

UDC 65.012.4:658.56](497.5)

Review

Received: 20.04.2009

## EDUCATION FOR QUALITY TOURISM MANAGEMENT\*

Vinka Cetinski

Violeta Sugar

University of Rijeka, Croatia

Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In every analysis of the economic development of Croatia, education is pointed out as a key factor. With the share of highly educated in the workforce of less than 15 percent, Croatia is seriously lagging behind developed countries. Human resource management (HRM) is a philosophy, a way of thinking for each employee. It is especially important in service, work-intensive fields, such as tourism. Croatia should, as a country which declared itself tourism country, as soon as possible apply the good experiences, adopt ways of application and the practice and results of the HRM philosophy. It is impossible to manage the development of tourism without a strategically placed system of management of human resources. Since tourism, as a service field, rests for the biggest part on people, their work, serviceability, knowledge, abilities, education, motivation, intelligence, in short on the human potential, that potential should be treated as capital, not as an expense or a burden.

*Key words:* knowledge, human resources management, quality, lifelong education.

### INTRODUCTION

“Man – key of success in tourism” is not just a successful marketing slogan, but before all, a true claim and a fact which tourism companies often neglect when they evaluate the contribution of their employees, that is the human capital to the quality of the whole.

There is no unique, generally accepted translation of *human resources management (HRM)* to Croatian since there has not been an accepted (or offered) corresponding translation for originally American *management*<sup>2</sup>. Just like *management*

---

\* This article is the result of the scientific project “*Management of Knowledge and Personnel in Tourism as a Feature of Croatian Identity*” (116-0000000-0758), financed by Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

<sup>1</sup> Vinka Cetinski, PhD, Full Professor, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Opatija, Croatia, Violeta Sugar, PhD, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Department of Economics and Tourism, Pula, Croatia.

<sup>2</sup> Despite language controversy, that is the criticism by one part of linguists directed towards using “quality management” syntagm, in this work, in accordance with many cited sources, and with the lack of a corresponding replacement, quality management is used as the closest (if not ideal) translation of the expression. In Croatian, there is no corresponding and all-inclusive translation of the English term *management*. The solution of that problem is left by the author to translators and linguists.

is not just managing, or just leadership, so the term *human resources management* is wider than managing personnel, human resources or human potential. *HRM* is the subject of many scientific research projects and works, and especially, as an important bond of economic development, it interests the researchers of economic situation in the countries in transition and developing countries.

Planning, organising and management of human potential (resources) is the foundation on which the future should be built by countries in transition and those on the way towards the society of developed ones, and one of them is Croatia.

*HRM* is also a philosophy, a way of thinking of each employee. It is especially important in service, work-intensive trades, such as tourism. Croatia should, as a country declaring itself tourist, apply as soon as possible the good experiences, ways of applying and the practice and results of the *HRM* philosophy. With the development of tourism, it is not possible to manage without a strategically set system of human potential management, or more precisely human potential management.

Since tourism, as a service trade, rests for the most part and depends on people, their work, serviceability, knowledge, abilities, education, motivation, and intelligence, in short human potential, that potential should be treated as capital, not as an expense or a burden.<sup>3</sup>

### **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (CAPITAL)**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the transition from industrial into knowledge era, developed economies build their future more and more on service trades and making of non-material value. In that process, a very important role is played by the "knowledge worker," not only in sophisticated technological companies, but generally an increase of the share of educated workers in the contingent of working age population is noticeable. They are the ones from whom a successful creation of non-material value is expected (knowledge, service, experience, benefits, reputation), which then turn into material shapes like income, profits, added market value.<sup>4</sup>

"The story of successful tourism enterprises is one that is largely about people - how they are recruited, how they are managed, how they are trained and educated, how they are valued and rewarded, and how they are supported through a process of continuous learning and career development".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> "People are the only business and economic resource which can self-develop..., and human knowledge and abilities are the only resource which does not shrink with use, but rather grows." Bahtijarevic – Siber, F. (1998). Meaning and specificities of the function of human potential management in modern companies. *Racunovodstvo i financije*, no. 3, pp. 76-81.

<sup>4</sup> Manual for intellectual capital management. (2001).

<sup>5</sup> Failte Ireland. (2005). *A Human Resource Development Strategy for Irish Tourism Competing through People*, 2005 – 2012, Dublin, p. 8.

*HRM* philosophy, as seen by Guest (Figure 1) emphasises three key and interdependent factors: integration of corporate and human potential strategies (vertical integration), focus on human potential and organisational results, and on the connection of *HRM* techniques with the goal of achieving those results (horizontal integration), as well as the development of the corresponding culture supporting the integration. Competitive advantage is achieved with a coherent strategy, completely determined goals of the policy of human potential, such as loyalty, quality, flexibility and strategic integration, supported by the combination of techniques of human potential from different areas – policy and practice which lead to the development of a more innovative, confident and change – prepared workforce.<sup>6</sup>

The cost-effectiveness of investing in humans is best shown by the results of research of a well-known American telecommunication company Motorola that every dollar invested into education comes back as 30 dollars, measured by productivity, quality and similar.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 1:** Guest's *HRM* (human resource management) model



Source: Guest, D. E. (1990). Human Resource Management and the American Dream. *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 377-397.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, D., Walley, E. E. (2002). Hijacking the Holy Grail? Emerging HR Practices in Croatia. *European Business Review*, vol.14, no. 4, pp. 294-303.

<sup>7</sup> Bahtijarevic – Siber, F. (1998). Meaning and specificities of the function of human potential management in modern companies. *Racunovodstvo i financije*, no. 3, pp. 76-81.

## **STRUCTURAL CHANGES, SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN EUROPE**

According to the Lisbon Strategy<sup>8</sup>, there are three pillars on which the future full employment and competitiveness of the EU economy rest:

1. Economy pillar – preparation of the foundation for transition into a competitive, dynamic, knowledge-based economy; the accent is on a continuous adjustment in accordance with the changes in information society and on encouraging research and development;
2. Social pillar – the need for modernising of the European social model by investing into human resources and the struggle against social exclusion; from the member countries, it is asked for investment into education, leading of active employment policy and opening of paths towards the knowledge economy;
3. Ecology – turning attention to the fact that the economic growth has to be independent of natural resources use.

The EU policy in the future will be based on better regulation and coordination, better use of available European financial instruments and on actions pointed at specific questions (problems) regarding tourism.<sup>9</sup>

Better regulation and coordination is related to the field of partnership and togetherness. The European Commission has started an ambitious initiative of lowering bureaucracy, simplifying the rules and improvement of influence (activity) evaluation. Günther Verheugen promised: “In 2005, there was an evaluation of 169 new regulations in order to establish whether they influence negatively the competitiveness of tourism. I would like to emphasise that we will not propose new regulations if it is not absolutely necessary. In order to make it happen, cooperation of all stakeholders is necessary. The same action is recommended on a national level of each of the members in order to avoid cumulating of administrative burdens on the tourism industry.”<sup>9</sup>

Many factors and areas of different development policies influence tourism. During terrorist threats, for example, research in the area of European security policy can lessen the negative effects without distraction (prevention) of the attraction of European destinations. The security of citizens and tourists should not be saved on.

E-tourism is becoming bigger and bigger and it is growing twice as fast as other EU economic sectors. To that, e-business should be added, as well as innovations, which the European Commission is supporting through the programme Enterprise, Research and ICT Development.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> At the meeting of leaders of states and governments of EU members, held in the capital of Portugal in March, 2000, the so-called Lisbon Strategy was adopted, whose goals are full employment by 2010 and the EU as the most competitive economy in the world.

[http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon\\_strategy\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon_strategy_en.htm) (December 19, 2007)

<sup>9</sup> Günther Verheugen: „A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger Partnership for European Tourism“. (2005). 4th European Tourism Forum, Malta, <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction..>, (January 28, 2006)

Health and protection of consumers, research, information society, law, trade, local market, environment protection, development, international and regional relations, employment, education, agriculture, competitiveness, culture, taxes, energy and transportation are all policies which, in this or that way, influence tourism in such a measure that tourism should be an integral part of each of those policies.

Sustainable development of tourism sector in the EU countries, especially in new members, makes an integral part of structural changes, whether they are rural areas or creating new tourist attractions in the areas which most of the population of western European countries have never visited, and now they are more and more open and accessible. Visitors of those destinations are offered possibilities of meeting new cultures and overcoming inherited fears and stereotypes.

Tourism takes an important place in Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Growth and Jobs, as well as in the new regulations related to the support of rural development. In the period between 2007 and 2013, European Commission for reformed cohesion policy is asking for €336.1 billion.<sup>9</sup>

If tourism would not develop in a sustainable way, it would jeopardise the natural and cultural environment. Therefore, active support for economical and social sustainability (of European) tourism is very important related to the environment. European Commission has founded the Tourism Sustainability Group<sup>10</sup>, made up of representatives of all stakeholders interested in making Agenda 21 of European tourism.

Ethics and responsibility are also very important, it could be said the key components of competitiveness and attraction of European tourism. It relates equally to sustainability of tourism related to the environment, culture and local population, but also to explicit refusal of all forms of violence and using of women and children in what is called "sex tourism." In accordance with affirmative attitudes towards ethics and responsibility, the behaviour of those who travel for the satisfaction of their sexual urges at the expense of the weaker, poorer and unprotected should not be called tourism at all if its positive perception as an activity with the goal of resting, learning, familiarising of the new, and not violence in any way is to be kept.

There is another important area in which partnership, cooperation and togetherness are expressed, and that is the promotion of Europe as a whole tourism destination. Internet portal European Tourist Destinations<sup>11</sup> enables the access to internet pages of European national tourist organisations, and so from there with a click of the mouse on one of the stars on the map of Europe, one can also access the pages of the Croatian Tourism Association.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/626&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (June 28, 2006)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/portal/?lang=en\\_GL&nav\\_cat=128](http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/portal/?lang=en_GL&nav_cat=128) (January 12, 2007)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.croatia.hr/English/Default.aspx> (December 1, 2007)

Europe, the old continent, bases its attraction advantages on cultural richness and diversity. Without investment in preservation and protection of the inherited treasure, as well as incentives of making new cultural values, European tourism would become poor very soon and it would lose its attractiveness.

Another thing not to be neglected is the new forms of tourism, meant for different demand segments, such as older persons or special needs persons. As the life expectancy is becoming longer, health provision becoming better, the sense of accepting differences is becoming stronger and standards of quality are being developed, so the offer has to adjust in accordance with the new demand (older persons and disabled persons are more and more mobile).

The European Commission announces the European Destinations of Excellence Award<sup>10</sup>, which will be given to the EU members for achieving high standards of quality. Promotion of sustainable tourism in different destinations, exchange of good experiences and practical results, improvement of the perception of European destinations without the influence on natural and expected competition between them, are some of the goals of the award.

### **EDUCATION IN CROATIA**

In Croatia during the 1990s, the number of students grew by about 35%, which is the consequence of poorer opportunities for employment of people with a high school degree, but also of the increase in growth rate of return of investment into education. Nevertheless, if one observes the number of students, Croatia is still lagging behind well-developed countries (Figure 2). With a fifth of young people finishing higher education, Croatia is at the bottom of the list of developed countries, together with the Czech Republic and Italy.<sup>13</sup>

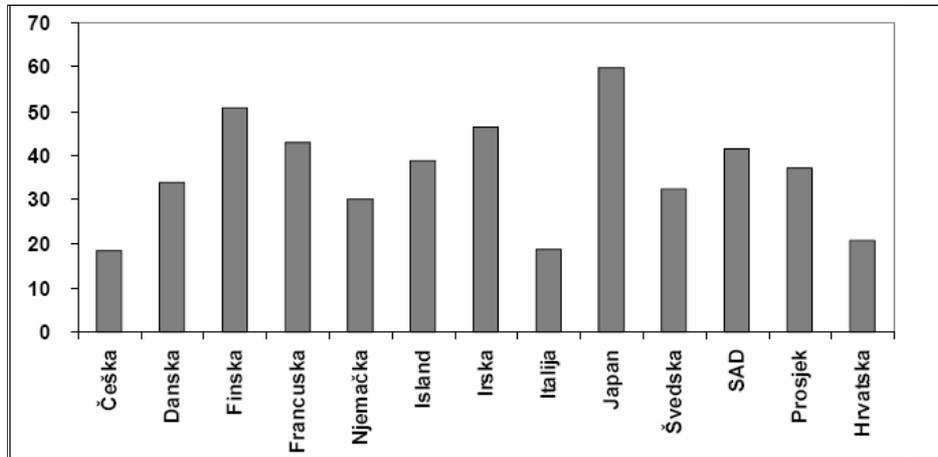
According to the statistical data in 2006 only 12% of the Croatian population was highly educated, and the goal, set by the Action plan for increasing investment in science and research, was to reach the European average of 20% by the 2010.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ijf.hr/konkurentnost/sosic.pdf> (December 12, 2007)

<sup>14</sup> Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH. (2008). Akcijski plan za poticanje ulaganja u znanost i istrazivanje. Zagreb.

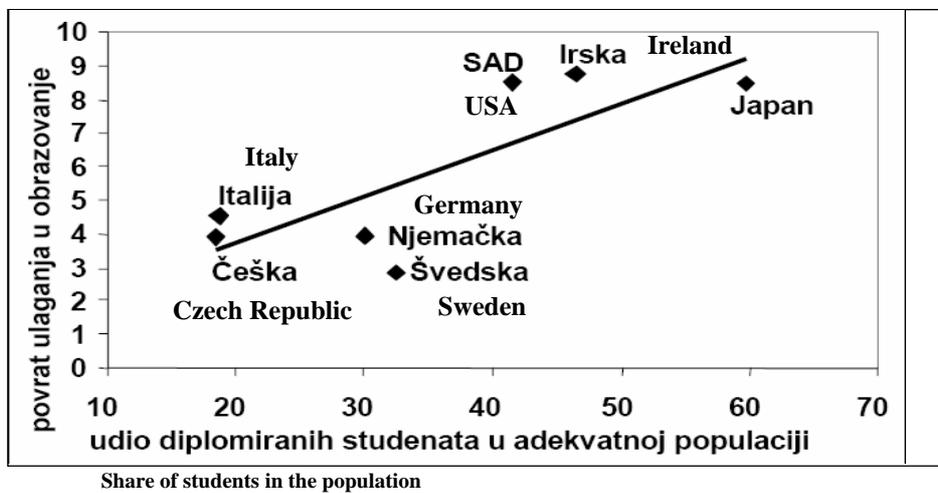
**Figure 2:** Share of students within the age-appropriate population (%)



Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Sweden, USA, Average, Croatia

Source: OECD Report. (2001). <http://www.ijf.hr/konkurentnost/sosic.pdf> (December 12, 2007)

**Figure 3:** Return rate of investment into an additional year of schooling and the share of students



**Return  
 on investment  
 into education**

Source: Denny, K. J., Harmon, C. P., Lydon, R. (2001). *Cross Country Evidence on the Returns to Education: Patterns and Explanations*. Warwick, University of Warwick and OECD. (2001). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2001 Edition*, Paris.

Education has to be carefully and strategically planned and adjusted to the needs of the economy and the market. When it comes to tourism, it has been shown by research of satisfaction of tourists with the services in Croatia that investments into education, new knowledge and skills have been neglected compared with those into tourist facilities. Each country whose income from tourism makes up more than 10% of GDP should point a part of that income to education, that is invest into human capital.

Dissatisfied and potentially quality personnel are leaving Croatia searching for the better working, living, and studying conditions. Director of the Croatian Tourist Association (HTZ), Niko Bulić says that, if Croatia will be hosting 11 million tourists by 2010 and making €6 billion from tourism, all forces must be directed towards making people able to give quality service to such a number of visitors and satisfy international quality standards.<sup>15</sup> Investment into accommodation quality and a bigger number of facilities with 4 or 5 stars is in ever more greater discrepancy with the level of education of the service staff which is supposed to work there.

### **EDUCATION CONTENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF EDUCATION IN CROATIA**

In all analysis of economic development of Croatia, education is emphasised as a key factor. Ten years ago, the share of uneducated people (persons older than 15 which do not have any other education beyond primary school) in the adult population was 55%, which is rather unfavourable for European standards. According to the most recent information about the education structure of active population in Croatia (2001), the share of uneducated persons has fallen to 37.5%, which shows considerable improvement of the education structure of the population. Nevertheless, that improvement did not help Croatia in moving from the bottom of the education of EU member countries and advanced transition countries. With that, 14% of the population did not even finish the primary school.

The development strategy of Croatia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>16</sup> has announced coordination and increase of the share of highly educated population. The basic and obligatory education is structurally and content-wise incompatible with the same education in developed European countries. Adult education, which in the world is the most dynamic sector of lifelong education, is the most neglected part of the education system in Croatia.

In its Yearly Report for 2006, the National Competitiveness Council<sup>17</sup> emphasised education, technology and innovations (foundation – knowledge) as priorities for Croatia on the way towards 40 of the most competitive countries:

---

<sup>15</sup> Accents from the expert meeting of HTZ and tourism workers in Zadar. (2004.). April.  
<http://arhiv.slobodnadalmacija.hr/20040427/ekonomija01.asp> (December 12, 2007)

<sup>16</sup> Republic of Croatia development strategy – Croatia in the 21. century  
[www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/bela\\_knjiga-toc-cro-hrv-t02.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/bela_knjiga-toc-cro-hrv-t02.pdf) (December 20, 2007)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.konkurentnost.hr/jesteliznali.asp> (20.12.09)

1. Accelerate the technological structure changes of the economy on the basis of local business, a considerably bigger attracting of export-oriented foreign investments and public programmes which encourage educational and technological modernisation. In that regard, it is extremely important to use the entry into the EU and the accession and structural funds for strengthening primary factors of competitiveness.
2. Modernisation of universities has to grow from a narrow sector problem into a wider problem of scientific, technological, economic and business interest. One of the more important national goals has to be the raising of the quality of Croatian universities. In new conditions, universities have to become not only the sources of spreading knowledge through their traditional role of education places, but also places of generating new research as well as using and commercialising knowledge.
3. Constant trade development should be the concern not only of public institutions, but all companies which have a long-term business strategy. In that sense, it is necessary in a radically new way to think which programmes of public-private partnership would be the best for Croatia with which the company investment into trade development would be encouraged.
4. Expand the focus from the support of the new technologically-based companies to co-financing innovation projects of existing companies.
5. Think about how to use EU funds for promotion of local innovation activity, expansion and diffusion of quality programme and for innovation strategies on the regional level.<sup>18</sup>

In developed societies, the human capital is the main development resource, and its quality is determined by education and upbringing. Education and upbringing should contribute to the sustainable national and individual development. Because of that, in developed countries education is considered a national priority as well as upbringing development strategies which contribute the most to the economic, social and cultural development of society and a personal development of its members are applied (Figure 4, Figure 5).

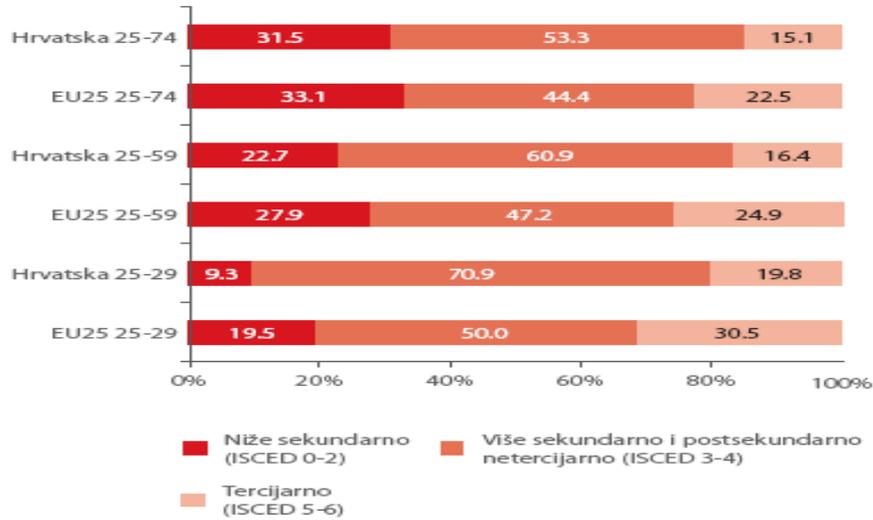
The 2008 National Competitiveness Council Yearly Report<sup>19</sup> recommends, among other, harmonizing the professional training and education with the market demands and needs, as well as development of the lifelong learning strategy for all segments of Croatian population.

---

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-godisnje\\_izvjesce\\_o\\_konkurentnosti\\_2006.pdf](http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-godisnje_izvjesce_o_konkurentnosti_2006.pdf), (September 28, 2008)

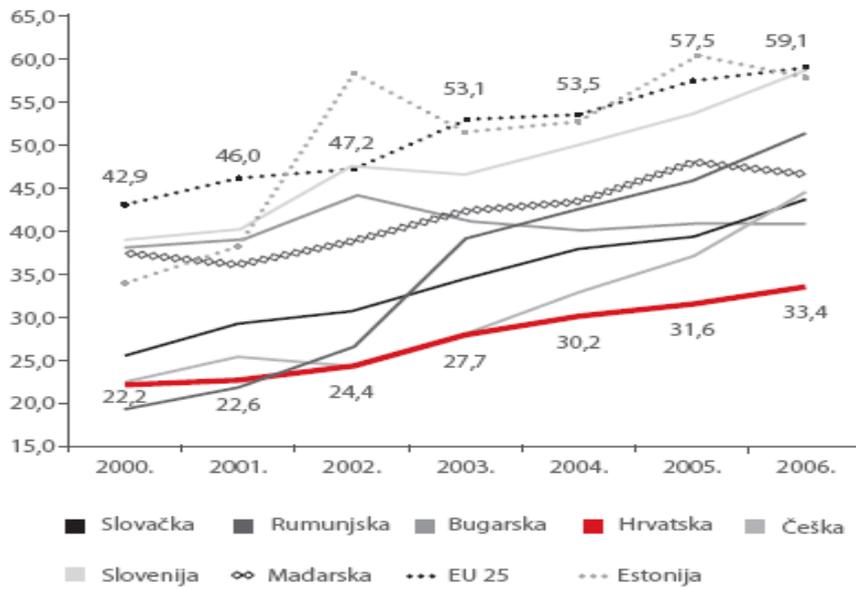
<sup>19</sup> <http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/godisnje-izvjesce-o-konkurentnosti-08.pdf> (December, 29, 2009).  
ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education (Level 0 - Pre-primary education, Level 1 - Primary education or first stage of basic education, Level 2 - Lower secondary or second stage of basic education, Level 3 - (Upper) secondary education, Level 4 - Post-secondary non-tertiary education, Level 5 - First stage of tertiary education, Level 6 - Second stage of tertiary education)

**Figure 4:** Educational structure of workforce in 2007 (%)



Source: <http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/godisnje-izvjesce-o-konkurentnosti-08.pdf>  
 (December 28, 2009)

**Figure 5:** Number of graduated students (ISCED 5-6) per 1000 citizens of age 20-29



Source: <http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/godisnje-izvjesce-o-konkurentnosti-08.pdf>  
 (December 28, 2009)

## STRATEGIES AND GOALS OF EDUCATION IN CROATIA

Modern strategies of educational development are based on the concept of lifelong learning and the concept of a learning society. Those concepts have been developed during the 1970s and 1980s by international organisations OECD, UNESCO, ILO, European Council and European Commission, thinking about international development and the role of education in it, and recommended them to their members as the foundation for national education policy.<sup>20</sup>

One of the strategic goals of the government is the development of Croatia as the society based on knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Investment in education and science is considered a highly productive state expenditure since it directly contributes to the economic growth of the country.

In the budget for 2007, the increase of investment in education and science has gone up by 9.3% related to 2006, and since 2003, investment in education and science was increased by 33.7% or HRK 2.6 billion.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, due to the actual financial and economic crisis the public investment in science and education in Croatia are cut down in 2009 for 11%<sup>21</sup>, while nearly all EU Member States (99%) are maintaining or increasing their R&D public investment in 2009. The four exceptions are Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.<sup>22</sup>

Together with the investment in education, it is necessary to develop, improve and promote different forms and channels of communication. Thanks to technological achievements, learning is becoming more and more accessible and simple.

The learning process in school and academic environment is not connected only to individual efforts in acquiring knowledge and skills, but it is founded on the interaction between students and instructors, as well as between students themselves.

Participation in a group educational process for students is an opportunity for informal contacts and fulfilment of different social needs. The social aspect in group education is especially important because communication influences the motivation of students, as well as because the greater feeling of security and satisfaction when students participate in group kinds of instruction and because of acquired knowledge and skills.

With distance education, there is a trend of intensifying of social interactions, so-called we-learning systems with the support of social software, as well as tools for management of personal social networks on the internet.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> *Entrepreneurship and Higher Education*. (2008). OECD.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.nsz.hr/novosti-aktualnosti-aktivnosti.php?NID=417> (December 28, 2009)

<sup>22</sup> European Commission, Research DG. (2009). Impact of the economic crisis on R&D public spending and policy measures. Brussels.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.carnet.hr/referalni/obrazovni/mkod/naslovnica/zastokom?CARNetweb=> (December 20, 2007)

Therefore, it can be concluded that the connecting string (or network) of all listed elements and strategies of quality management, from attraction management, human resource, space and perception (image) management to learning, is quality communication.

### **CLASSICAL VERSUS E-LEARNING**

Classical, formal, and institutional forms of education which, even though they try to modernise their programmes and education and study models, in the environments in which they are not successful, lose their step with the technological development and unforeseen possibilities offered by the “network of all networks,” internet.

Without computers, nothing can be imagined anymore, from learning to business. Internet has a strong influence on educational models and the improvement of educational process; it facilitates and accelerates communication and discovering of necessary information.

E-learning is a new model of learning and education which enables the selection of any educational institution or course from around the world without leaving one’s own desk and computer.

One of the most famous Ivy League American universities, Cornell, enables the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge from the areas of tourism management, and it offers online classes<sup>24</sup> with the possibility of entering programmes and taking exams at any time, when convenient for the e-student.

University of Zagreb has adopted the e-learning strategy<sup>25</sup> in May, 2007, with which it defines e-learning as a component and integral part of the university education process, and with it, the university intends to realise the following goals:

- improve the university education quality,
- enable instructors and students to take new roles in the education process,
- increase the competitiveness of the university and university study programmes,
- enable students the use of lifelong learning technologies.

The goals of European eLearning programme<sup>26</sup> are the use of information technology for improvement of quality of educational programmes and pointing Europe towards the knowledge society. Using the eLearning programme is a step towards the vision of future in which the technology serves for lifelong education. Promotion of electronic literacy, European virtual universities, e-Twinning schools<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ecornell.com/> (December 22, 2007)

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/eucenje\\_strategija/Sveuciliste\\_u\\_Zagrebu\\_Strategija\\_e\\_ucenja\\_Senat\\_v1.pdf](http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/eucenje_strategija/Sveuciliste_u_Zagrebu_Strategija_e_ucenja_Senat_v1.pdf) (December 21, 2007)

<sup>26</sup> <http://elearningeuropa.info> (December 27, 2007)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.etwinning.net> (December 27, 2007)

for teacher education and activities pointed at the promotion of eLearning programme throughout Europe.

When it comes to tourism education of higher quality, educational programmes called Welcome to Excellence<sup>28</sup>, for education of tourism workers, managers and everybody interested to learn more about tourism and tourism services, have become a huge success in Great Britain. Several hundred thousand students, a wide palette of different societies and organisations, from small caterers to large national chains and organisations, such as Hotel de Vere and National Trust<sup>29</sup> have participated in the programmes from their establishment in 1993. Programmes include the following:

- Welcome Host and Welcome Host Plus – for the basics of accommodation of visitors,
- Welcome International – for raising the confidence of persons who are in contact with foreign visitors,
- Welcome All – intended for provision of services of advising and leading of persons with a disability and special needs,
- Welcome Management – for helping managers and leaders (supervisors) who define standards of help for clients in their activities and are responsible for leading the team (personnel) at the “front line” (reception, etc.),
- Welcome Line – for improvement of help for clients and sales over the internet,
- Welcome E-business/Smarter Marketing – how to profit the most through the internet,
- Green Advantage – help for students to understand the environment and the principles of sustainable tourism development.

On top of that, there is a whole number of courses for specific needs of individual sectors. That is why there are Welcome Host for transportation, Welcome Walkers and Cyclists for pedestrians and cyclists, Welcome Farmer (for agrarians), Welcome Host for sports and leisure time and Marketing for Smaller Business.

Generally speaking, Welcome to Excellence courses are designed equally for new personnel as well as experts in the hotel management and catering sectors, attraction management, leisure and recreation centres, travelling and transportation, and tourist information centres. Participation at courses enables employees to maximise user service, achieve all expectations and needs of guests, create an ambiance of a high standard of hospitality, pleasantness and warm welcome, and to concentrate on self-development.

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk/welcometoexcellence/press/northernireland.htm> (December 28, 2007)

<sup>29</sup> Peter Lane, president of *National Best Value Tourism Group*, Great Britain, (March 2, 2006) [www.rete.toscana.it/sett/turismo/euromeeting\\_2003/peter\\_lane\\_ita.pdf](http://www.rete.toscana.it/sett/turismo/euromeeting_2003/peter_lane_ita.pdf)

The benefits of educational programmes can be measured by the return rate of guests to the destination, recommendations, and improvement of the personnel recruitment system and their retention.

Another example from Great Britain is Redcar, a small town on the northeast of England. The quality of tourist product, the level of provided service and industrial development efforts have caused great concern when in that place by the sea, which was advanced in the past, the role of a tourist Mecca was jeopardised by competition and chemical, iron and steel industry growth. The dramatic contradiction (conflict between tourism and heavy industry) at the end of 80s and 90s has caused the new valorisation of the economy of that space and brought about the realisation that tourism is still functioning, even in unfavourable conditions. Therefore, it was decided that the necessary activities be performed in order to improve the quality of urban tissue and form the tourism product. Nevertheless, not a lot of attention was given to the way of presenting the town to the outside world. The quality of available accommodation capacities was not satisfactory or sufficient, and not one facility was included in the National Outlines of financing. At the same time, tourist and other services related to tourism were mediocre.

Using the financial institution resources, such as National Initiative of financing, educational programmes and incentives were created, after which almost all accommodation facilities met the necessary conditions for inclusion into the national registration framework. The personnel of institutions related to tourism have attended the courses from the Welcome programme, as well as specific activities such as commercial development, marketing and e-business possibilities.

European project for professional education Leonardo da Vinci supports the efforts aimed at fulfilment of challenges set in Lisbon<sup>30</sup> that Europe become an economy based on knowledge by 2010 through efforts for fulfilment of needs of people in all educational structures, developing possibilities for their mobility, supporting innovation and quality education development in tourism, especially developing the packages of e-learning for destinations<sup>31</sup>. The project partners come from Italy, Greece, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Belgium, Spain and Great Britain. The first task of the project is selecting comparative information on tourist destinations in each of the partner countries.

Leonardo da Vinci HOT<sup>32</sup> project, the European programme of professional education is financed for the biggest part (75%) from the partner projects aimed at supporting national education strategies, encouragement of cooperation between

---

<sup>30</sup> "White paper on education and training: towards the learning society", European Commission programme created as a response to bigger and bigger needs for new knowledge, aimed at lowering the unemployment through constant studying and improvement, a key to strengthening the competitiveness of European businessmen,

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/doc/official/keydoc/lb-en.pdf> (February 10, 2006)

<sup>31</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/valorisation/doc/case.pdf>;

<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/> (February 25, 2006)

<sup>32</sup> HOT. (2006). *Hospitality and Tourism - A Training Framework*. February 25.

[http://www.hcima.org.uk/content/education/documents/education\\_leonardo\\_projectwork.html](http://www.hcima.org.uk/content/education/documents/education_leonardo_projectwork.html);

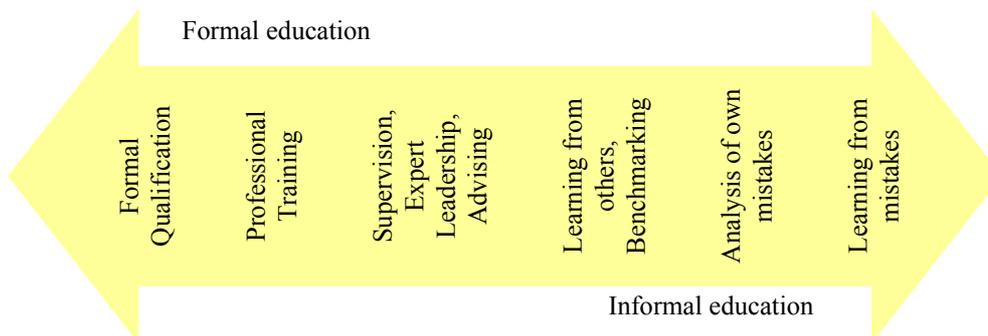
<http://www.hotframework.org/?sid=9712084c46c2cee744b13feeb09f0eee>

organisations throughout Europe, included in professional education, and the goals are raising the level of education quality, new knowledge, workforce mobility, innovation stimulation and strengthening the competition of European tourism industry. There are two main goals of HOT projects:

- to establish the framework for benchmarking of instructors of hotel management and catering
- to create and coordinate the European syllabus for hotel management and catering students.

Analogue to the ability and a wide range of possibilities of educating a man, an individual, a person, so a society or a group of people, people in an organisation, can develop their abilities, expand possibilities, in short advance by learning. One man's potential is realised through learning, new understanding and acquiring of skills. Learning society, observed as a group of units learning is a key for improvement, better results, individual and collective. In the partnership synergy of public and private sector, based on a common vision, consensus and knowledge, as well as learning, it is possible to achieve what is proclaimed from political podiums as knowledge society. Learning continuity (continuous, lifelong learning) is shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6:** Learning continuity



Source: Sugar, V. as per. (2006). Innovation in tourism: How to create a tourism learning area. Enterprise and Industry DG Tourism Unit, Brussels.

Tourist destination, as a learning organisation, includes the partnership of the public and private sector, not only within the destination, perceived as an area/region with certain attributes, tourism infrastructure, attraction basis and other offer in that context, but also outside of its borders. EU encourages and promotes public-private partnership as a form of cooperation between the public administration and the economy, aimed primarily at large infrastructure projects, as well as providing public services. Newer research shows that in other areas, such as education and lifelong learning, the possibilities of cooperation between the public and the private sector have been opened.

## CONCLUSION

Modern global strategies of educational development are based on the concepts of lifelong learning and a learning society. One of the strategic goals of Croatia is its development as a knowledge-based society. Investment in education and science is considered highly productive state expenditure because it directly contributes to the economic growth of the country. Nevertheless, indicators of educational structure in Croatia still do not produce real results of such a strategy.

When it comes to tourism and productivity, tourist destination can maintain its competitiveness by profitable investments and capital value growth of own resources and attractions, and destination capital value is directly connected to the way of management, maintenance and improvement of own resources and tourist attractions, and with capacity growth, planned and agreed upon through partnership.

Human resource productivity is tightly related to technological efficiency and service provision. Improvement of destination productivity and way of management of tourism resources encourages new investments, equally into technology and human capital, which requires the cooperation of the public and the private sector. European experiences and examples listed here can be a direction, a benchmark for strategic thinking and acting in the area of tourism quality and human capital management.

## REFERENCES

- Bahtijarevic – Siber, F. (1998). Meaning and specificities of the function of human potential management in modern companies. *Racunovodstvo i financije*, no. 3, pp. 76-81.
- Denny, K. J., Harmon, C. P., Lydon, R. (2001). *Cross Country Evidence on the Returns to Education: Patterns and Explanations*. Warwick, University of Warwick and OECD, *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2001 Edition*, Paris.
- E-learning strategy.(2007).[http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/eucenje\\_strategija/Sveuciliste\\_u\\_Zagrebu\\_Strategija\\_e\\_ucenja\\_Senat\\_v1.pdf](http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/rektorat/dokumenti/eucenje_strategija/Sveuciliste_u_Zagrebu_Strategija_e_ucenja_Senat_v1.pdf) (December 21, 2007)
- European Commission, Research DG. (2009). Impact of the economic crisis on R&D public spending and policy measures.Brussels.
- Faite Ireland. (2005). *A Human Resource Development Strategy for Irish Tourism Competing through People, 2005 – 2012*, Dublin, p. 8.
- Guest, D. E. (1990). Human Resource Management and the American Dream. *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 377-397.
- Günther Verheugen. (2005). A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger Partnership for European Tourism. 4th European Tourism Forum, Malta, <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction..>, (January 28, 2006)
- Inovation in tourism; How to create a tourism learning area*, Enterprise and Industry DG Tourism Unit, Brussels, 2006.
- Lane, P.. (2006). *National Best Value Tourism Group*, President, Great Britain (February 3), [www.rete.toscana.it/sett/turismo/euromeeting\\_2003/peter\\_lane\\_ita.pdf](http://www.rete.toscana.it/sett/turismo/euromeeting_2003/peter_lane_ita.pdf)
- Manual for intellectual capital management. (2001).
- Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta RH. (2008). Akcijski plan za poticanje ulaganja u znanost i istrazivanje. Zagreb.
- OECD Report. (2001). <http://www.ijf.hr/konkurentnost/sosic.pdf> (December 12, 2007)
- Republic of Croatia development strategy – Croatia in the 21st century, Republic of Croatia 2007 budget. <http://www.croatia.hr/English/Default.aspx> (January 12, 2007)  
<http://www.mfin.hr/download.php?id=1041> (December 20, 2006),
- Sugar, V. (2006). *Innovation in tourism; How to create a tourism learning area*. Enterprise and Industry DG Tourism Unit, Brussels.

Taylor, D., Walley, E. E. (2002). Hijacking the Holy Grail? Emerging HR Practices in Croatia. *European Business Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 294-303.

Yearly report on competitiveness. (2006). [http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-GODISNJE\\_I\\_ZVJESCE\\_O\\_KONKURENTNOSTI\\_2006.pdf](http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-GODISNJE_I_ZVJESCE_O_KONKURENTNOSTI_2006.pdf) (September 28, 2008)

<http://www.croatia.hr/English/Default.aspx> (December 1, 2007)

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info> (December 27, 2007)

<http://www.etwinning.net> (December 27, 2007)

<http://www.ijf.hr/konkurentnost/sosic.pdf> (December 12, 2007)

<http://www.konkurentnost.hr/jesteliznali.asp> (20.12.09)

[http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-godisnje\\_izvjesce\\_o\\_konkurentnosti\\_2006.pdf](http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/Sazetak-godisnje_izvjesce_o_konkurentnosti_2006.pdf)  
(September 28, 2008)

<http://www.konkurentnost.hr/dokumenti/godisnje-izvjesce-o-konkurentnosti-08.pdf> (December, 29, 2009)

<http://www.nsz.hr/novosti-aktualnosti-aktivnosti.php?NID=417> (December 28, 2009)

[http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/portal/?lang=en\\_GL&nav\\_cat=128](http://www.visiteurope.com/ccm/portal/?lang=en_GL&nav_cat=128) (January 12, 2007)

<http://www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk/welcometoexcellence/press/northernireland.htm>  
(December 28, 2007)