultural event makes the tourism product more complex, richer and more competitive (Jere-Lazanski, 2007). Tourism animation deals with the free time of hotel guests and tourists. They are kept active and are either active participants or a passive audience of a program of tourist animation. Cultural institutions, as well as tourism, interpret animation as a form of communication undertaken during free time with the purpose of liberating the tourists from their everyday commitments. Animation signifies a new link between tourism and culture as two important aspects of life and results in educating the tourists who end up returning because of the cultural programs provided by animation. As a segment of free time tourism satisfies the needs and expectations of "homo turisticus". It constantly creates new programs linked with culture as a special part of the tourist product (Jere-Lazanski, 2007).

The experiential value of a certain product is a real factor which contributes to the motivation of a client when he/she is purchasing or desires to purchase a certain product. In this case, the visitor/tourist is a client who seeks emotional experien-

ces such as entertainment, events, adventures or thrills. Generally we can say that an experience is formed when the managers of a destination decide to use its services as a stage and its resources as props to attract tourists. In this case monumentality is the most important characteristic: "While the products are entertaining, the resources material, and the services intangible, the experiences are being remembered" (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 1). In order for the purchasing power of the clients to be transferred from the more common consumption of goods and services to the market of "memorable experiences," the goods and services must be advertised with the help of a psychological introduction which will intensify the experiential character of tourist activities. For the achievement of the adequate staging experience skills such as script writing are needed, as well as the use of such tools which will incite desired associations, emotions and memories in the clients.

The basic principles and procedures used in the creation of events through cultural animation programs are the following. First, the principle of freedom, according to which no one can be forced to participate in the programs. Each individual can freely choose the program in which he/she will participate as an active or passive participant. According to the active principle it is assumed that the animators are obliged to include activities during which people can participate actively. Programs are divided into active ones (sports, games, etc.) and passive ones (exclusively cultural programs such as concerts, operas, theatre, etc.), in which the tourist is only the spectator. According to Hudson (2006), experiences are a crucial innovation in the many diverse activities such as health care and the auto industry. The most recent studies show that for most clients "the experience they remember the most" is linked to their leaving on holiday (Hudson, 2006, p. 138). The demand for leisure and tourist products which cater to the desires of clients, encourage them spiritually and offer them unique moments on the emotional, physical, spiritual and the intellectual plane is constantly growing. The other aspect of experience in the leisure market is that one should not only offer entertainment and pleasure, but also mystery, message and feeling (Groetsch, 2006). The future belongs to fast experiences. It is not surprising that for postmodern travelers invested time is becoming more and more important. This is why short trips which promise more powerful experiences and better quality are

becoming more popular. Besides, the possibility of disappointment is much lower when compared to the promise of two weeks of sun on the beach (Reiter, 2004, p. 177).

## 2. An Analysis of the Psychological Characteristics of a Cultural Tourism Animator

The position of a tourist animator is well known in tourism by the terms such as entertainer or an official for guest relations. Working with guests demands significant mental and physical capabilities which are not necessary in other tourist-related jobs. Self-motivation and the motivation of others bring positive results. Motivation by itself provides the energy which is crucial to achieving goals. The tasks of a tourist animator are the following: organizing leisure time, managing various programs and events, creating animation programs, informing the guests about the possibilities within the tourist destination, hotel, tourist complex, camp, etc., counseling guests about animation programs and choosing appropriate programs for guests. It could be said that the choosing of an appropriate animator is a form of deciding, but, most importantly, this is the managing of human resources within a tourist destination.

The considering of formal characteristics of tourism workers (sex, age, education) is insufficient for gaining enough insight to appreciate those characteristics of personality which are the most appropriate for the role of the initiator and creator of new ideas for the development of cultural tourism, the animator. We believe that the term *cultural tourism animator* represents a satisfactory syntagm and that it is necessary to improve its psychological profile and educational content. Using the instruments developed by Goldberg (1992), adapted and calibrated to the Croatian population, as the foundation of this part of our analysis, we used this test, better known as the "Five Big<sup>1</sup>," in two ways:

I. We asked three tourism and tourism development experts to independently enumerate in

the test the most desirable psychological characteristics that a cultural tourism animator should have. These evaluations were compared and arranged in order to get the average rating of each psychological trait and in this way we obtained an *ideal typical personality profile* of a cultural tourism animator.

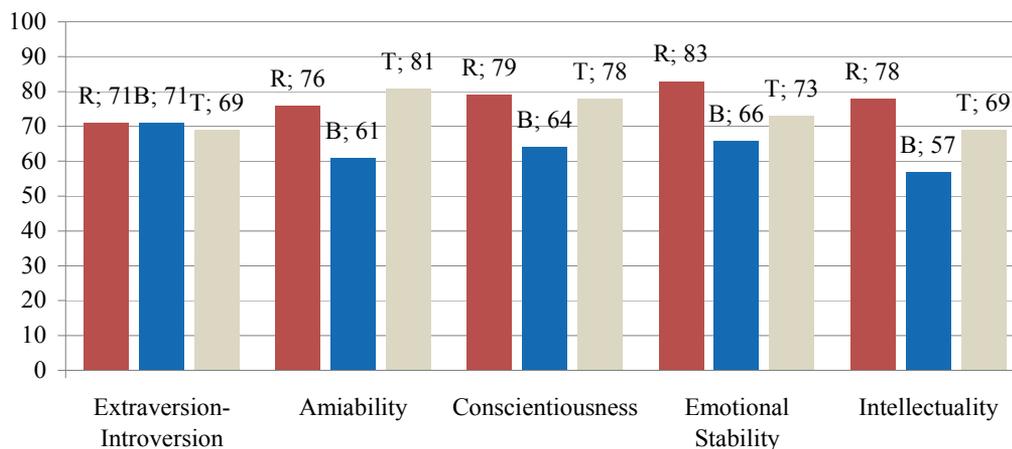
II. The experts were very familiar with the work and personality of the seventeen tourism workers which served as our sample group<sup>2</sup>. Although our sample group belongs to the so-called "small samples" (under thirty respondents), the application of the Crombach (1951) *Alpha* reliability test showed exceedingly high reliability ( $\alpha = 0,9717$ ) with all fifty markers which were part of the test. In the next graphic example we will show the results of the relative importance of individual personality characteristic, as reported by our three evaluators independently of one another.

The clearest agreement among the evaluators regarding the ideal profile for a cultural tourism animator is apparent in the extraversion-introversion characteristic. Each of the three evaluators strongly agreed that an animator should have a strongly extroverted personality and that introversion would be counterproductive in that line of work. The amiability characteristic is perceived in a more diverse manner, because the second evaluator (marked by the letter B) evaluates this characteristic as much less important than the other two evaluators. The second evaluator retains this tendency towards a lower estimate in the estimation of all following personality characteristics and this is especially evident in the assessment of the ideal intellectuality characteristic, which, according to his/her opinion, needn't be highly pronounced. This evaluator views the emotional stability characteristic in the same manner. The remaining two evaluators deem the amiability characteristic, the emotional stability characteristic and intellectuality characteristic to be much more important for a cultural tourism animator.

<sup>1</sup>This personality test contains over fifty bipolar markers and measures five personality characteristics: extroversion-introversion, amiability, conscientiousness, emotional stability, intellectuality. Ten markers for each characteristic have a negative extreme marked with the number 1 and a positive extreme marked with the number 9. The task of the evaluator is to mark each marker with the degree which would be the most suitable for the personality or profile which he/she evaluates.

<sup>2</sup>This test is known in Croatia under the name "Velepetorni model strukture ličnosti" (Mlačić, Knezović 2000). It was applied for the assessment of others and for self-assessment, for which the correlation was between 0,5 and 0,7.

### A Presentation of the Ideal Typical Personality Profile of a Cultural Tourism Animator



Note: the chart was made on the basis of cumulative grading of personality characteristics by three independent evaluators marked by initials.

In contrast, the first evaluator (marked by the letter R) gave an extremely positive assessment for the characteristic of emotional stability, which he/she considers to be the most important. In this view, a cultural tourism animator should be a relaxed, peaceful, calm, sensitive and contented person in order to be successful in animating tourists in accordance to the cultural heritage of the area in which he/she works. The third evaluator (marked by the letter T) agrees with the first evaluator only in his/her verdict on the characteristic of conscientiousness, while he/she gives a far lower assessment on all other personality characteristics. In conclusion, the greatest agreement between the evaluators was in the characteristics of extraversion-introversion, conscientiousness and amiability. Greater discrepancies were expressed with regard to emotional stability and especially about the intellectuality characteristic. It is interesting to note that almost all three of the evaluators considered the intellectuality characteristic to be relatively unimportant when measured against other characteristics. Their results could be descriptively expressed in the following fashion: *a cultural tourism animator should first and foremost be an extroverted person of a pleasant disposition, of conscientious work habits, emotionally stable and of a somewhat above average intellectual development.*

In the following table we will express the results of the evaluations of the seventeen tourism workers whose work and personality were familiar to the evaluators. The following graphical example clearly illustrates the results of this assessment of

tourism workers and compares it to the ideal profile.

According to this presentation of an ideal profile, the evaluators deem that a cultural tourism animator should have the following characteristics: he/she should be a PLEASANT, FAIR, RESPONSIBLE, CONSCIENTIOUS, STABLE AND CONTENTED PERSON (average marker is 9). In contrast, the evaluators also agree that he/she doesn't have to be too ASSERTIVE, SUBMISSIVE, FRUGAL, CERTAIN, THOUGHTFUL, ANALYTIC (average marker is 5). In certain personality categories the evaluators agree and give high markers (8) on EXTRAVERSION: OPEN, ENERGETIC, SOCIABLE, DECISIVE; AMIABILITY: WARM, POLITE, COOPERATIVE, TIDY; CONSCIENTIOUSNESS: RELIABLE, PRACTICAL, THOROUGH, HARDWORKING; EMOTIONAL STABILITY: CALM, COMPOSED; INTELLECTUALITY: INTELLIGENT, CURIOUS, IMAGINATIVE, CREATIVE, CULTURED.

In conclusion, the necessary main personality traits of a cultural tourism animator are exceedingly demanding, at least according to our evaluators, who are experts in modern tourism. According to their estimate, a cultural tourism animator should undoubtedly be an extroverted, pleasant, emotionally stable person who is markedly intelligent, curious, imaginative and creative, and is also a reliable, practical and hardworking employee. We also mentioned that this similarity test was translated to Croatian and tested on a sample of Zagreb students (Mlačić, 2002). This enables us to compare our results with the results of a test undertaken by a relatively high number of students (N = 519).

*The comparison of the ideal profile of cultural tourism animator with the profiles of assessed tourism workers (N = 17)*

1.	INTROVERSION	Enclosed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Open	EXTRAVERSION
2.		Non-energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Energetic	
3.		Uncommunicative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Communicative	
4.		Indecisive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Decisive	
5.		Afraid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Brave	
6.		Passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Active	
7.		Diffident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Confident	
8.		Submissive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Assertive	
9.		Non-spontaneous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Spontaneous	
10.		Unsociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sociable	
11.	DISAGREABLENESS	Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Warm	AMBIABILITY
12.		Impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Polite	
13.		Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Cooperative	
14.		Selfish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unselfish	
15.		Untidy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Tidy	
16.		Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Pleasant	
17.		Untrusting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Trusting	
18.		Selfish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Generous	
19.		Noncompliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Compliant	
20.		Unfair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Fair	
21.	UNCONSCIENTIOUSNESS	Unorganized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Organized	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS
22.		Irresponsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Responsible	
23.		Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Reliable	
24.		Negligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Diligent	
25.		Impractical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Practical	
26.		Careless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Thorough	
27.		Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Hardworking	
28.		Wasteful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Frugal	
29.		Reckless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Careful	
30.		Heedless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Mindful	
31.	EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY	Angry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Calm	EMOTIONAL STABILITY
32.		Tense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Relaxed	
33.		Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Peaceful	
34.		Volatile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Composed	
35.		Irritable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Good-natured	
36.		Envious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unenvious	
37.		Unstable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Stable	
38.		Discontented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Contented	
39.		Uncertain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Certain	
40.		Insensitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sensitive	
41.	INTELLECTUALLY UNDEVELOPED	Unintelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Intelligent	INTELLECTUALLY DEVELOPED
42.		Unperceptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Perceptive	
43.		Unanalytic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytic	
44.		Unthoughtful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Thoughtful	
45.		Incurious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Curious	
46.		Unimaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Imaginative	
47.		Uncreative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Creative	
48.		Uncultured	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Cultured	
49.		Rough	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sleek	
50.		Unrefined	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Refined	

**Expected Profile**
 **Estimated State**

Comparative Overview of Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Scaled Results from the Sample of Zagreb Students (N = 519) and the Sample of Tourism Workers (N= 17)

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS		ZAGREB STUDENTS			TOURISM WORKERS		
		M	SD	min – max	M	SD	min – max
I.	Introversion/Extraversion	68,65	12,89	20 – 90	68,47	18,38	24 – 89
II.	Amiability	77,33	9,76	16 – 90	60,65	17,12	30 – 87
III.	Conscientiousness	71,25	12,88	26 – 90	65,29	17,97	30 – 90
IV.	Emotional Stability	67,05	12,73	29 – 90	54,00	17,26	26 – 84
V.	Intellectuality	78,10	8,56	36 – 90	76,64	18,97	28 – 90

Due to the large discrepancies among the samples, our constataion can be only illustrative. Our evaluators were much more critical than those who evaluated the students on the basis of emotional stability and amiability. This can be expected because these were crucial personality characteristics for a cultural tourism animator. The differences between other characteristics (introversion, intellectuality, conscientiousness) weren't statistically significant. On the basis of these findings we can constatae in general that if we undertook an "action of selection and education" of cultural tourism animators, we would have a great selection among existing tourism workers whose intellectual capabilities and extroverted personalities would guarantee a successful and qualified selection and the expediency of additional education. The corrective criterions should be the categories of amiability and conscientiousness which are rather poor among tourism workers. The most pronounced difference between the ideal profile of an animator and the evaluated tourism workers is in the category of emotional stability, which is highly valued in the profile and lacking among evaluated tourism workers.

Therefore, we conclude that in choosing candidates for cultural tourism animators one should primarily consider certain crucial personality characteristics relevant to the occupation. The results of this pilot study (using the Goldberg "Five Big" personality test adapted and calibrated to the Croatian population) indicate that it is possible, through the use of modern psychological personality tests, to make important new discoveries in the more efficient use and evaluation of human resources in tourism in order to expand and develop its new dimension: cultural tourism.

### 3. Conclusion

To precipitate sustainability one should support initiatives of a smaller scope and not mega-projects. One should educate the local population while taking into account local diversity and further educate tourism workers. In this way a level of expertise essential for the tourist workers to enrich the tourist product of their destination can be achieved, and this would also improve the quality of interpretation. An ideal tourism worker who will carry out these changes within a tourist destination is a cultural tourism animator who should be an extroverted person of a pleasant disposition, of conscientious work habits, emotionally stable and of a somewhat above average intellectual development. A cultural tourism animator is an inspirator and a motivator who must be enthusiastic and determined, who needs to incite inspiration and excitement. Such types of tourism workers determine trends and bring in new ideas into management and into the decision-making process. They use their energy to successfully transform otherwise boring tasks into motivating games. In this way, the tourist space, or the crystallized points of global and tourist-oriented movement, will be interpreted in a new way, as a spiritual resource for tourists who visit this space and the local population.

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**Zaključak:** *Garancija održivosti turizma usko je vezana uz poticanje razvoja mikro poduzetništva i ekonomskog prosperiteta. Sama se lokalna populacija mora identificirati s mjestom u kojem živi te s razvojem turizma koji želi kako bi mjesto moglo uistinu živjeti. Ako mjesto živi, živjet će i turisti u njemu. Prema tome, ukoliko lokalno stanovništvo može svoja svakodnevna zanimanja uklopiti u turističku aktivnost te tako prezentirati svoj način života i rada, biti će osigurana kvaliteta turističke ponude, kao i kvaliteta života domicilne populacije. Kreativni kulturni turizam može se brže razvijati od drugih oblika turizma a turističke destinacije mogu inovirati proizvod relativno brzo, pridonoseći tako prednostima destinacije pred konkurentima. Kreativnost je mobilna i izrazito pokretna i temelji se često na prijenosu lokalnog umijeća i iskustva turistima u adekvatnom okolišu a ne zahtjeva izgrađenu infrastrukturu.*

*U okviru garancije održivosti trebaju se poticati inicijative manjeg opsega, a ne mega-projekti; treba omogućiti poduku lokalnog stanovništva na temu lokalne različitosti i dodatno educirati turističke djelatnike. Na taj način bi se dobio onaj stupanj stručnog usavršavanja koji je neophodan da bi turistički djelatnici mogli obogatiti turistički proizvod svoje destinacije a isto tako dobilo bi se na kvaliteti interpretacije. Idealan turistički djelatnik koji će biti nositelj ovih promjena u turističkoj destinaciji je animator u kulturnom turizmu koji treba prvenstveno biti ekstrovertirana ličnost ugodnog nastupa, savjestan u radu i emocionalno stabilan, te nešto iznadprosječno intelektualno razvijen. Animator kulturnog turizma je inspirator i motivator koji treba raspolagati entuzijazmom i odlučnošću, taži inspiraciji i uzbuđenju. Takvi tipovi turističkih djelatnika određuju trendove, donose nove ideje u procese upravljanja i odlučivanja. Svojom energijom i dosadne zadatke uspoješno pretvaraju u motivirajuće igre. Turistički prostor, tj. izkristalizirane točke globalne i turistički orijentirane pokretljivosti, interpretirat će se tako na novi način, kao dubovni resurs i to za turiste koji posjećuju taj prostor ali i za lokalno stanovništvo.*