Increasing the attractiveness of South Moravia and Brno for young people, with the goal of rising tourism and satisfaction of visitors

Project MUNISS

Team no. 26
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Abstract

The importance of tourism in development of regions cannot be understated, especially for areas without significant agriculture or industry, which are dependent on it. That's why it is necessary for the municipal governments to stay up-to-date and follow current trends in tourism if they want to attract new visitors in cities. One of the modern phenomenons nowadays is the Erasmus exchange program that allows students to study abroad, explore other cultures and places, socialize and travel throughout the chosen region. This new way of travelling brings a lot of foreign students to university towns and cities. The students stay usually for 6 month or the whole year, which is long enough to use all opportunities offered for tourists. The city municipality of Brno is well aware of this unconventional but prospective group of visitors. Therefore it tries to ensure the best conditions and services which would make exchange students satisfied and willing to go back again in the future or even recommend the city to their friends and acquaintances.

Important roles in this project are held by Municipality of Brno, Headquarters of tourism and universities – Masaryk University, Mendel University in Brno and Brno University of Technology - which provide consultants and university staff to help in this study.

The main discussed questions set for our project were: Why do students choose Brno? Is it because of universities in Brno, wine culture in South Moravia or something entirely different? What attracts them to this city and what are they expecting to find here? How can we make them explore not only the city of Brno but also the whole South Moravian region? Whatever the answer is, cities and regions benefit from students, both financially and culturally, and therefore it is important to know what to focus on to gain the best results.

According to the answers found, our primary goal is to find ways to make South Moravia and Brno more attractive for young people, mainly students. Part of our research will be done by questionnaire and the other by SWOT analysis. We will also develop schedules and budget for implementation of our proposed instruments and strategies.

The first step to reach the goal is the analysis of current situation in Brno and South Moravia. We analyzed various aspects of the region, such as overall image, contemporary culture, education, research & development, sport, transport, food, safety and also number of visitors. According to our results, Brno is considered mostly an academic city, but is poorly promoted in media and has lack of possibilities for accommodation. Concerning transport, Brno is generally well equipped. It can be easily reached by train or road, and it has a good public transport that includes night lines, which was also positively perceived not only by international students. The other big advantage of the city are a lot of culturally interesting places and buildings and overall a lot of events going on throughout the year. Last but not least we should not omit the region of South Moravia which provides immense opportunities to spend free time, get to know its rich folklore and the wine making culture, so important in this region.

Most tourists who visit South Moravia are from Poland and Slovakia. Most common reason to visit seems to be recreation and entertainment as well as visiting acquaintances. Number of tourists who come to the region is growing, but this is mostly due to increasing number of Czech visitors. Visit rates of foreign tourists are decreasing.

After having analyzed current situation, we used the questionnaire to find out the needs, opinions and suggestions from students themselves. We divided our target group into three major categories, based on their type of study, age and residence, while keeping in mind their further diversity. The categories were: foreign students, with

focus on those who arrived under the Erasmus program, Czech college students and students of high schools in Brno.

We put together four questionnaires, with around 30 questions in each adjusted for one of the three aforementioned target groups and one especially for exchange students who arrived to Brno only for two weeks, with emphasis on first impressions. The questions were focused mostly on culture and sport opportunities. We tried to find out how students spend their free time, which activities they prefer (cultural ones or sports) and if they even use all the opportunities offered by the city and South Moravian region. Other areas of interest were their satisfaction with the possibilities offered or their desire to change something. Furthermore we asked them if they know about the events organized by city municipality, if they visit them and which sources they use for gaining information. The questionnaires were filled mostly on-line, some of them by personal conversation. We succeeded in getting more than 400 answers from Czech university students, more than 40 international students and about 50 high school students with permanent residence outside Brno.

The analysis of the results showed us that apparently foreign students consider Brno to be a nice, student city. They were a little dissatisfied by insufficient information, about ongoing events, especially in English, which makes them unable to attend them. Results from domestic students were similar, only without problems with language barrier. They would also wish to see more grassy areas suitable for free time activities other than taking a walk. Furthermore, there was a noticeable interest in having a website that will link to information about current and upcoming events.

According to given answers we proposed several projects to be realized either as one bigger project regarding Brno and the whole region of South Moravia or only some partial projects aimed at chosen areas.

The main idea of our project is to create common logo for our ideas and also create some icon of Brno and the South Moravia. So we created an icon like lifelike grapes. His name is *MoBi* and it means *Moravia Bike* because our first idea was advertising our project of bicycle with him. *MoBi* symbolizes the main color of the region- blue and yellow and his accessories are in red and white because of color of the Brno city. We hope that our icon *MoBi* become an icon of whole region and the city, not just for our project.

In response to demand for more opportunities for active spending of free time, we proposed creation of a public outdoor fitness center, common in many cities of Western Europe or United States, in the part of city called Kraví hora. The outdoor fitness can be located in any part of Brno but we chose Kraví hora because it seemed as the most suitable place to us. Outdoor gym can give all students the opportunity to spend their free time purposefully, and is supposed to be well received by foreign students who might be familiar with outdoor fitness centers from their home countries. It can also be used for rehabilitation or exercising disciplines such as yoga, aerobicor calisthenics. Supplementary suggestion is to build a circuit for cyclists and inline skaters. It could be used by all age groups for cycling, skating but also merely walking. Both projects are visualized in 3D space to be better understood.

Another one of our ideas to improve appeal of the city and the whole region for young people is creation of network of bicycle rentals. A suitable implementation of this is the *Nextbike* system, which is successfully used in nine countries. It is a 24-7 bicycle rental service, which allows its users to easily rent bicycle from designated stations by calling a hotline, written on each bicycle. This requires one prior registration online. First half hour is usually free, with each next hour being charged approximately 1€. We

would recommend placing these stations especially along the most important cycle tracks in Brno and South Moravia, which has a great network of them.

Our last suggestion, indicated by student's responses, isa new website. Students use the internet as the most common way of planning their activities, followed by recommendations from friends and Facebook. Therefore, we would suggest establishing a new web portal connected with a site on Facebook. We decided to call this site „My sobě na jižní Moravě" ("we to ourselves in south Moravian"), or www.my-sobe.cz, because it is designed in response to students' requests. The aim is not to create new information but to bring all the information aboutEvents, Culture, Sport, Tourism, Transport, Restaurants, Activities for international students, Education, Accommodationand "World of MoBi" (see below). Photo gallery or reviews from students will not be missing. Part of the site will be also a special section for international students with information about the most important places, events or trips to make their start in Brno more convenient and easy. The site should be translated into several languages and keep up to date.

To promote our suggestion and also our other ideas, we conceived an icon, a mascot for bicycle rentals, outdoor fitness centers, as well as new websites. "World of MoBi", as we dubbed it, comes from collocation "Moravia Bike" (originally planned as an idea for promotion of the rentals only), but later we realized, that it could be a good symbol for the whole project. MoBi is an anthropomorphic bunch of grapes, symbolizing South Moravia, which will be depicted in different activities and places. We hope for MoBi to become a modern icon of Brno and South Moravia and to inspire creation of other interesting connected projects.

We tried to conduct every suggestion into details so that it could be implemented in very short time. Obvious parts are in-depth budget and schedule, followed by graphic and visual support. All our ideas and facts are elaborated in SWOT analysis for city of Brno and for the whole South Moravian region. There was put a strong emphasis on viability and sustainability of all suggested strategies. They are environmentally friendly and contribute to the development of city environment. We were trying to design them for students and eventually all inhabitants of this beautiful region to make the visit or stay here more beautiful and unforgettable.