

## **The concept of " tourism community "**

**Delia – Mioara POPESCU, PhD, Professor**  
University "Valahia" of Târgoviste, Romania,  
Email: [depopescu@yahoo.com](mailto:depopescu@yahoo.com)

**Duță (Ghită) Nicoleta Mihaela, PhD Student**  
University Valahia of Târgoviște, Romania  
Doctoral School of Economic and Humanities,  
Email: [ghita\\_mihaela03@yahoo.com](mailto:ghita_mihaela03@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** *The concept of "community tourism" has no official definition. This first article therefore aims to present its basic principle, philosophy, characteristics and ethics in order to provide a clear, complete and concise definition.*

*We could observe from our bibliographic research and from those carried out on the ground in Costa Rica that the term "community tourism" appears in several forms.*

*Ultimately, we understand from the term "community tourism" or "community based tourism", that this form of tourism is carried out by a group of people who share a common culture, language and/or values, all in a spirit of "solidarity".*

*The tourist activity is therefore generated and managed by a group of people organized voluntarily. Conversely, the tourism that we call "classic" is an activity whose results are achieved by salaried employees within a company and whose benefits accrue only to its shareholders.*

**Key Words:** Community tourism, Ecotourism, Agritourism, Rural tourism, Community rural tourism

**JEL Classification:** Z32, O13

### **Introduction**

**In this article** we will analyze, in this first part, all the facets of this concept in order to give it a concrete definition, but without concretely defining what its ethics consist of. **The community tourism is a concept** with many names.

We could observe from our bibliographic research and from those carried out on the ground in Costa Rica that the term "community tourism" appears in several forms. In French and Spanish, we found the following expressions: Community tourism (Turismo comunitario), Community rural tourism (Turismo rural comunitario), Community Ecotourism (Ecoturismo comunitario), Community agrotourism (Agroturismo comunitario). In English, the term currently used is "Community based tourism". However, this expression has a slightly different meaning compared to the French or Spanish term "Community Tourism" which in English would be "Communitarian Tourism". We also found another English term for the concept: "Community-led tourism" which means "Community-led tourism" in French.

We can already see, from the multitude of terms used, the complexity and ambiguity of the concept. This does not seem to define a type of tourism, but to encompass several (rural tourism, agrotourism or ecotourism), but having an organization based on the "community" principle, of the "community".

### **Theoretical Background**

A tourism based on "community" is a form of tourism that involves human satisfaction.

Used in French and Spanish, the term "community" is defined as: "belonging to a community".

Let's now define the term "community" at leisure:

Looking up this word in the Le grand Larousse dictionary (1987 edition), we discover the multitude of meanings this word can have. Depending on the field, we are talking about communities of goods, communities of people, etc. The word "community" comes from "communal": the state or character of what is common.

Etymologically, "cum munus", the community, is a group of people "as"-who share something - "munus", a good, a resource or on the contrary, an obligation, a debt.

We note what we need now, the definition of the community of persons:

"Human group constituted geographically or historically on a given territory, who share a common culture or language". By using this term we generally mean the notion of sharing common values, and especially the notion of "solidarity", which is not found in synonymous terms such as "peoples", "nations", "civilizations" or "ethnicities".

Ultimately, we understand from the term "community tourism" or "community based tourism", that this form of tourism is carried out by a group of people who share a common culture, language and/or values, all in a spirit of "solidarity". The tourist activity is therefore generated and managed by a group of people organized voluntarily. Conversely, the tourism that we call "classic" is an activity whose results are achieved by salaried employees within a company and whose benefits accrue only to its shareholders.

### **Argument of the paper**

A tourism form related to several types of tourism. As we saw above, community tourism can be called "community rural tourism", "community agrotourism" or "community ecotourism". This diversity of names therefore requires the study of different concepts of tourism that are related to the "community" principle.

After recalling their definitions and the relationships that connect them, we will try to situate community tourism.

### **Definition of terms: Ecotourism, Agrotourism and Rural Tourism**

#### **Ecotourism**

Ecotourism, as defined by the UNWTO in 1988, originally corresponded to a type of tourism that respects the environment and human societies, from a perspective of "sustainability" ("satisfaction of present needs ... with care for the future)" (but without to name it, since the term was officially adopted only in 1992 at the Rio summit)

Later, the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) state in their definitions that ecotourism is "a responsible visit to the natural environment..." "...with the aim of appreciating nature..." , recalling the philosophy based on "respect and preservation of the natural and cultural environment and the participation of the inhabitants"

Thus, ecotourism is defined at the same time:

- ethically: sustainable, respectful, fair, etc.
- from an environmental point of view: natural spaces
- in terms of purpose: to enable tourists to discover and appreciate these natural environments

The definition does not specify the types of activities that this type of tourism offers, which can be extremely varied.

#### **Agrotourism (or agri-tourism)**

Agritourism, which can also be called "Agri-tourism", is defined as "an activity complementary to agriculture that takes place on an agricultural holding." It allows "farmers to sell their products, share a meal with tourists and share their way of life" and "tourists to recharge their batteries in a natural setting and discover agricultural flavors and traditions". Starting from this base, different activities can be proposed: restaurant (peasant meal, tastings), accommodation (farm guesthouse type), visiting the farm and its surroundings, picking the harvest, etc.

We thus see that agritourism, like ecotourism, is not defined by a precise activity, but by the place where the activities are carried out, here the agricultural space. We did not find ethical notions in the content of the definitions studied, as in the case of ecotourism, but a special form of reception where the tourist is a guest rather than a client and where the exchange between the two parties is at the center of the interaction.

To summarize, we say that agritourism defines the tourist activities developed in a specific space - the environment and agricultural exploitation, with a purpose - the discovery of agricultural traditions and the quiet country life, in a special form - sharing and exchange between the parties involved.

### **Rural tourism**

From the many definitions of the concept of "rural tourism" that we found, we note that:

Rural tourism is "local tourism, wanted and managed by the locals", offering "a personalized contact to the visitor", of "meeting and mutual sharing", which makes him discover "rural spaces and landscapes, natural resources, cultural heritage, traditions local...", through "accommodation, restaurants, leisure activities, entertainment and various services", all "for the purpose of sustainable local development".

We therefore understand that "rural tourism" defines above all an environment: the rural environment, with a particular offer - a customizable local offer, but which does not specify the type of services because all possible tourist activities are allowed.

Note: What exactly do we mean by "rural environment"? The rural environment is a fluid notion, simply defined as "areas outside the limits of urban areas". We consider here that it is about "country" areas with a low population density and including "agrarian areas" and "natural areas".

### **Arguments to support the thesis:** The links between these three types of tourism

The study of the three terms – Ecotourism, Agrotourism and Rural Tourism – allows us to discern the overlap and connections between them.

We could see that these three concepts of tourism do not define precise activities, but rather places/environments where they happen, as well as a common goal, which is to make tourists discover that environment with all its components. Some have a certain ethics to respect, others a specific form of reception.

If we consider the environments in which these different types of tourism are carried out, we will see that "rural tourism" includes the other two, ecotourism and agrotourism, because the natural environment and the agricultural environment are part of the rural space.

If we look at the philosophies of the three types of tourism, we can say that agritourism is a subdivision of rural tourism, and ecotourism is closer to the ethical concepts of responsible tourism.

Knowing that community tourism refers to the tourist activity developed and managed by a group of organized people and knowing the concepts and principles of ecotourism, agrotourism and rural tourism, we can say that:

"Community ecotourism" implies that tourism services are developed and managed by the organized local population, living in or near natural areas, and revealing to tourists these spaces and the relationships they have with them, all with respect and instilling respect in visitors for ecological balance.

"Community agrotourism" implies that tourist services are this time organized and managed by organized groups of farmers who show tourists in a friendly way the rural agricultural environment, its activities and culinary products.

---

## **Conclusions**

Finally, "Community rural tourism" assumes that tourist services are organized and managed by organized groups of rural residents, who welcome tourists and reveal in a friendly way their identity and heritage (natural, built, agricultural, gastronomic, landscape, cultural, ethnic, etc.) of their region.

Thus, if we superimpose community tourism on top of the three forms of tourism above, rural tourism, ecotourism and agrotourism, we see that it is a tourism that takes place in the countryside.

It is also a local tourism generated and managed by an organized rural community, with the aim of revealing the natural environment next to (or in the middle of) it lives or the agricultural environment it maintains and related activities.

Following these findings, the term "Community rural tourism" seems more interesting to use than the other two, as it better encompasses the various component concepts, while remaining precise and accurate.

## **Bibliography**

Extract from the definition given in 2002 by the Groupe de concertation sur l'agrotourisme au Québec

According to INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques)

Conclusion drawn by the Ulixes 21 project (international project aimed at supporting sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean area)

According to the EVEIL Charter - Tourisme Responsable et Solidaire

According to Madieng Seck - Source: MAE report « Caractériser le tourisme responsable : facteur de développement durable »

Definition by Dora Valayer and Isabelle Bourboulon of the Transverses association

Definition given by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1995, during a meeting organized in the Canary Islands

Definition of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (1998)

Definition given by Wikipedia

UNWTO : Organization Mondiale du Tourisme. Called in English WTO: World Tourism Organization

TIES: The International Ecotourism Society

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature