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# THE POLYTECHNIC OF ŠIBENIK'S ROLE IN THE PROMOTION OF CULTURE, ART AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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*The scope of this article is to show in which ways the professional studies, in this case the professional studies at the Polytechnic of Šibenik, have the mission to educate young people for one direct inclusion in the world of business and entrepreneurship through education, valorisation of traditional values, art and culture in general. Professional studies are by their definition a place where theoretical knowledges are combined with those from the professional environment but at the same time are ideal for all those who might want to round up their professional carrier by giving it a dose of formal knowledge. On the other hand, for students who have just completed their secondary education, it is the ideal place to gain formal knowledge together with the practical one in close relation to the professional working environment. Since County of Šibenik-Knin for its position has chosen tourism as its primary orientation in all its aspects, culture, environmental concerns and entrepreneurship in close connection with this type of industry have imposed themselves to be the prism that Croatia has recognized and wants to cultivate as its primary benchmark for future periods.*

**Key words:** *culture, art, entrepreneurship, education, synergy.*

## 1. Introduction

The Polytechnic of Šibenik is a higher education institution whose aim can be directly linked to the development of the local community and the region that focuses itself on the promotion of art and culture within tourism. Having analysed the current situation in Croatia in terms of strategic developments it has been noticed that each strategy emphasizes the need to visualize the concept of innovative tourism. It is not surprising that tourism has one of the crucial roles in generating further development of Šibenik and the County of Šibenik-Knin. One of the four goals in this strategic plan is sustainable tourism within which several

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projects have been envisaged with the sole purpose of offering high quality of tourist experience in our town and county. Tourism thus has a multiple role that is reflected in valorisation of existing resource basis and combination of tourism with other economic activities.<sup>2</sup> Is it possible that the potential of culture, art and entrepreneurship in this locality can be utilized to create a unique notion, at least in our circumstances, of a cultural district? Can a cultural district be the new strategy in tourism? And, lastly, can the Polytechnic of Šibenik be recognized as the disseminator of the added values that inevitably come from such fusion?

## 2. Cultural district in theory

Firstly, the cultural economics and different models of cultural districts (industrial, institutional, metropolitan or museum cultural districts) should be acknowledged. Cultural economics is the branch of economics that studies the relation of culture to economic outcomes.<sup>3</sup> It is not true that people like simple things; they are just accustomed to that. If they can make a meaningful experience in sophisticated things, they will like them more. They can evolve in their preferences. Culture is transgressing and it can expand the domain of experience and competence. New strategies should lead into cultural planning because it can improve lives and bring the quality of living in general. Cultural development means: reducing social diseases, exploiting new fields of opportunities, constructing a chain of value that increases individual capabilities instead of reducing them. One can see that cultural districts are different from industrial ones.<sup>4</sup> It can be seen from examples like Louisville in USA where cultural renaissance boomed after the initiative to help young playwrights whose plays were chosen according to their quality. A European example is Lintz, Austria which successfully transformed itself from steel giant into multimedia authority with permanent cultural dimension.<sup>5</sup> Benefits from cultural districts are numerous, just to mention some: quality of life improves because of cultural supply; there is strong orientation to innovation and capability increases enormously. One of the examples in Italy is Illy café, which is now a highly sophisticated product because of artistic intervention. What is especially significant for any kind of project is the definition of all the assets in cultural districts (physical, natural capital or human, information, social or symbolic capital). Potentials for the creation of a cultural district can be developed by taking actions on all the cultural assets such as the improvement of quality of cultural local activity as well as the quality of local governance, knowledge production, further education of all the members of the society, management of social criticalities, on development of entrepreneurship and local talents and finally on attraction of talent and external firms and investments. This strategy is rather demanding because it supposes the effort in many fields and it is certainly not a short term process. Considering the long term benefits, it is essential to direct all the initiatives in such a way.

<sup>2</sup> S. Boranić Živoder et al: *Strategija razvoja inovativnog turizma grada Šibenika*, Institut turizam, Zagreb, 2015, p 41

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_economics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_economics), 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016

<sup>4</sup> *Industrial districts and inter-firm co-operation in Italy*, F. Pyke, G. Becattini, W. Sengenberger, International Labor Studies, Baltimore 1990, pp. 37-51

<sup>5</sup> Becattini G., "I sistemi locali nello sviluppo economico italiano e nella sua interpretazione", *Sviluppo Locale*, 2-3(2-3), 1995-96, 5-25.

### 3. Šibenik as a cultural district

How to manage cultural heritage and cultural projects is essential because no cultural sector is self-sustained. This is the reason why management of cultural sphere is not only a necessity but also an obligation. Different bodies are in charge of cultural projects and we should stress the necessity to separate property from management. Cultural heritage will then become more appealing for investment (foundations) and it will be much easier to define the target and adjust all the relevant interventions and ideas. Šibenik is the new star in tourism of contemporary Croatia. There are numerous reasons why this is so but the authors believe profoundly new rethinking of the town and the area has taken place in the last five years. This rethinking could not have happened without the rich cultural and artistic heritage that Šibenik possesses. However, the fact that Šibenik is the oldest Croatian town on the Adriatic coast with many artistic monuments cannot be enough. This material and immaterial heritage must be preserved along with its natural environment promotion and affirmation of young local artists. It would put new lights on old cultural and historical links inside of this unique civilization circle through promotion of our culture and art. However, can this new strategy be sustainable? This is the most difficult part of the cultural planning because good ideas are not enough. The potential beneficiaries of this initiative could be the whole area with modern tourists who want to experience the place to its maximum, enterprises that will recognize the rewards coming from the added value of this new tourist product, local community along with university institutions. It is essential to develop strategies of evaluation and promotion of systems of production whose high quality derives from cooperation and integration of processes between systems of enterprise, culture and art, artistic world and local community, competences and traditions and values represented in the territory by cultural, historical and ambient heritage. The Polytechnic of Šibenik can have a very prominent role in the creation and implementation of these strategies. Systems of interaction in a specific region are of vital importance and new management of small and medium enterprises and evaluation of activities of local craftsman production can be utilized as new tools of promotion of a territory. The institution should strive to create cultural interventions for greater social, cultural and artistic satisfaction. In this sense Šibenik represents a natural ambient for such interventions being the part of the southern Croatia which has rich cultural heritage though not completely evaluated and promoted. Systems of interaction in a specific region are of vital importance and new management of small and medium enterprises and evaluation of activities of local craftsman production can be utilized as new tools of promotion of a territory. The Polytechnic educates young experts who should be able to realize this new strategy.

It is often said that world is a global village. With all the possibilities that new technology provides it is more significant to avoid a uniform aspect of different cultures. The experience that people visiting Šibenik should have, can serve as a reference for integration, harmony and reinterpretation in the field of cultural systems and local knowledge. The things that modern man should not forget are local traditions and values. It is not sufficient to have pieces of art if people are not aware of their value. Culture is recognized by everyone but it has to be made prosperous by everyone. Only in this case, culture and art can coexist and become the model to follow.

#### 4. The self-esteem of the City of Šibenik

The human factor needs to be put on the first place and contemplated as a starting point towards the development of a community consciousness of the investment in human factor in the future, where the citizen should be placed in the foreground.

The sense of affective belonging to the town should be developed, encouraged, and cultivated over time since the participation of every citizen can bring down those invisible walls that give a sense of division creating sometimes a kind of almost paranoid concern for each proposed initiative.

Taking in question the particular momentum that the City of Šibenik and the whole County have been experiencing, the prospects of tourism development in all business areas, which would provide the possibilities of creating new jobs, are numerous because tourism and the economic development will favour the correct direction with the possibility for one better organization of the whole community.

In the past few years, the City of Šibenik together with its citizens, has been investing in real estates and tourist facilities, transforming the city (specially its old town) into a bustling construction site. The awareness of tradition, cultural heritage and traditional values has been coming to surface always more.

But the sole investments in real estates, properties and the renovation of its exterior and thus material appearance do not complete the idea of what should tourism in this area become. It should be given an added value that just through human factor can be achieved. This body has to be animated and if the energy of this community wants to keep in touch with the always changing needs of the modern tourist, it must adjust itself to those particular needs and wishes in the era where global competition is huge.

There is a need of creating the unified network which will help all the stakeholders of Šibenik's society to create an awareness that a tourist offer does not lie in something completely new and unreachable, but primarily in its citizen, in the development of hospitality in general.

The affection towards the historical heritage, the sense of belonging, together with the inner wellbeing would make them proud to be active members of the community creating thus a positive climate for entrepreneurs and all those willing to make commercial experiences.

Just to start with on example; the city's motto could be taken from the small bowl carved on the foot of the old town palaces with well known „amor di cani“ inscriptions in latin to refer to the spirit that Šibenik's people should rediscover and thus transfer into „amor di Šibenik“.

What could those possible initiatives be, without creating an invasive impact on the population? Here are some possible ideas by which every citizen can make a contribution in the research of vital innovative applications:

- Precious contribution could be given from the part of Šibenik's commercial activities in creation of rich and diversified offer with a stress not just on competition but also on the creation of common prosperity.
- The activation of seasonal manifestations by focusing on common strategies where the event encourages the curiosity. One simple example that could be taken in the

first place is the traditional manifestation of The International Children's Festival whose main scope should become the cultivation of its international character orientated towards tourism and hospitality in which the economic impact would not be underestimated.

- Feasts and festivals that should cover the entire historical centre, whose scope would be to actively involve all Šibenik's citizens (through ancient crafts, forgotten recipes). An example for achieving this kind of synergy can be found in the picturesque cities of regions Tuscany and Umbria in the central Italy who have already used these strategies to valorise their cultural heritage. Italian picturesque old towns („comuni“) are divided in districts or areas each of them having their own characteristics, families, tradition and crafts. That kind of division or structure can be compared with the structure of Šibenik's centre which could easily be divided in parishes (župe). Each of them could participate in some kind of antique, medieval game in which each participating district, or in this case a parish, (every „župa“) would have its own flag and competition could very much affect the creation of synergies among all members of the society.
- Organizations of Festivals that will bring to light the tradition, native products of the entire County.

Certainly these are just basic suggestions among many ideas that could derive from different initiatives.

## **5. The Polytechnic of Šibenik's role**

The authors have analysed that the principal stress should be put on the citizen and the overall consciousness that through constant education the entire society can learn to appreciate always more its cultural heritage in general (churches, castles, particular forgotten stories, tradition connected to different periods of the year) but in terms of rendering it more functional through tourism in its various aspects. The role of the Polytechnic should be exactly the one that it has already been cultivating through various projects and constant education of its lecturers and professors. It should be the disseminator of new ideas and initiatives towards the society, creating young professionals in close connection with the private sector. The Polytechnic itself should become the model of district creation, a leader which would propose initiatives and educate various members or stakeholders in rediscovering the history and the natural possibilities that this territory offers considering our heritage and the favourable natural environment in which the County of Šibenik-Knin is situated which is another advantage for its development.

## **6. Conclusion**

It may be concluded that in today's globalised world, the need for one clear diversification in terms of touristic offer is crucial in preserving one's position on the market. One of the possible ways for County of Šibenik-Knin, due to its position and its historical heritage, is to invest in the education of its citizens on all levels in the process of the rediscovering the historical and traditional crafts, ways of living, hidden stories, art and culture in general.

The Polytechnic of Šibenik as a higher educational institution has a huge responsibility in creating a background as well as in taking initiatives for such a development by educating young professionals exactly towards that innovative way of perceiving the needs of today's modern tourist.

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Sažetak

**ULOGA VELEUČILIŠTA U ŠIBENIKU U PROMICANJU KULTURE, UMJETNOSTI I  
PODUZETNIŠTVA**

*U ovom je članku prikazano na koji način stručni studiji, u ovom slučaju stručni studiji Veleučilišta u Šibeniku, mogu i imaju za zadaću školovati mlade ljude za direktno uključivanje u poslovni svijet odnosno svijet biznisa. Stručni su studiji po svojoj prirodi mjesto gdje se teoretska znanja prožimaju sa onima iz profesionalnog okruženja pa su sami po sebi idealni za sve koji možda žele zaokružiti svoj profesionalni put i dati mu jednu dozu formalnog znanja. S druge strane, za one koji su tek završili srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, to je idealno mjesto za stjecanje teoretskih, formalnih znanja, no u isto vrijeme i onih praktičnih u uskoj poveznici s profesionalnim radnim ambijentom. Budući da je Šibensko-kninska županija po svojoj geopoziciji okrenuta turizmu i svim njegovim aspektima, kultura, briga za okoliš, te poduzetništvo u uskoj povezanosti s tom vrstom industrije, nameću se kao prizma koju je naša županija već prepoznala i koju gaji kao svoju primarnu odrednicu za buduća razdoblja.*

**Ključne riječi:** kultura, umjetnost, poduzetništvo, obrazovanje, sinergija.