

VILLAGE REVITALIZATION THROUGH ECO KATUNS

Dragica Mijanović¹, Mileva Brajušković Popović¹, Branka Manojlović¹

¹ Faculty of Philosophy Nisic, Department of Geography, Montenegro

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 20th century was marked by a decline in population in rural areas of Montenegro. The number of rural population decrease from 79% in 1948, to 35.8% in 2011 at the national level, with significant regional differences. Therefore, rural areas are exposed to depopulation and senilization, with the threat of being left without permanent residents. Over the last twenty years, Montenegro has established itself as a tourist destination, and the development of the economy has largely been based on tourism development. Such conditions have created an opportunity for the revitalization of rural settlements and the reactivation of their natural and anthropogenic potentials through establishing of eco- and ethno-katuns, whose operation provides livelihoods to the indigenous population in rural areas. The development of rural tourism through the construction of eco and ethno-katuns is a way to reduce the pressure on the coastal region, but also to revive Montenegrin villages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regions	1948		1953		2011	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Coastal	50530	72,4	58694	50,7	62736	41,9
Central	91615	71,1	70901	29,6	59639	20,3
Northern	68503	88,6	56358	67,3	27565	48,3
North-eastern	87416	86,3	106296	73,2	73394	59,1
Montenegro	298064	79	292249	50	223534	35,8

Table 1. Rural population of Montenegro by regions in the period 1948-2011
Source: Monstat Stanovništvo – uporedni pregled broja stanovnika 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 i 2003, podaci po naseljima, knj. 9, Podgorica, Popis stanovništva 2011.

Examining at data from Chart 1, we can see that the number of tourist arrivals in mountainous areas had been increasing in the period 2001-2017, from 19,185 to 84,509. These data give us an insight into the growing interest of tourists in eco- and ethno-tourism, therefore showing the need to revitalize rural areas. Data on tourist arrivals by type of accommodation in 2018 reveal that out of all guest arrivals, only 0.09% of tourists stayed in accommodation capacities of eco lodges and ethno-villages. This clearly demonstrates that attention to the construction of tourism infrastructure and suprastructure must be paid, as well as to invest in the promotion of eco- and ethno-tourism.

Year	Montenegro	Capital	Coastal sites	Mountainous sites	Other tourist sites	Other locations
2001	555040	22211	488008	18628	25763	430
2018	2 204 856	169 890	1 873 764	97 808	59 902	3 492

Guest arrivals by types of tourist sites in Montenegro
Data source: Monstat Statistical data book 2006, 2019.

Between 2001 and 2018, the number of tourists increased by 1,649,816, i.e. by 397.2%. Over the same time period, the number of overnight stays increased from 4,011,413 in 2001 to 12,930,334 in 2018, or 322.3%. The largest number of tourists stayed in coastal towns - 87.9% in 2001, and 85% in 2018. Number of tourists who visited Montenegro during the summer tourist season of 2018. is 76.3% of all arrivals and 80.8% of all overnight stays in our country, happened during June, July, August and September of the same year.

Mountainous sites accounted for 18,628 arrivals or 3.35% of all tourist traffic of the country at the beginning of the analysed period, and for 97,808 or 4.4% at the end. In the period 2001-2018, the number of visitors increased by 525%.

There is an increasing number of eco-katuns throughout our country each year. Eco-katuns "Montenegro", "Vranjak", "Golež", "Grebaje", "Komovi", "Ječmen Do", "Kolijevka", "Dević" and others are trying to attract as many tourists as possible and become competitive in the tourist market of Montenegro and the region with their diverse offers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data used were provided by the Statistical Office of Montenegro (Monstat) - data from the censuses and statistical yearbooks (2001-2018). Logical methods were used in the paper - induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis, statistical and mathematical methods, comparative methods and geographical method - which represents a synthesis of mentioned methods through comparison, systematization, generalization, mapping and separation of territorial units.

According to the 1948 census, 79% of Montenegrin population lived in the countryside, compared to 35.8% in 2011. Rural population decline has been present in other regions as well, from 71% to 20.3% in the central, from 88.6% to 48.3% in the northern, and from 86.3% to 59.1% in the north-eastern.

In the revitalization of rural areas, tourism is emerging as a significant development factor.

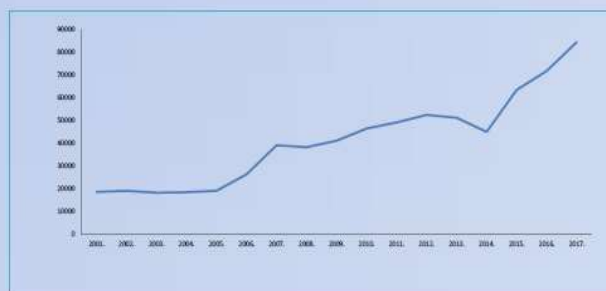


Chart 1. Tourist arrivals in mountainous areas in the period 2001- 2017. Data source: Monstat, Statistički godišnjaci (2001-2018)

Building eco-katuns is an economic alternative for rural residents who want to stay in the countryside. This way, agricultural and organic food production, revival of old crafts, promotion of local customs, gastronomy and culture can successfully connect with tourism. By preserving nature and local identity, the opportunity to make a living and stay in the countryside is being given to the young population of rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Changes in tourists' needs have led to increased interest in eco- and ethno-tourism, where it is being strived to restore the connection with nature, to learn about local culture and traditions, and to experience something specific. Such an experience can only be achieved in places that have preserved their natural and cultural (material and immaterial) heritage. Considering the extraordinary natural beauty and rich tradition of Montenegro, an opportunity is being created for the revitalization of rural settlements and the reactivation of their natural and anthropogenic potentials by establishing eco- and ethno-katuns, whose business provides the local population with livelihood in rural areas and prevents further outflow of the population. The development of this form of tourism is supported by the ecological commitment of our country, the growing demand for specific types of tourism and the increasing financial sustenance for the development of rural areas.