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THE HUMAN LIBRARY INITIATIVE AS AN EXPERIENCE-BASED TOURISM PRODUCT

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Make the world talk and it is only the beginning of journey!

Abstract

The desire to get to know new cultures and their way of living has always inspired people to travel. Human library initiative provides precisely that - an opportunity to get to know different people from first-hand. It is a one of a kind of library where instead of borrowing books, one “rents” people who tell their stories. This initiative is easily applicable in tourism: both in promotion of destinations and as experience-based products, which are increasing in demand. The goal of this paper is to introduce human library as a new experience based tourism amenity that will disclose interesting stories about the destination and its residents in different languages. The development of the initiative for tourism purposes and the comparison of living books and other in-destination information provision services are provided.

Key words: human library, living books, experience tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

In the phase of soft tourism people are seeking a more close relationship with the destination they visit and communities they meet. The human library in tourism would provide on demand the interaction already going on between tourists and residents and make it more thematic focused according to the particular interests of guests. Although it lacks the spontaneity of occasional encounters with locals, it however represents an innovative way of discovering local community's lifestyle.

The role of living books in tourism can be dual: in-destination they can act as local community's lifestyle guides (experience tourism products) while outside the destination they can act as promoters / tourism ambassadors. This paper will deal further with their product function.

A peer to peer initiative worth mentioning that also provides interest based (i.e. gastronomy) interaction of locals and tourists is <http://bookalokal.com/>. This website allows tourists to book a meal from locals that is consumed with hosts in their homes. However here, the primary object of exchange is a typical local meal in a specific context.

This paper is composed of six parts. The theoretical review disclosed the human library initiative in detail - its history, the origin of the idea and current practices. It further deals with experience tourism and the importance of community involvement. A framework of application of the concept adapted to tourism is given in part three. A comparison of this and similar, already existing information provision services are developed in part four, followed by the implications and conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1. The human library initiative

The Human Library is a non-profit international equalities movement that challenges prejudice and discrimination through social contact. It uses the language and mechanism of a library to make respectful conversations that can positively change people's attitudes, thought, perceptions and behaviours towards people who are different.

The concept of human library is simple, instead of checking out and judging a book by its cover, you "borrow" a person who has stories to tell gathered from a unique life experience. You can sit down for free with someone whom has incredible stories to share, they're able to answer your questions and tailor the storytelling experience to you.

In practice, the Human Library, explaining the diversity and positive difference, raises awareness and takes positive action to address some of the issues that can lead to bullying, abuse and hate crime.

The aim of the ‘human books’ is to be lent out to curious readers who will ask them questions to challenge our stereotypes and prejudices in a positive framework, where difficult questions are accepted, expected and appreciated. Books typically have titles that aim to represent a stigmatized or stereotyped group of people in the community. This could be a religious minority or sexual minority or other members of the community who are exposed to general misconceptions, stigma, stereotyping and or prejudice. The goal is to learn more about each other, to explore and move beyond stereotypes, and to develop a greater understanding of each other’s unique story.

2.1.1. The history of Human Library

In 1993, Copenhagen, five youngsters decide to found non-governmental movement called Stop the Violence to raise awareness and education to mobile Danish youngsters against violence after their mutual friend was brutally attacked and stabbed in the nightlife and survived. Few years later the organization counted 30.000 members all over the country. In 2000, Leif Skov director of Stop the Violence festival encouraged and organized events for Roskilde Festival to put focus on anti-violence (Humanlibrary.org, 2000). That is how Human Library was born and began to encourage dialogue and build relations among the festival visitors.

Human Library has always been a non-profit movement as they provide services that are free to their public. Organizing it is not very expensive and budget depending with the only resources needed being time and willingness to do the tasks; this allows for a wide range of events in different countries staged with very little funding. It is also preferable to organize the libraries in crowded areas like supermarkets, stations or even in the street. Readers and books are engaged in one-on-one conversations that last for about 30 minutes.

While some libraries are ditching their books in favour of laptops, e-readers, and mp3 players, there’s one library that believes stories are much better shared when they come from the source. People get a special feeling in the air when they realize that a policeman is sitting and speaking with a graffiti writer or a football fan is in deep chat with a feminist. Helena Warburg (2012) head of the Science Library at Williams, participated as a book titled, “Child of Holocaust Survivors.” Warburg reported that she wanted to participate because as a librarian she loved the message she would get from a book and the opportunity to be a human book instead of a written book was intriguing for her. To be able to share something personal about her was extremely intense and exciting. Warburg was surprised to learn the extent to which stereotypes persist. She added that each reader was varied and not once did someone ask the same question.

Today Human Library is developed and currently active in more than 60 countries and is still growing. The Human Library is associated with a lot of positive experience. In Australia, first country with a permanent Human Library,

it won the award for the social project of the year and award for the Grand Marketing Event of the Year. In Denmark, a Human Library bus tour was given The Little Brother Award. The Council of Europe became the biggest supporter of the development and promotion of Human Library programs and has become a crucial partner in the developing of a global promotion.

2.2. Experience economy and local community

Global tourist trends impose new perceptions of tourism and the emergence of "new" tourists. People who get involved in tourist trends are today becoming increasingly experienced. They are expressing an increased number of needs, not only within the destination, but also during their journey to the destination. Attractive destination elements must be complemented by additional activities and the destination excellence measured by expectations and experiences, i.e. realised experience. It is this very diversification of needs and motives for which people choose visits to and stays in a particular tourist destination which leads to a qualitative shift from the standard tourist offer. The accent, therefore, is on tourist product quality, by which a qualitative differential factor in competitive tourist destination positioning is achieved.

A modern tourist product, which is adjusted to the needs of new tourists no longer, includes a tourist partnership role, but individualisation and personalisation of the experience itself. Should such a base be accepted, it is to be concluded that traditional positioning of destination tourist offers on both macro and micro levels is no longer sufficient, i.e. positioning based on comparative advantages. By traditional positioning, it is not possible to differentiate the tourist offer from the competitors' tourist offer, which ultimately implies a request for competitive tourist offer positioning, enriched by new requirements and needs. Such an approach negates the conventional attitude that the existence and availability of comparative advantages is, in itself, sufficient in order to generate tourist demand and creation of competitive experience economy.

If tourism is interpreted as a social phenomenon, it is necessary to consider it not only at economic sciences level, but that consideration needs to be extended also to history, political sciences, sociology, geography and cultural anthropology (Cohen, 1995). Such a wider perception implies a lack of a one-sided perception of tourism where, as an observation base, the category of growth and not of development is taken. From that aspect, the space which represents a tourist base should not, at any time, have an exclusively tourist purpose, although it is the bearer of the tourist function. Therefore, no method of evaluation which is used to assess spaces with dominant tourist function is applicable, but rather the method of equilibrium between protection and tourist demand, which later also facilitates tourist offer market differentiation and positioning.

Taking into account the main, dominant motive for travel as a need to acquire an unrepeatabeable, unique, experience in parallel with increase in travel, we

come across an expansion of an increased number of tourist products based on the experience economy. Following socio-economic trends, i.e. interpreting recorded changes in the form of a demographic societal picture, a better education and a higher standard of living, a change in the structure of demand for products and services also can be noticed. A transition from service economy to experience economy occurs and increasingly the purchase of objects and services is exchanged for the purchase of experiences. Such purchases represent specific exchange of values for money, which is characteristic for traditional understanding of the experience economy. The development of tourist products established on experience as the key exchange value requires an interdisciplinary approach, which, together with the applied marketing activities and competitive positioning through identity affirmation, leads to the tourist offer positioning from the point of view of the experience economy.

The development of tourist products based on experience as the key exchange value requires an interdisciplinary approach. By means of further analysis, distinction imposes between perception of experience as a separate product and the aggregate set of experience economy. The absence of experience economy factors in the creation of a modern tourist product achieves extremely negative results. Historically speaking, the category of national economy competitiveness has suppressed the once dominant category of comparative advantage. The same situation can be noticed in observation of tourism, where added value progressively increases when competitiveness is based on experience economy.

De-regularised tourist offer growth irreversibly decreases the exchange value of the resource base and, accordingly, also the income from tourism. Setting out tourist offer concepts on the principles of experience economy represents also a regulatory phenomenon, which not only protects the resource base, but also, by means of the decrease in negative external factors, affects the quality of life of the domestic population. At the global level, the concept of experience economy has still been theoretically insufficiently researched and implemented. The complexity of defining the impacts emanates from the approach, i.e. perception of an individual and the intensity of his/her involvement at all levels. The base for creation of experience economy is the experience as a complex category. The experience and its nature, as well as its impact on a person, i.e. tourist is, therefore, explained first, before any further considerations. The experience which a person, i.e. tourist had in a tourist environment is individual and subjective for each of them. The realisation of an experience and its qualification depend on motivation, perception, value, significance, satisfaction and life style. Experience represents a psychological category, thus being the subject of psychological studies. Comprehension of experience is linked to the explanation of perception.

It is possible to link experience as a psychological process to the process of perception of stimuli. Perception is, therefore, an active process of organising, integrating and interpreting of sensorial information, which facilitates

familiarisation with and recognition of the meanings of objects, phenomena and occurrences in the environment. Persons do not have clear senses, they have precepts – as senses are only elements of which a complete experience is made up of (lat. *percipere* = adopt). Perception is not only a sum of elements, it is also the structure of those elements, active processing of all received and already existing information, their interpretation based on previous knowledge, memory, expectations, attitudes, motives, emotions and personal characteristics (Petz, 2010).

A tourist product within the tourist system represents a complex concept, which includes services, people, organisations and ideas with the aim to realise travel, stays and tourist activity outside of their familiar surroundings (Smith, 1994). Tourist product consumption affects experience realisation. Experience, therefore, depends on the type of tourist product.

Tourism and expenditure during the course of tourist activity, perceives tourism as a form of expenditure. Tourism can, therefore, be observed as a specific form of expenditure in which a change in the structure of expenditure occurs (Laws, 1995). During the course of tourist activity, perception of authenticity, i.e. the authenticity of content (of purchased products and services) affects expenditure. Tourists, therefore, expect authenticity in the destination (MacCannell, 1992) as opposed to pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1964). The search for authenticity in a tourist destination can also have negative impacts and bring pressure on sustainability and local community life. Tourist expenditure pertinent to authenticity is, therefore, observed in relation to modern and post-modern perspective. In modern perspective, tourists are always in search of authenticity which is perceived through authenticity of the presented content, while tourists in the phase of post-modern perspective are directed to activities, entertainment and enjoyment and do not care about the content authenticity (MacCannell, 1976., Urry, 1990., Cohen, 1995). Consequently, it can be presumed that tourists consume tourist products in relation to previous knowledge, experiences and expectations which, later, in a tourist destination, leads to expenditure driven by emotions and expenditure in the heat of the moment, looking for experiences and entertainment (MacCannell, 1976., Urry, 1990., Cohen, 1995).

Tourists expect a temporary escape from their everyday lives through something unrepeatable, spectacular and unique. It can be concluded that activities for the channelling of tourist expenditure structure within a tourist destination should be directed towards tourist expectations and realisation of their desired experiences.

Experience economy represents creation of a new value (economic and social), where experience is an integral part and starting point of a product or service and not only their expansion or added benefit. Systematic impacts of the elements of offer, therefore, must enable creation of memory, which then becomes experience, i.e., in fact, becomes a product or a service. Such perceptions emanate from research on the behaviour of consumers themselves or

service and product users. Initial papers define purchase for the purposes of a meaningful and realistic observation and thinking process (Holbrook, O'Shaughnessy, Bell, 1990). With the emergence of the criticism that cognitive models insufficiently define and explain behaviour, however, (Hoch, 1991; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) a change in the study starting point occurs. The emphasis is put on the experience and expenditure. Even Levy (1959) states that people do not purchase a specific product because of what it is intended for, but because of what they think it is, i.e., what it represents for them. Thus Holbrook and Hirschman, in 1982, define that products have two fundamental functions and that their indivisible wholeness is needed. They define usable and hedonistic product functions. Usable functions represent what a product or a service is literally intended for and hedonistic values are those which are described by users as entertaining, fantastic and pleasant for perception. The hedonistic function, therefore, illustrates subjectivity and individualisation of both products and services. Dhar and Wertenbroch in 2000 prove that, by the usable function in the goods consumption itself, people retain a neutral position in experience consumption, while hedonistic aspects represent a method for improvement in the experiential component of the expenditure itself. Despite the quoted efforts, academic literature determines a lack of a systematic approach in observation of a realised experience (Gentle et al., 2007).

By consumption of a tourist service as opposed to the experience, expectations and realised experience, the importance of the intensity of individual perception of the said experience and functions of use are noticed. In conclusion, the experience economy therefore is not a generic creation of the experience itself, but it is based on the individualisation of the personal experience by a person in his/her social surroundings.

All experiences are individual; some occur more or less within a social construct or are cultural. A common link for all categories is that they are markedly prone to emotional influence and that they affect the realisation of, let us say, a new person, discovery of innovations and research of the unexplored. Kelemen (1974) quotes that, apart from the emotional category, excitement creates a link and desire for progress. The main product in a destination, therefore, is experience. The perception of a destination is a combination of factors, comprising a "collection of experiences gained by the traveller" (Gunn, 1997, p. 32).

Increase in tourist travel, fast and expansive growth of the tourist industry, globalisation conditions and innovativeness confront the tourist industry with product differentiation. New tourist demand requirements condition the level of profits from tourism and even question market cost-effectiveness. In the conditions where competitiveness is extremely important, even crucial, a challenge is set for comprehension and a more detailed definition of the tourist experience, i.e. experience (Perdue, 2002). For a more detailed comprehension of the concept of the experience economy, tourism is exactly the best example of application of the concept. The first applications were implemented at the

beginning of the 70's of the 20th century (MacCannell, 1976, Dann, 1977, and Cohen, 1979). It is, therefore, deemed that tourist experience represents a unique, indivisible entity, pronouncedly filled with the emotional factor, containing almost immeasurable personal value. Tourism facilitates realisation of an alternative experience of time i.e. time spent far away from everyday life, usual routines and familiar, usual surroundings (Wang, 2000:216). Tourists wish for and expect a unique, authentic experience (MacCannell, 1976).

Tourist experiences cannot be purchased; they can merely be channelled or adjusted. Nobody apart from the tourist himself/herself has direct control over the power of perception and motives and, ultimately, their own value scale of the experience which they had. Tourists, therefore, independently combine elements such as time and skills in pre-expenditure set for experience creation (Rustichini and Siconolfi, 2004). When a tourist joins a tourist activity, nobody knows in advance either the result of the realised expectation, or the intensity of the experience. Tourist offers, therefore must be directed to the creation of experiences which satisfy momentary tourist needs. Tourist product components, the tourist product itself and the tourist service must be conceived in the manner that they increase the level of the realised experience. In other words, the value of the experience represents a functional orientation of an individual and his/her elementary social and intellectual needs, with the aim to experience excitement in a destination.

The complexity of the concept of experience economy and its elements requires more detailed determination. Innovation can be defined as a complex process in which organisations transform an idea into a new or improved product, service or a process of advancement, competition or successful differentiation in the market (Baregheh et al., 2009). Joseph Schumpeter (1961) focuses on the role of innovations in economic and social development, explaining innovation as a process of development in which an individual approach is contained. Innovation in tourism is generally characterised by distancing from the usual practice of tourist sector business, with the emphasis on quality (Hjalager, 2010).

When we talk about the tourist market, we think of it as a specific market phenomenon. Tourist market, like any other market, functions on the principle of interaction between offer and demand. As opposed to the traditional markets, this interaction is manifested differently.

The tourist markets' differential criterion is the division of tourist offer from tourist demand. The consumer (tourist) must be physically present at the site of the tourist offer creation. Most often, tourist offer communicates with tourist demand via tourist intermediaries, who, most frequently, appear on the demand side.

Destination, as a part of the tourist system, affects the experience creation. The impact of destination on the realisation of the experience is observed through the perception of tourist offer competitiveness and the phase of stay in the destination. The tourist system is, therefore, simply observed as an

interaction between tourists and the tourist destination. Such a perception is based on the production and expenditure of tourist products and services (Gunn, 1994). Tourists represent an element of tourist demand and tourist destinations, an element of tourist offer. Tourists are connected to the destination by means of traffic accessibility, information accessibility and by marketing mix elements¹. Furthermore, tourists are exposed to the influence of destination promotional activities, price-forming strategies and the development of tourist product in the destination. The interaction between tourists and the tourist destination becomes reciprocal and the interaction intensity and content are determined by the willingness of both sides (Formica and Uysal, 2006).

Tourist expenditure products represent products which are predominantly used by tourists, during their stay in the destination (accommodation, transport, food and tourist activity services). General consumption products are those products which are mostly used by the local population, but which can also be used by tourists (hospital, post office, hairdressing services, and lotteries). A tourist destination attractive base represents the totality of attractions and, as a rule, is the main motive for travel, being an equal factor in realisation of experience in a destination (Uysal, 1991), by which tourist destination competitiveness is affected.

Local communities are a basic element of modern tourism development. They are the focal point for the supply of accommodation, catering, information, transport, facilities and services for tourism development (Godfrey & Clarke, 2000). The term community can have a specific geographic meaning with a clearly defined spatial boundary and area and also refers to groups of people with a common interest (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). According to Bradshaw (2008, p. 6) Community as defined has historically shared boundaries one's geography of residence. For the purpose of this study, community is defined as a group of individuals living or working within the same geographic area with some shared cultures or common interests. This geographical definition of community is essential to understand how community development is linked to the ability of a community to improve tourism development. The role of the local community in influencing the tourism development activities are becoming clearer (Hall et al., 2005). McIntyre, et al. (1993, p. 50) states that local communities must organize themselves at all levels to play a more effective role in development, and interact with government and role-players at all levels. They must be able to identify potential tourism resources and attractions within their communities and support responsible tourism and community development. They should be eager participants in tourism decision making with respect to major tourism development for communities. According to Telfer & Shrpely (2008) there is a wide range of perspectives that can be taken on local communities in the context of tourism development. Local communities may be considered as the main

¹ A set of marketing tools by which an attempt is made to satisfy the target market needs, reach goals and support or empower the tourist product position in the target market. The marketing mix tools are: product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence and process (Križman-Pavlović, 2008).

attractions to community skill and knowledge while for others the community is simply the setting where tourism occurs. And for others still, a community may, in fact, stand in the way of other potential tourism development. Local communities are increasingly being drawn into tourism not only from the demand side, as tourists actively seek out new destinations and communities to experience, but also from the supply side, as communities are becoming aware of the potential of the products they can offer to tourists and the economic gains that can be made (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008, p. 115). Tourism is increasingly seen as a key community tool, with the recognition of its economic contribution in bolstering stagnating economies and its ability to unify local community residents (Fennell, 2003). At community levels, tourism offered opportunities for direct, indirect, and induced employment and income, spurring regional and local economic development (Aref, 2010; Coccossis, 2004).

A tourist destination, i.e. a competitive tourist destination, represents the destination which provides a higher level of realised experience qualification (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

In order for destination marketing and management strategies be fully successful, creative opportunities should be sought to encourage the co-creation of positive, unique, and quality tourist experiences that can attract visitors efficiently (Binkhorst & Dekker, 2009; Jennings & Nickerson, 2006; Mossberg, 2007) and contribute to the competitiveness and sustainability of destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

The sustainable approach for tourism aims to optimize the use of the local resources and harmonize needs of local stakeholders and community, while simultaneously focusing on the high satisfaction of tourists by ensuring a meaningful, authentic experience (Kastenholz, Carneiro, & Marques, 2012). Considering that tourists seek multiple experiences, destinations should articulate their endeavours in facilitating diversified, quality tourist experiences (Lane, 2009; Agapito et al., 2014).

2.3. The importance of foreign languages

Human Library can be used in tourism to promote destinations and provide tailored information to its visitors. Living books can easily convey interesting stories about destination and its residents in different languages. Significant is the role of tour guides and home residents who participate in storytelling to tourists. To make sure that tourists are getting the right message from the story, languages are important to communicate. The limitations in languages of guides are considered as a barrier to communication (Gordon, 2009; Tange, 2009; Kostić-Bobanović, Bobanović, 2013) and we suppose it is going to be the same for telling story as a living book.

For Croatia, tourism is one of the main branches in economy, especially in the coastal regions. The interest for Croatia's tourism is growing. Since 2005, Croatia was declared as one of the top destinations in the world three times, by National Geographic Adventure, Lonely Planet and Travel Leaders. In order to keep this level of interest it's necessary to present what Croatia has to offer through advertisement in different languages. Foreign languages are used in promotions, invitations and service providing. Nonetheless, foreign languages are important in making a first-impression with tourists (Hanlan, Kelly 2005; Jansen-Verbeke et al. 2005; Kostić-Bobanović, Gržinić, 2011.) As a result of a good first impression, international tourists and visitors will probably come back again visiting the country where they felt comfortable and secure. (Kostić-Bobanović, Bobanović, 2013). The knowledge of foreign languages has evidently the key role in the development of tourism which has a multiple role and is viewed as economic, social and cultural activity (Huges, Allen, 2005; Kostić-Bobanović, Bobanović, 2013). According to Vuković (2006) it is indisputable to state that it represents one of the most important activities of the modern, contemporary society around the world, but especially in Europe where languages have long been a fundamental and accepted part of educational programs. In today's globalized world, the importance of knowing foreign languages is a necessity and multilingualism is viewed as an investment in the future. With the continued expansion of the European Union, European language policies are moving towards the teaching of 'at least two foreign languages from a very early age' and describe the knowledge of foreign languages as a 'basic skill' (Kostić-Bobanović, 2013). However, not all foreign tourists can communicate in a foreign language, whether or not it is English. We suppose that a key to a successful Human Library is the ability to communicate with tourists by using their own language.

3. THE HUMAN LIBRARY INITIATIVE AS AN EXPERIENCE TOURISM PRODUCT

The pilot project development is briefly explained through the 4P marketing model. The responsible holder of the activity is the DMO (Destination Management Company) or tourism organisation. The 4P of a human library for tourism purposes should include:

a) Product:

- definition of desired topics (encouraging suggestions)
- tender launch for periodic job
- selection of candidates (public representatives of a certain group)
- storytelling education of candidates

- advance language courses (advisable)
- b) Price:
 - setting the price for individuals
 - setting the price for small groups (depending on library's capacity)
- c) Place:
 - organisation of work (availability of living books, payouts)
 - possibility of booking
 - post sales support
- d) Promotion:
 - media plan development
 - PR
 - DMO website
 - social media marketing
 - in-destination marketing (posters, brochures, info-kiosks etc.) etc.

It is advisable to arrange free storytelling for groups especially in the launch phase to popularise the product. It is possible to include as living books various associations active in the promotion of cultural values of a particular destination, but also local experts in various fields (e.g. historians, craftsman etc).

Human libraries in tourism could also be organised on voluntary or semi voluntary basis. An idea how to incite locals to apply could be offering them complimentary services such as library subscription or language courses. Donations for destination related causes could also be collected this way.

4. COMPARISON OF LIVING BOOKS vs. SIMILAR IN-DESTINATION INFORMATION PROVISION SERVICES

The most widely known information providers in tourism destinations are tourist guides and their online counterpart are virtual travel guides. These two service providers are the most closely related to living books in tourism, which, for the sake of clarity in their comparison, are located in already existing libraries. The comparison among those three is given in the following table.

Table 1.

Comparison: living books vs. virtual travel guides vs. tourist guides

Characteristics	LIVING BOOKS	VIRTUAL TRAVEL GUIDES	TOURIST GUIDES
Personal contact	Yes	No	Yes
Mobile	No	Yes (if accessed on mobile devices)	Yes
Visual experience of the storytelling	No (it is however possible to use visual tools)	Yes (virtually)	Yes (physical)
Language barriers	Depends	No	No
Diversity of topics (including lifestyle)	Yes	No	Mostly no
Working hours	Fixed, depending on library working hours	24/7	Flexible, depending on arrangement
Professional staff	No, hastily trained	Not applicable	Yes
Communication	Yes	Yes, non-human	Mainly monologue
Exclusivity of service	Yes	Yes	Mainly no
Price	Low to mid	Complementary to low	Mid

Source: authors' contribution

Flexible working hours and professionalism are the main advantages of tourist guides. One to one communication, non stop working hours and price are the advantages of virtual travel guides.

The disadvantages of living books is the lack of visual experience of the story, the static location while its strength are two sense communication with real local people about a variety of destination topics lifestyle subjects of conversation at a small fee. Providing lifestyle storytelling in person could somewhat fill the current gap in the tourism destination marketplace.

By detaching living books in tourism from libraries, this experience product becomes more flexible and customized for today's mobile travellers. Lack of professionalism of living books in this case is not seen a priori as a disadvantage, on the contrary, it could provide a certain charm.

5. IMPLICATIONS

There are different aspects the introduction of human libraries in a tourism destination influences e.g. within the social component it encourages interaction, mutual understanding, helps fighting prejudices etc. There is an

obvious educational component with benefits for both locals (improved language skills, storytelling) and tourists (learn about the destination, its culture and residents). The model represents an entrepreneurial opportunity for locals and an innovative amenity for today's experienced tourists. It contributes to the revival of libraries (in case of use of those spaces) or other vacant buildings, without many modifications to existing places. This initiative is in line with sustainability as contributes to all of its three pillars.

6. CONCLUSION

Today's travellers are eager on making new discovers, thriving for new, capturing stories. The human library concept application could be an excellent response to the markets' need for 3E (Entertainment, Excitement and Education) products. Currently in the market there are not many tourism products offering first hand opportunity to meet the lifestyle of locals.

Unlike other tourism products that imply the supply side, in this case, resident communities are crucial, their stories, their lifestyle - they are the product itself. Getting to know local lifestyle from interactions with locals has thus developed from a "side effect" to a complete product.

Using existing libraries and/or other vacant buildings as indoor venues of the activity or practicing it outdoor makes this concept a low-cost one. As it contributes to improving visitors' experience, preserve destination culture, requires no construction works and generates new, although modest incomes, it is in line with sustainability goals of tourism destinations.

As peer to peer business models are growing in popularity, a possible development direction of such an initiative could be a global player in the industry (such as Airbnb for accommodation) specialized in living books and connecting locals to tourists.

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