UDK: 37.018.5:379.8.092(497.7)

ANALYSIS OF BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL EXCURSIONS AND THE CONDITIONS OF THE RECEPTIVE VENUES IN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

School excursions or field trips are a very important segment of educational programs and curricula and their implementation would most certainly are of high importance regarding the increase in knowledge which is achieved through them for students of elementary, but high schools as well.

Successful implementation of one school field trip is a specific process that requires high engagement of the involved sides. Moreover, besides careful establishment of the goal and the tasks of the field trip, it is necessary to take careful approach towards the implementation of the field trip.

The Republic of Macedonia has at its disposal numerous potentials that could be utilized in the direction of field trips realization; however the implementation is often conditioned by the receptive venues that enable acceptance of the student groups at the selected locations.

In this direction, this paper has a goal to show the basic principles connected to the school excursions, the process of implementation and realization, and giving guidance and suggestions for supplementing the appropriate legal norms regarding the realization of the field trips.

Key words: school excursions, primary and high school, venues, rulebook, directions

INTRODUCTION

Organization and realization of school field trips, in elementary and high school education is a specific process requiring engagement and commitment by all involved sides. Additional attention would require the appropriate legal acts that prescribe the procedures for preparation, organization and realization of school field trips. Moreover, the choice of receptive venues or capacities needs to correspond to the prescribed conditions and requirements. However, experience shows that there is a realistic need of supplementing and changing the appropriate legal norms, with the purpose of improving the level of school field trips.

BASIC PRINCIPLES REGARDING SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

The genesis of the term "excursion" comes from the Latin word "excursion", which would most accurately translate as picnic, recreational travel, short trip etc. In the world's scientific circles, excursions have a large number of definitions, and as such they have been studied by numerous authors. What is of high importance for the Republic of Macedonia is that the aforementioned are defined and prescribed with appropriate legal norms. Additionally, Rulebooks regarding the basic principles related to school excursions and their implementations for elementary and high schools were introduced on 05/06/2014. According to the Rulebook for elementary school excursions (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia," no. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016 и 127/16) they are defined together with other students' leisure activities, organized by the primary schools and are special forms of out-of-school educational work that is organized outside of school premises with the purpose of to realizing some specific goals from the educational programs.

The Rulebook regarding the matter of implementation of school excursions for elementary and high school students says that excursions represent a form of educational work, fulfilled through various out-of-school activities such as visits to: natural and touristic places, educational, cultural and sport venues, technical and technological capacities, historical sites among others, in accordance to specific goals and tasks of the educational programs and areas for development and realization of the different interests of the students (Law on high school education, consolidated text, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia," no 44/1995, 24/1996, 34/1996, 35/1997, 82/1999, 29/2002, 40/2003, 42/2003, 67/2004, 55/2005, 113/2005, 35/2006, 30/2007, 49/2007, 81/2008, 92/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016 и 127/2016).

School excursions and other leisure activities of the students have the purpose to teach the students and expand their knowledge, let them apply skills and form opinions by direct introduction to various phenomena, as well as relations within the natural and social environments, cultural and historical sites, industrial and agricultural capacities in accordance to the school curriculum.

The high school students excursions have the purpose of acquirement and expansion of knowledge, developing different students' interests as well as relations within the natural and social environment, cultural and historical sites, industrial and agricultural facilities, in accordance with the educational program of the school (Rulebook for performing high school excursions, Law on high school education, consolidated text, Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia," no 44/1995, 24/1996, 34/1996, 35/1997, 82/1999, 29/2002, 40/2003, 42/2003, 67/2004, 55/2005, 113/2005, 35/2006, 30/2007, 49/2007, 81/2008, 92/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016 и 127/2016).

What is known is that the organization of one school excursion represents a quite demanding activity for all involved parties in the process of organization and realization of the excursion. Namely, the choice of the place and location of visit is one of the most specific activities for elementary, and even more for the high schools.

Unfortunately, experience shows us that a large number of students show an increased interest in participation in school excursions (outside the borders of the Republic of Macedonia), despite the fact they are not still sufficiently familiar with their own country, or they have only little knowledge of it. Furthermore, the responsible parties, including the Council of Parents, the Bureau of Education Development and the Council of the Municipality should seriously consider directing school excursions within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia with the purpose of expanding students` knowledge of their native country, all according to the educational programs and curricula. The natural and anthropogenic potentials, complemented with the receptive capacities, definitely leave some room for giving a thought to the realization of this idea.

Besides the already prescribed and established tasks, school excursions contribute towards creation of certain benefits for the students, and for the professors as well. The benefits for the students refer to the development of friendships, strengthening solidarity, organization and team-building, improvement of socialization, while the benefits for the professors would be related to personal improvement, and also a better familiarization and acquaintance with the students.

School excursions have a few classifications. This paper gives the division according to the subject of study, as follows: thematic (organized for the purpose of knowledge, improvement connected with specific geographic disciplines, economic – geographic, demographic, urban-geographic and others), and regional (organized for the purpose of complex study and monitoring of a certain area rich with different content).

According to the purpose, they can be with the purpose of obtaining new knowledge, with the goal to improve and upgrade the already acquired knowledge, and with the aim to practically apply the already acquired knowledge.

According to the place of visit, school excursions are classified as: local (relating to the geographical environment where the school is located and the closest settlements to the school itself) and state (relating to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia).

According to the timeframe, the excursions can be of duration of a half a day, daily, and lasting for a few days.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

The process of preparation for implementation of the excursions can be divided into three parts: preparation, realization of the excursion and conclusion from the excursion. The preparation part relates to the arrangements made by teachers and the tourist agency – the organizer of the trip, as well as preparation of the students. The most important steps in the second phase are: the direction of movement, choice of location, choice of methodological approach in the performance of the activities and application of certain educational means that would enable easier comprehension of the events and processes that are usually hard to notice.

Within the framework of the activities the teacher has to make a choice of the appropriate location for the fulfillment of the excursion according to the students' needs and the educational program, to pick a field that is well known, to study the area and to carefully pick the most meaningful objects for the students within the given area.

Additionally, it is necessary for the teacher to prepare and get the students familiar with the goal, the content and the place of visit, the duration of the excursion. Namely, teachers have to provide the program of the whole excursion as well as all available literature connected with the school excursion.

Receptive venues are an exceptionally important segment of implementation of school excursions, and this is why it is important to choose the most appropriate capacities offered on the market. However, this is a very specific activity and it does not depend on the school, the teacher or the excursion organizer.

Actually, the procedure for the choice of an organizer for the complete excursion with an appropriate receptive capacity, as well as all technical rules for excursion organization are prescribed by the Rulebook for the manner of elementary and high school excursion implementation. It also depends on the offer that will be submitted by the tourist agencies that applied according to the public call published by the specific school. The route of movement and localities foreseen are established by the educational program, which is created by an Expert team, in accordance to the Council of Parents, the Bureau for Education Development and the Municipality Council. After the approval, the process that follows is a public call which calls for all interested legal subjects (tourist agencies) to apply with appropriate offers and suitable prices for the arrangement of the school excursion with an included program and established capacities for accommodation at the desired location.

The received applications are analyzed by the responsible organ - a Commission formed with a decision of the School Board. The commission consists of five members, out of which three are from the Council of Parents of the generation that is included in the excursion and two members are from the teachers.

The only tourist agencies that are able to apply are the ones that fulfill the established criteria as follows:

Criterion for granting a contract for excursion implementation and other leisure activities is the lowest price.

Minimal conditions that the bidder has to fulfill are:

- to be registered according to the positive regulations in Republic of Macedonia for performance of adequate tourist activity.
- to have successful realization of at least 3 school excursions and other leisure activities within the last 3 years.
- to fulfill the conditions for transportation of groups of children according to the Law on safety of road traffic and the Rulebook for special technical requirements of the vehicles transporting groups of children (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia," no. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016 и 127/16).

ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITIONS OF RECEPTIVE CAPACITIES IN MACEDONIA

The analysis of the conditions of the receptive capacities in Republic of Macedonia shows existence of a large number of objects that offer accommodation services, disproportionally spread throughout the country. In this direction, this paper will show the accommodation facilities and their basic conditions regarding the number of beds, for 2015. The analysis will be given by regions with the purpose of creating a clearer representation.

Table 1: Number of bed places in receptive capacities in the Republic of Macedonia, total, and by regions, (for 2015), and categorization of hotel capacities, total and by regions (on 29/02/2016).

	Number of beds in 2015	Categorization of hotel capacities in R. Macedonia (on 29.02.2016)								
		5*C	**5***	**4*C**	**4***	**3*C**	**3***	**2*C**	**2***	**1***
Total	**72021**	**5**	**12**	**7**	**63**	**6**	**83**	**7**	**57**	**43**
Vardar region	1696	/	1	/	3	2	4	/	5	6
East region	1894	/	1	/	2	/	6	/	6	3
Southwest region	41917	/	2	2	17	1	29	2	10	7
Southeast region	6316	1	3	1	5	/	1	/	5	5
Pelagonia region	9993	/	/	1	4	/	9	1	4	5
Polog region	3443	1	/	1	6	/	10	1	11	3
Northeast region	673	/	/	/	1	/	1	1	1	/
Skopje region	6089	3	5	2	25	3	23	2	15	14

Source: http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/8.4.16.01.pdf, authors research

The data analysis shows the disproportional number of rooms, and consequently disproportional number of beds in these regions of the country. The Southwest region stands out with the biggest percentage of rooms, carrier of the tourism and touristic movements within the country, and of course a region with a highest number of touristic attractions, out of which the smallest percentage is noted in the Northeastern region, namely 0.91%. The highest representation of beds is noted in the Southwestern region, namely 58.20%.

In the previous table there is a display of the number of hotel venues in the Republic of Macedonia in total and by regions, according the Law on Categorization of hotels, motels and rooming houses in Republic of Macedonia. The data display the widespread of hotels of different categories by regions and at state level. The hotels of 3 (third) category are the most important for the study of excursions. These objects have been mostly used for the realization of the school excursions so far, according to the conditions and standards they offer. Actually, these hotels are highest in numbers and are represented in all regions of Republic of Macedonia, out of which they are most situated in the Skopje region and the Southwestern region, where they take up to 62.7% of the overall number of hotels.

The conducted research gave the following results: on a state level, there are 15 registered children camps, out of which 6 are within the Southwestern region, three in each the Southeastern and Polog region, 2 in the Pelagonia region and one in the Vardar region.

Analysis of the venues and the experience of the organization of the school excursions point out to existence of a solid receptive base, necessary for realization of extended excursions, but the legal acts do not always allow a choice of the most convenient venues in terms the quality of the venue, the level of categorization, food offer and menu for the students, furthermore whether the venue has an animator and a doctor at its disposal, the type and representation of potentials and touristic localities in the environment and their proximity. As oppose to these criteria the most meaningful criterion regarding the choice is the prescribed cost, which imposes the need of change of the previously analyzed regulations in the Rulebook for

the manner and implementation of school excursions for students of elementary and high schools.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that school excursions are a necessary segment within the execution in the elementary and high schools, prescribed with the appropriate legal acts. They should represent an addition to the educational process, and therefore to impact the improvement of the students` knowledge levels.

The process of organization and realization of school excursions is a very specific one, and in order to reach positive results, the need of dedication and engagement is imposed to all involved parties. Besides the prescribed and established norms regarding the realization of school excursions, the receptive capacities are a very important factor. Namely, the conditions of receptive capacities in the Republic of Macedonia are satisfactory in terms of the function of implementation of the school excursions.

We think that some enhancements and modifications of the Rulebook for implementation of school excursions are necessary, in order for the excursions to be organized on a higher level in comparison to the ones nowadays. Those modifications and enhancements relate to the criteria for choosing the organizer, then expert preparation of the programs themselves (it refers to the order of visiting locations, depending on the students' age). Additionally, reconsideration of the criteria for choosing an organizer may be necessary, modifying the criteria for choosing receptive capacities, transportation, as well as strict control of the documents of the tourist agencies after getting permission to organize the excursions.

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АНАЛИЗА НА ОСНОВНИТЕ НАЧЕЛА НА УЧИЛИШНИТЕ ЕКСКУРЗИИ И СОСТОЈБАТА СО РЕЦЕПТИВНИТЕ ОБЈЕКТИ ВО РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

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ИЗВОД

Училишните екскурзии се неминовен сегмент од наставните програми и планови и нивната реализација несомнено оди во прилог на зголемување на нивото на знаења на учениците, како од основните, така и од средните училишта.

Успешната реализација на една училишна екскурзија е специфичен процес и бара голема ангажираност од сите инволвирани страни. Притоа, покрај внимателно утврдување на целта и задачите на екскурзијата, неопходен е и внимателен пристап при самата реализација на екскурзијата.

Република Македонија располага со голем број на потенцијали кои можат да се искористат во насока на изведување на училишните екскурзии, но изведувањето на истите често е условено од рецептивните капацитети, кои овозможуваат прием на групи на ученици на дадените локации.

Во таа насока трудот има за цел да ги прикаже основните начела поврзани со училишните екскурзии, процесот на реализација на екскурзиите, да даде анализа на состојбата со рецептивните објекти кои можат да се искористат во реализацијата на истите, и да даде насоки за измени и дополнување на соодветните законски нормативи, кои се однесуваат на реализацијата на екскурзиите.