Communication for Development

‘Forgotten communication’

- The case study of sustainable rural development through rural tourism -
project of mini camping sites in western Serbia -

Denis Murselovic

Autumn 2013
ABSTRACT

This Project Work looks into the communicational dimension of one development strategy for rural development through tourism in rural areas of western Serbia. In 2011 the regional Development agency of Uzice – ‘Zlatibor’, together with the Camping Association of Serbia started a project of mini camping sites in the rural areas of western Serbia. The aim was to meet an unemployment issue by capacitating and empowering locals to take an active part in rural camping tourism. The purpose of this study is to determine both strengths and weaknesses in the development project from a communicational point of view. The methods used to gather data in this research are qualitative semi structured interviews and participant observation. The study examines the presence and/or absence of C4D in the strategy’s planning and implementation, and considers ways in which a stronger and clearer focus on C4D could lead to enhancement of the process of community-based development in the rural area and building of tourist capacities within the local community. The findings of the study indicate that an unclear responsibility sharing between stakeholders and neglecting of the communicational aspect in the planning and implementation of the project could lead to an insufficient communication among participants. This lacking communication has shown to suppress the full potential of the development project.
# Table of Content

**ABSTRACT**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

List of Abbreviations

1. **INTRODUCTION** ........................................................................................................... 6
   1.1 Hypothesis and research question.............................................................................. 11

2. **LITTERATURE REVIEW** ............................................................................................... 12
   2.1 Literature covering theoretical framework................................................................. 12
   2.2 Literature covering research methodology............................................................... 16
       2.2.1 Qualitative interviews......................................................................................... 17
       2.2.2 Participant observation....................................................................................... 18

3. **THEORY AND METHODOLOGY** .................................................................................. 19
   3.1 Theoretical framework................................................................................................. 19
   3.2 Methodology............................................................................................................. 22
       3.2.1 Description of fieldwork.................................................................................... 23
       3.2.2 Approach to data analysis.................................................................................. 25

4. **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION** ..................................................................................... 26
   4.1 The pilot project case: mini camping site *Viljamovka*............................................... 26
       4.1.1 Communication at the site level.......................................................................... 27
   4.2 The usage of ICT among local operators.................................................................. 33
   4.3 Communication between CAS, DAZ and local tourist organizations............. 34
   4.4 Communication with and in–between local operators/camping owners............ 37
       4.5 C4D and preservation as development: the issue of waste management.............. 46

5. **CONCLUSION** ............................................................................................................. 50

REFERENCES ...................................................................................................................... 53
# List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(C4D)</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ICT)</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CAS)</td>
<td>Camping Association of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DAZ)</td>
<td>Development Agency ‘Zlatibor’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TOS)</td>
<td>Tourist Organization of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TOZ)</td>
<td>Tourist Organization of Zlatibor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TOP)</td>
<td>Tourist Organization of Prijepolje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TOA)</td>
<td>Tourist Organization of Arilje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CBT)</td>
<td>Community Based Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LEADER)</td>
<td>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement Rural – Links between Actions of Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ABCD)</td>
<td>Asset – Based approach to Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SNDA)</td>
<td>Serbian National Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SSO)</td>
<td>Serbian Statistical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IMF)</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(OECD)</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(JICA)</td>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CIA)</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(TI)</td>
<td>Transparency International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Florencia Enghel for her patience and an excellent guiding through every aspect of the thesis. I have benefited greatly from her constructive comments and ideas. I would also like to thank Dr. Tobias Denskus and Dr. Anders Høg Hansen from ComDev department at Malmö University for their comments regarding the forming of the topic, particularly at the initial phase of the project case. I would also like to thank my fellow students at ComDev for their positive input on the topic.

This thesis would not be possible without kind support from Vladimir Djumic, head of the Camping Association of Serbia, Snezana Milosavljevic, Tijana Bogdanovic and Bojan Milicevic from the regional development agency ‘Zlatibor’, staff at local tourist organizations of the cities Zlatibor and Prijepolje, and six of the mini camping site owner families I have visited during my fieldwork. They all have contributed greatly to this thesis by providing me an opportunity for interviews and other necessary data.

I am also very thankful to everyone who supported me in any way during the process of conducting my research and writing of the thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my better half Sabine Lemke, for her endless support, her patience and encouragement.
1. INTRODUCTION

‘The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place’

George Bernard Shaw

After the fragmentation of former Yugoslavia, Serbia, similar to the majority of the post-war new-born countries in the Balkan area has faced an economic deterioration. The situation is particularly harsh in the rural areas, and various developing strategies have been implemented in order to raise economy, reduce unemployment and improve people's living standard. Geographically, Serbia covers an area of 77,474 sq km (CIA World Fact book). According to Natalija Bogdanov, Professor of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Belgrade, there are no official data particularly focusing on rural areas in Serbia. By using OECD’s definition and criteria for rural areas\(^1\), she has determined the typology of rural Serbia, and what is relevant for this study is her description of the region III\(^2\) (See the map below). This case study deals with the assessment of the developmental strategy used in rural areas of western Serbia.

![Map of Serbia's rural areas](http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0013-3264/2008/0013-32640877007B.pdf)

Picture 1. The territory of Serbia according to the types of rural areas identified (source: doiserbia)

---


According to the Serbian Statistical Office, data from April 2013 shows an unemployment rate of 25% on a national level (SSO). This is a higher rate than the IMF’s 2013 projection for Serbia of an unemployment rate of 23% (IMF). The most accurate data for the unemployment rate in the region, which is the subject of my study and the latest data DAZ is using as its start point, shows an unemployment rate of 29.54%, and that is data from 2008 (DAZ). It depicts the situation in the dawn of the world economic crisis and before the project has started. What could be estimated is that the situation has further developed in negative direction.

In 2011, aware of the increasing number of eco- and camping tourists in Europe, the camping association of Serbia (CAS in further text) has started a project of mini camping sites in the western part of Serbia. The focus was on rural areas attractive to the tourists because of their abundant and untouched nature. It is also households living on animal husbandry that mostly inhabit this rural region. The department of Serbian national development agency – regional development agency ‘Zlatibor’, based in the city of Uzice, (in further text DAZ), has become a partner in the project primarily because they wanted to face a growing unemployment rate in the region. The founders of DAZ are eight municipalities/self-governments (see the maps below), city of Uzice and General Association of Entrepreneurs of Uzice (DAZ). It is a Serbian national development agency that coordinates and monitors DAZ’s work (SNDA). The national development agency in its turn is responsible to the Ministry of regional development and self-government. By DAZ’s entering the project an official development status has been provided to the project.

Since the project itself could be defined as an attempt to achieve sustainable development in a rural area through rural tourism, three of the local tourist organizations of the cities Prijepolje (TOP), Arilje (TOA) and the tourist area of

3 http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Public/ReportResultView.aspx?rptKey=indId%3d240100IND01%2635%3d6%266%3d1%2c2%2c3%2c4%2c62%3d%23last%232%2640%3d15%2c15-64%266Areaid%3d240100%26d%3d%26dType%3dName%26IType%3dEnglish Retrieved 2013-10-16 at 09:45


5 http://www.rrazlatibor.co.rs/index.php?option=com_con
tent&view=article&id=58&Itemid=11

6 http://www.rrazlatibor.co.rs/english/about-us/founders

7 http://narr.gov.rs/index.php/narr_en/About-us

7
Zlatibor (TOZ) have also become partners in the project. Respective local municipalities founded these organizations but in some cases as in the case of town Prijepolje, TOP also covers some neighbouring areas. Their purpose is to promote tourism of these particular rural areas. They also have a direct connection to the Tourist organization of Serbia (TOS) as an official tourist institution of the Republic of Serbia and must coordinate their activities according to TOS’ plans (www.tos.rs).

![Picture 2. The region of western Serbia with local municipalities](image)

Representatives from CAS and DAZ together have set up criteria for the application process for households interested in participating in the project. Out of eighty households that applied, nineteen have been certified and approved. These criteria were: a) the household should be already registered at a local tourist organization as an accredited provider of countryside tourism made in authentic Serbian ethno style with well-preserved nature around (please note that this registration does not include camping sites at this stage, but *home stay service at countryside household*).

b) They need to possess a minimum of fifteen parcels for the future camping site in direct connection to the house or near by, access to sanitary facilities such as toilet and shower, access to water, and generally good access to the household by road.

Twelve of these are situated in the rural areas of western Serbia, another seven in a more cultivated flat area of the cities Bajina Basta, Kosjeric and Arilje with traditionally developed plantation agriculture. This research is limited to the former ones in rural areas. The reasons for this limitation are several: these sites lay in rural
remote areas, the others don’t; the locals in the rural mountainous areas have very limited economic options (see the description of the region in Map 1). In non-rural areas it is more of an additional activity for the households mainly living on fruit and berry plantations. Despite the relatively close distance between the areas, the living conditions and existential circumstances are very different. The national average gross salaries and wages paid in August 2013 in the Republic of Serbia amounted to Serbian currency dinars (RSD) 61797 (€550) per month. In municipalities where the objects of my research are situation is as follows: Prijepolje RSD 44021/€400, Nova Varos RSD 48608/€440, Pozega RSD 46702/€430, and Cajetina RSD 44761/€405 (SSO)\(^8\) – substantially below national average.

The sides in partnership – CAS gathering local residents under its umbrella on one side, and DAZ together with local tourist organizations representing the state on the other, have shared responsibility according to the fifty: fifty principle between the state and the local residents – camping sites owners. This means to equally split the investment, funding, promotion, and educational costs. The idea was to with minimum investment maximize profit.

CAS supposes to gather appropriate households and insure their fulfilment of criteria for being able to accommodate the guests. Local tourist organizations should provide support in logistics such as access to the sites, signage along the roads and similar support. DAZ would mainly provide finances, coordinate the project and monitor it by regular visits to the sites. The goal was to make any mini camping site able to operate independently within one year from the day it started running.

However, the aspect of communication within the project was nearly disregarded. I could not find any clear reference to the communication beside the first year promotion campaign free of charge by DAZ. This campaign consisted of printing a number of maps of mini camping sites in the western Serbia and to distribute them through local tourist organizations, gas stations and restaurants along the main roads. Planning this way has led to the interpretation that the partners have overseen to clearly and visibly declare this segment in their responsibility sharing.

With all pieces in place, they started a pilot project of one single mini camping site where every side has accomplished its part of the project according to above-mentioned commitments. According to CAS and DAZ, this pilot site has turned out to be the only camping site with outstanding results, running completely independently

\(^8\) [http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Public/PageView.aspx?pKey=26](http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Public/PageView.aspx?pKey=26)

Retrieved 2013–10–16 at 09:34
until today. This is also the only site with impeccable coordination and an active and smooth communication between the parties involved. This site is also included in the study and it deserves a special section in this paper.

Two years after the start, the majority of the camping sites are facing difficulties in operating such as lack of necessary sources in the form of education, promotional skills and ability to communicate internally. For example, there exists no space where the local stakeholders could share their experience and good practices. Another disadvantage is a sporadic absence of proper sanitary and water utilities, accessibility of the sites and every mini site beside the pilot one lack road signage. The result is that four of the camps do not operate at all, and apart from above-mentioned pilot site the existence of the rest seven mini camping sites is threatened, consequently threatening the existence of the project itself. Take a look at the table of mini camping sites below I have included in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINI SITE</th>
<th>CAMPING SITE</th>
<th>CAMPING SITE</th>
<th>CAMPING SITE</th>
<th>CAMPING SITE</th>
<th>CAMPING SITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘POTPECE’</td>
<td>‘IVA’</td>
<td>‘GOLOVO’</td>
<td>‘UVAC’</td>
<td>‘BOR’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VILLAGE</td>
<td>Pozega</td>
<td>Rozanstvo</td>
<td>Golovo</td>
<td>Akmacici</td>
<td>Kamena Gora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potpece</td>
<td>Cajetina</td>
<td>Cajetina</td>
<td>Nova Varos</td>
<td>Prijepolje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pozega</td>
<td>Cajetina</td>
<td>Nova Varos</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uzice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>THREATENED</td>
<td>THREATENED</td>
<td>NON ACTIV</td>
<td>THREATENED</td>
<td>OPERATIVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Picture 3: Table of mini camping sites included in the study
1.1 Hypothesis and research question

After the initial acquaintance with the project through CAS I have identified the problematic of communication, in other words, the presence and/or absence of communicational elements in the development strategy’s planning and implementation as my preliminary object of investigation. At an early stage of my fieldwork (Day 1) I developed a hypothesis I would like to examine:

The lack of communication on several levels between parties involved in the project threatens to repress the full potential of the project of mini camping sites in western Serbia.

The analysis has led me to the following framing of the main research question followed by two sub questions:

- How can Communication for Development (in further text C4D) increase the potential and help solve the obvious lack of communication in the project of mini camping sites in rural western Serbia?
- What kinds of communication are needed and how can they assumably improve the project?
- Capacity building\(^9\) as a key: how could it possibly contribute to the project?

\(^9\) For the definition of capacity building see ‘Theoretical framework’ chapter
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review chapter was mainly divided in two sections: a section focusing on literature dealing with theoretical framework and a section dealing with literature on my research methodology.

2.1 Literature covering theoretical framework

The following set of questions has guided the Literature Review and theoretical framework of this paper: What is the role of C4D in rural development through tourism? Are there any standards of the positive practices in the field of developmental rural tourism? What are the good practices in the area shown so far? How does C4D relate to these positive practices? What are the disadvantages in the development experience so far, and why is this the case?

The idea of rural development through the various aspects of tourism is nothing new to the academic community; on the contrary, it is a well developed and frequently used development approach all over the world. An extensive amount of literature has been written about this concept. Geographically, this developmental strategy and its variations have been implemented from Australia over Eurasia to Latin America.

Sustainable tourism is a sub-branch of sustainable development that was put on the world agenda in 1987, addressing primarily environmental issues. This approach has brought environmentalism into the ideology, but the side effect could be neglecting, ignoring, and marginalizing of the socio-cultural aspects of the local communities (Cole, 2006:1).

According to Moscardo, despite the large amount of books and articles written, there is still a huge knowledge gap in both theory and practice regarding sustainable rural development through tourism. Contemporary tourism planning in developing countries is designed after the model of developed countries, often excluding the local community (Moscardo, 2008:5). In other words, there is a tendency for implementing tourism models from developed countries, often followed by disregarding of the locals’ needs or participation of local community in the projects. This gap is mostly visible in the lack of theories around Community Based Tourism (CBT) (ibid).

In order to make a proper choice of literature I set certain standards as criteria to guide my literature choosing process such as the newest findings from the rural development through tourism field, relevant studies from PhD thesis to the experts
covering most of the experiences so far, case studies from countries in a similar situation to Serbia – e.g. EU countries being in transition before Serbia such as Romania and Croatia. In order to keep focus on C4D, I choose to limit my research within the frame of the work of Wilkins and Morris, supported by relevant case studies from the C4D field in conjunction to rural development. I have also processed cases where I looked for common communicational issues and applicable development strategies to the case of mini camping sites in western Serbia. The scope of the sources varies from books from the development field, capacity building, approved PhD thesis, and methodology literature to the latest updates from the leading journals and articles. Let’s have a look at some of the main choices I’ve made.

One of the pillars for this research in regards to C4D is a comparison of the participation and diffusion model of development communication by Nancy Morris. In her paper, she does not only provide the reader with a detailed overview of the two models and their prevailing role in the development field, but she also defines new frontiers of developmental work in bringing together these two approaches by combining them. She was comparing the outcomes and objectives of forty-four projects, advocating for a combined, holistic approach in the development communication field. Her work is very inspirational and relevant for this research because she appoints the strengths and weaknesses of every model separately, then emphasizing the demand for joint forces in creation of an integrated C4D approach. There is an urge for both ends of her analysis, since the elements from both participation and diffusion models were lacking in this project research.

Together with Morris, it was also the work of Wilkins (2008) on development communication that helped define the C4D scope of this paper. She presents an overview of development communication in the form of a summary, covering various aspects such as historical path, media, research and theoretical approaches. What is of particular relevance for the study here is a discussion on the participatory model of development communication and its features. She emphasizes the notions of institutional and economic-political support, existing power that could be resistant or not to potential social change and insufficiency of participation only for social transformation. This is of importance since the informants at both institutions and/or in the field have experienced abovementioned segments as being deficient or completely lacking in the project.

In 2011, the UN published a paper called Communication for Development, strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations as a comprehensive manifesto
of C4D in development practice (www.undg.org). This paper dealing with C4D is focused on empowering people to take action and participate in making decisions that affect their lives. The paragraphs of Integrating mass media into small business development and Supplying ICT to improve farmers livelihoods are relevant for this research since they advocate the recognition of taking into account locals’ cultures, needs, aspirations and perceptions; I have recognized a major lack of these demands although they suppose to be an essential part of the project in western Serbia. Another benefit of this paper is a thorough analysis of C4D practices based on C4D’s principles well proven and widely accepted within primarily the UN development community. The disadvantage of the paper might be the geographical positioning of the case studies since they are outside of Europe. However, despite the long distance from Serbia, there is a belief that C4D principles proven to work in other similar projects could provide positive effects in the project of this study.

Complementary to this comprehensive paper, I took a closer look at the on–going project by the UNDP Vlasina Lake Ecotourism Promotion and Environment Protection in southern Serbia. The current UNDP project in southern Serbia provides a clear perspective over the communicational segment and strategy implemented in the project, particularly the promotional and environmental aspect, which was missing in my project of study.

A study about knowledge and learning in small–scale tourism in rural and peripheral area (2012) by Giovanna Bertella from the University of Tromsø is an in–depth analysis of the theoretical framework around small–scale tourism in rural areas. The focus is on knowledge–based approach, communication, social media and its role in knowledge acquisition and sharing between the stakeholders. Other scholars to focus on not only knowledge–based approach but also the communication and empowerment in the first place are Wilkins (2008), Morris (2003), Cole (2006), Sofield (2003), Moscardo (2008); participation Moscardo (2008), Morris (2003), Buckley (2009) Radnic (2012), Brouder (2013) Cole (2006) and Ivanis (2011); conservation and preservation in the rural areas Stronza & Gordillo (2008), Radnic et al. (2012) and Brouder (2013). The level of environmental awareness is generally low in the local communities I visited; I will address this later on. Moscardo (2008) especially addresses the support of the local community on a local level.


The dissemination of the knowledge is a necessity in a successful developmental work. By empowering the locals and raising awareness of C4D importance as a developmental tool among the local community dealing with small-scale tourism is one of the focal points in this work. That is the reason why the knowledge-based approach, acquisition and dissemination of the know-how is found to be of relevance to my research. Another essential aspect of successful rural tourism is the preservation of the nature and environment, tightly connected to above-mentioned knowledge-based approach.

Bennett et al (2012) discuss a highly interesting matter advocating for the Asset-Based approach for Community Development (ABCD) in tourism. ABCD has emerged from community development in the US and envisions identification and mobilization of the human, social, natural, financial, physical, political, and cultural capital assets as an essence in community development (Bennet et al., 2012:755). This approach is relevant because of its inclusion, allocation and management of the local assets as a precondition for community development. It includes knowledge, awareness, skill and education as its essential ingredients.

McAreavey & McDonagh (2011) discuss the capacity building and potential of the rural tourism for rural development processing the case study of a national park in Northern Ireland presented in the program LEADER by the EU. It is important to mention that Serbia is an official candidate country to the EU, thus needing to adapt EU guidelines and legislation in agriculture and rural development. Since LEADER initiative is a EU official standpoint it is highly relevant to the Serbian rural development policy.

Beside its importance from the above-mentioned political stance, the LEADER is an approach gaining substantial support within the development community regarding rural tourism. The idea of LEADER is to break with traditional “top-down” developmental approach and to focus on local community, not least because of the diversity and characteristics of the various regions. Of particular importance for this work among the key features of the LEADER are Integrated multi-sectorial actions, cooperation, and local public-private partnership because it is these aspects I investigated during my research. Sooner than focusing on what needs to be done it delivers how solutions with local stakeholders in focus, backed up by relevant partner institutions and organizations – a strategy that lays in the core of my research.
2.2 Literature covering research methodology

As for the method literature, it is primarily processing aspects relevant to this research: a) qualitative interviewing; b) qualitative observation with focus on participatory observation. The literature dealing with case study and data analysing will be mainly focused on the work of Creswell (2013), Berg (2004), and Cassell and Symon (2004).

Developing his reasoning of the research methods, Berg emphasizes that the “quality is essential nature of the things”. It refers to the notions of how, what and where, while the quantity is an amount of something. Qualitative research is concerned by meanings, characteristics, concepts and symbols of the thing, he continues. Still discussing the development of the most relevant methods of qualitative research, Berg points out how its most associated technique participant observation has been extended with interviewing (Berg, 2004:2). Most advocates of qualitative research argue for– and against it by opposing it to quantitative research methods and vice versa. I will not dwell about the relation between these two approaches but try to motivate my choices. At an early stage in the study I decided to conduct a qualitative research in the form of semi structured interviews and participant observation as a complementary method. There are several reasons for this: the research question addressing how C4D can help in solving obstacles in the project from a communicational point of view demands an answer to how and why; a necessity of making a deep insight into the project and it’s issues. In order to prove the hypothesis derived from the obvious problem of lack of communication, all of the sides in project need to be heard. I interpreted this demand as a necessity for me to be present on the spot and evaluate the project. All of the above–mentioned factors contributed to the decision that the most suitable way to carry out this study would be through the qualitative research methods. Darin Weinberg initiates his book about qualitative research methods by quoting a novelist Robert Pirsing, asserting the reader of when searching for the “right” facts, the facts we need, we will not be sitting passively and observing from the far but we are going to be “there” looking for them (Weinberg, 2002:1).
2.2.1 Qualitative interviews


There are various forms of the interviews, so the natural question to raise is what defines a qualitative interview? According to Kvale, it is

‘An interview whose purpose is to gather description of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to the interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena’ (Kvale, 1983:174).

He continues arguing that the goal of any qualitative research interview is to see the topic of research from the informants point of view, and even more important, to understand why the interviewee has come to such a peculiar perception (Kvale, 1983: 176). According to King, the key feature of the qualitative interview is the relation between the researcher and the interviewee. He claims that there is no such thing as a relationship-free interview, and it is up to the interviewer to minimize the impact of the subjectivity. However, he sees this relationship as an advantage and a part of the research process, not a distraction from it. He also considers the interviewee to be a participant in the research sooner than being just a passive respondent (Cassell & Symon, 2004:11).

According to Pickering, performing a good and valid interview research requires two major preconditions. The first one is a matter of definition of the parameters within the scope of the research. It involves number of participants, aspects of the object of study and variety of possible alternatives from the informant’s point of view. Another prerequisite would be the possibility of satisfying access to and excellent contacts with the participants in the study. Good relations with mutual confidence and reliance between the interviewer and interviewee is a necessity not only because of the material to be gathered but also because the informants often are likely to be gatekeepers and access for further information source (Pickering, 2008:60).

Hansen (et al) discuss the value of the semi structured qualitative interviews by defining it as a research approach allowing the researcher an access to potentially richer and more delicate data on informants’ relations (to media). The advantages of the approach are its relatively low–cost since the researcher avoids negotiations for participant observation. On the other hand, it is a time–consuming research method (Hansen et al, 1998:258). Burgess’ advocates for interviews as “conversations with
purpose” highlighting its great value in providing rich and detailed material that could be complemented with other methods (Burgess, 1984, 102).

### 2.2.2 Participant observation

First of all, in line with Nightingale I would like to position myself in relation to communication where the communication could be perceived as a material process that can be observed, recorded, documented and analysed (Pickering 2008:105). She continues arguing about observation as a research process in general; she claims that observational research is an active process – interaction between observer and participant where the researcher seeks to transform another’s ideas into analysable material forms. First then, the researcher could find a place where his experience meets the observing object’s ones (ibid). In the ‘Description of fieldwork’ section the reader can find what aspects were in focus for my observation. The description of the concrete situation I participate in will be processed in the ‘Analysis’ chapter.

Observations, participant or not, can provide the researcher with certain material but the interpretation of it is often on the researcher itself. Combining it with semi structural, in this case individual “in depth” interviews provides the researcher more adequate, much richer and more sensitive data that creates a more holistic picture of the study (Hansen et al, 1998:257). Burgess provides an insight in his research techniques by recommending and arguing how essential it is to make observation of the people and their behavior prior to deep and detailed interviewing. First on this basis, he claims, it is achievable to get a deep insight and understanding of the informant’s life (Burgess, 1984, 103). This claim is found to be of great importance for this study.

There are several levels of the extent to which the observer actually participates in the study. Burgess classifies them in four main categories:

- **The complete participant**, operating covertly without exposing his intentions.

- **The participant as observer**, actively participating in the process and without hiding his intentions.

- **The observer as participant**, maintaining a superficial contact with the objects of study

- **The complete observer**, who does not interfere with the activities but staying back carefully observing the objects and their activities (Burgess 1984:104).
I would interpret my role in the study as the *complete observer*, since I have not conducted any action covertly nor participated in the object’s activities.

Another important segment of participant observation is the researcher’s self-reflexivity. The critical reflection of the observer is of the utmost importance for two reasons. Firstly, the observer’s presence might affect the object’s behaviour and his course of action, for example, he/she might adjust their routines in order to do the work more properly. Secondly, the observer is in power to affect his own representation of the study by his/her subjectivity; that is why the role of self-reflexivity is crucial to the outcome of the study (Nightingale in Pickering, 2008:106).

Dawe, a prominent sociologist has elaborated this problematic even deeper. He said that *the researcher’s experience* would inevitably influence his research. He argues that any statement of the researcher’s subjective meaning has some elements of his personal experience incorporated in the study. Burgess himself has proven these claims at several occasions during his research studies (Burgess, 1984, 89).

3. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this paper is twofold and within the scope for C4D. The first part is derived from discussions and definitions of ComDev – the work of Wilkins and Morris; the second part is aimed at relevant case studies from the field of rural development through rural tourism. The aspects to be considered deeper here are a) communication for development; b) developmental approaches to tourism; c) capacity building as well as how they relate to each other. This research is not a comparative study. The emphasis will be on studying the applicability of the good practices found in the theoretical framework and flagging possible malpractice in relation to the communication used in the case of the mini camping sites in western Serbia. As mentioned before, most theories in developing tourism are built on positive practices of case studies from all around the globe.

This paper is an attempt to assess the current project in western Serbia and the role of C4D in it. The goal is to point out possible practices and their potential implications. Another important aspect is the endeavour to establish a firm link between the choice of research methods and the theoretical background. I started with an evaluation of the project in the form of analysis of data from the fieldwork, combining it together with results of diverse case studies as my theoretical
background. The aim is to draw general conclusions for improvement of the project through communication. This approach has led me to the choices of research methods that I am going to develop in the following chapter.

Before we proceed further let us discuss the aspect of C4D closer. Since 1997 through Article 6 of the General Assembly Resolution 51/172, C4D has been acknowledged by the UN for its empowerment related role in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. It is this aspect that differentiates C4D from other forms of communications and makes it essential for human development (www.undg.org). There are many definitions of Communication for Development. In line with acknowledgments of the UN and concerning the obvious limitations of this paper I will focus on the model thoroughly discussed by Morris and Wilkins and the definition of multi-approaches to C4D such as participation and diffusion. These two approaches are dominating the area of development communication and have a distinct origin (Morris, 2003: 225).

The **diffusion model** is derived from Roger Everett’s *diffusion of innovations* theory from the 1960’s and it could be defined by three main components: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice. The information supposes to provide certain knowledge, which would lead to a change in attitudes to eventually end up in behavioral change – practice (Morris, 2003: 226). The process itself is presented as vertical – *top down*, from the educated and cognizant to the ignorant, and refers to the transmission of knowledge (ibid).

The conceptualization of the **participatory model** has varied greatly and developed in many ways. It included the recognition of its processes and the consequences of social change (Wilkins in Donsbach, 2008: 2). This model has evolved as a sort of reaction to the diffusion one. It is the horizontal process of information exchange and its proponents insists on dialog as a catalyst for both individual and community empowerment. Its purpose is to empower people to have a control over decisions and processes that affect their lives. The Participatory model focuses almost exclusively on interpersonal communication; the workshops, local community media or group meetings are the most common development activities within this approach (Morris, 2003: 227). The key for this communicational approach is the shift of the power from development institutions to the local community (Wilkins in Donsbach, 2008: 2).

---

Despite the fact that these two approaches are often presented in contrast to each other, they do not exist as opposites. There is an ongoing debate within the development community advocating for inseparability of these approaches discussing it as a false dichotomy (Morris, 2003: 241). The latest trend has shown that these two approaches have developed in a direction that brings them closer to each other (ibid). Participation for example does not have any definite agreed-upon definition or strictly determined practices, which makes it difficult to measure. This could be the case because neither empowerment nor participation has any specific units or quantity for comparison (Morris, 2003: 229).

When it comes to the operational level in the field, Cole (2006) has attempted to define the level of participation of and within the local community. Based on the work of Arnstein and Pretty, he discusses the participation on the scale from ‘being consulted’ to being able to determine every aspect of the project. However, he argues that regardless of the level of involvement, the key element is in active participation and empowerment (Cole 2006, 631). He continues on Sofield, framing empowerment as a shift in balance between the powerful and the powerless, between the dominant and the dependent (Cole, 2006, 632).

Sofield himself finds empowerment being a single crucial element in the sustainable tourism field. He claims that an empowered community can reverse the path of power direction, adapt themselves and take over the control of the development. In other words, a local community is capable of implementing a social change and reach sustainability. Or the other way around, many of the problems in community development through tourism are grounded in lack of empowerment, he says (Sofield, 2003, 335).

Most diffusion studies are grounded on quantitative data, while the participatory ones often relies on qualitative results (ibid). Consequently, these approaches need to fulfill each other in order to maximize effect of the C4D. Morris continues to argue that although the gap between the approaches is apparent and visible, there are many studies that acknowledged the need for the elements of the other approach (Morris, 2003: 239). She summarizes by concluding that there is an indication for growing awareness of the potential of these two approaches to inform and complete each other (ibid).

This is important for my study because focusing only on diffusion approach would possibly prevent the development within the local community by depriving the interaction between locals and the sharing of mutual experiences. On the other
hand, exclusively focusing on participation approach would not be sufficient; the locals need both knowledge transfer and empowerment.

The notion of capacity building is a complex matter. Nathan Bennett and his colleagues in the article on rural tourism development in Aborigines community have probably given the most comprehensible definition of the capacity building in conjunction to rural development. They perceive it as a set of practices aimed to build a local communities' capacity (Bennett et al, 2012:4). The scope of these practices stretches from positive attitudes, communication, knowledge and information, skills information and training, networking and collaborations, tourism facilities, training education to local awareness among of tourism (ibid). C4D could be seen as a link between these segments, a communicational space where partners could meet and share experience, education of locals in terms of possible funding sources, promotional skills, creation of social communicational platforms for building capacity etc.

3.2 Methodology

I have chosen to study a single case of development strategy and its C4D aspect through a qualitative approach.

In order to put that qualitative approach into practice, I choose the following methods:

1. Qualitative semi-structured interviews
2. Participant observation

I have used these two methods primarily to collect data during my fieldwork, and the analysis of the materials gathered would be from the stance of my theoretical framework.

In his comprehensive work on qualitative research design, Professor Creswell (2013) is taking us through the world of qualitative research differentiating it into small pieces. He points out the importance of the assumption framework where every researcher is going through five phases: 1) starting with abstract ideas and beliefs to develop them into 2) paradigms and perspectives introducing theoretical framework; 3) implementation of the strategies and approaches; 4) methods of data collection and analysis and finally 5) the interpretation and evaluation of the data (Creswell, 2013:18).
3.2.1 Description of fieldwork

The empirical data in this study has been collected between June 18th and June 25th, a weeklong fieldwork in the rural parts of western Serbia. The several meetings and the interview with CAS have taken place in Belgrade before the fieldwork.

Before I conducted any activity in the field I had detected certain issues in communication through the discussions with CAS. Then I designed a semi-structured questionnaire for the interviews and contacted my potential informants (see the Annex). At the initial stage it was CAS that provided me contacts with the informants. During the course of research, the other actors such as DAZ and camping site ‘Bor’s owner in the Municipality of Prijevoj arranged an opportunity for me to meet and set up interviews with local tourist organizations’ officials. The development of the interviewing process was guided by the researcher towards determination and examination of the communicational aspect in every area of the project (see attached guideline). Focused on communication through a set of sub questions, the areas to cover were as follows:

1. Idea/Inspiration for the project
2. Motivation
3. Experience (assessment of achieved/the level of satisfaction)
4. Aspirations (preconditions for their fulfillment)
5. Visions for the future (preconditions for their fulfillment)

Although I’ve been following the same “five dimensions” pattern with all of the informants during the study, the sub questions within dimensions were evolving into substantially distinct directions. In order to obtain a holistic picture of the project I needed perceptions from as many angles as possible and from all of the parties involved.

The second step was to contact my potential informants. I’ve started my interviews with the initiator of the project – the head of the Camping Association of Serbia (CAS). He recommended me further to the Development Agency of Uzice – Zlatibor (DAZ) that supposes to provide legal framework for the project and partly finance it. He also introduced me to the carriers of the projects in the field, the owners of the mini camping sites and local community members in the rural area of western Serbia. The DAZ in its turn has provided me both contacts and recommendations to
its partner organizations – an acting link between DAZ and camping site owners – local tourist organizations in Zlatibor and Prijepolje. These local tourist organizations suppose to carry out necessary logistics support in the field on the behalf of DAZ and local municipalities, while the DAZ was in charge of the monitoring (please refer to Introduction section for detailed description of the project).

I have conducted ten interviews in total, one with previously mentioned CAS, and a group interview with DAZ where I talked to all relevant officials in the project (for time and date of the interview please see the table above). Two of the interviews were performed with local tourist organizations officials who acted as a link to DAZ and locals, and six interviews with camping sites’ owners/local community members in the rural area of western Serbia. I have also managed to reach and complete the interview with one of the owners of the non-running camping site, while the rest of the sites of the locals/informants were in operation. All of the interviews were conducted in the Serbian language and recorded; I have translated them into English later on.

During the fieldwork I have concluded a set of participant observations in the role of complete observer, staying in the background and carefully observing following situations:

- Communication between the partners: how they communicate, which channels they use in internal communication
- Communication between the locals/camping sites operators
- Communication between locals and guests (when guests were present)
- Attitudes toward: other stakeholders in the project, guests (when possible), and my personal assessment of the level of dedication to the project – how officials and institutions relate to the locals/camping sites owners and vice versa
- Stating Reality/the physical evidencing of commitments to the project: to what extents have the local residents fulfilled their obligations and to what extent has the state (DAZ and local tourist organizations) accomplished their part of responsibility
- Possible good practices with focus on communicational aspect: usage of promotional material, social networks as communicational platforms, the usage of the ICT, and education planning.
3.2.2 Approach to data analysis

Analysis of data is conducted in three steps: description of all of the elements of the case, seeking for the *collection of instances* in the data hoping that issue-appropriate meaning would become apparent and then development of certain generalizations (Creswell, 2013:200). During my research I had to investigate not only the technical characteristics of the project but also those tiny relations between the local community members and communication within them, communication with the rest of the participants involved taking into consideration factors such as cultural context, historical, political or economic influences. Professor Halloran, discussing various methods in social science in general (and mass communication in particular) states that whatever research method we advocate, our research will be affected by above-mentioned factors (Hansen et al, 1998: 11). There is also Nightingale’s remark on the fieldwork on how it actually involves finding different or any ways to transform communication and social relations into readable data forms (Pickering, 2008:105).
4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the empirical data will be explored by applying the theoretical framework keeping communication in mind as its focal point. Furthermore, as an example of the good practices I will be analysing the successful case of the pilot project – the first established and well operating mini camp in the western Serbia; then I will try to compare the rest of the mini camping sites and their practices with the pilot one, anchored in relevant theories. To clarify, in case of a need for a narrative, I have tried to keep the structure by starting with a depiction of the case and then proceeding to analysis.

4.1 The pilot project case: mini camping site *Viljamovka*

The mini camping site *Viljamovka* started its operation on the 15th of August 2011 (App. *Viljamovka*). This site has been chosen by DAZ and CAS to be a pilot site before proceeding to the full implementation of the project. The site itself is located in the village Kremna near the state border to Bosnia and Herzegovina, some 10 km from a popular tourist destination *Kustendorf* or *Wooden town*, a small village designated as an ecological oasis by famous film director Emir Kusturica and completely built in wooden material. This geographic position opens numerous possibilities for tourism development because of the high frequency of tourists in the area, which is one of the reasons why DAZ and CAS decided to start the project here (Annex). The camping place is based in the middle of the Viljamovka–pear garden, and the pear fruit itself is the main ingredient in the production of the famous local liquor from the household, *The Royal Viljamovka Rakia*.

![Picture 4: Mini camping site Viljamovka](image)
Asset-based approach to community development (ABCD) deals with mobilization of capital assets as a central point in order to support local development efforts. These assets were defined as a necessity in development of any region and recognized as natural, human, social, physical and built, financial, cultural and political capital (Bennet et al, 2012: 756). The OECD defines natural assets as a sort of compilation of biological assets such as abundant nature, fresh water richness, fresh and clean air etc (OECD). Because of its position between natural reserve ‘Zlatibor’ and national park ‘Tara’, good infrastructure and easy access as well as abundant and untouched nature, Viljamovka site is a good example of the mobilization of natural capital, as Bennet would have named it.

4.1.1 Communication at site level

According to the DAZ, CAS and the mini camping site’s owner, the communication flow between them was smooth, direct and open; all sides have fulfilled what they agreed to the large extent. The owner appraised both CAS and DAZ for their financial and educational support, and he was very fond of the local tourist organization (TOZ) for setting up the road signage along the main roads in the area (App. Viljamovka). This is the only camping site with the proper road signage; the rest of the camping sites are lacking this necessary tool. The reasons for this lack could be, according to DAZ, because the finances provided to local tourist organizations for producing signs and other communicational-logistics equipment were spent on other expenses in their budget; they have either spent money on other projects or not prioritized this one. One of the underlying causes could be also because local tourist organizations claim that they need to have a proper ‘legal frame’ for the mini camping sites, which is not the case right now (see the coming chapters, App. DAZ, TOZ). Another reason, according to some of the sites, are corruption and the attitude towards locals; the local tourist organizations see them more as competitors in the race for guests than partners in the field (App. Iva, Bor, Golovo, Uvac). However, this shows a clear absence of communication, transparency or monitoring channels.

DAZ has appointed the main weakness of the Viljamovka camping: no food production in the household. Their hypothesis was that if this camping site proves to be operational, the other sites containing food production could expand their offer to the guests and earn even more money (App. DAZ). This is indirectly in connection to C4D because the owner has coped with the problem by unintentionally using participation approach in C4D, networking and involving the broader local community in the project (see next paragraph).

The owner himself has faced this problem by involving the surrounding households in the business offering them an opportunity to deliver local food products after guests needs. Doing this, he has created a chain of suppliers among the local community members helping his neighbors further specialize in the production of certain ecological food products such as various meat products, cheese and dairies, bread and pastry, pies, vegetables, fruits, wines, pickles, etc, and providing them with an additional income. The owner of the Viljamovka could be seen as a textbook example of the positive human capital. According to Bennet, it involves individual’s skills and education, knowledge, awareness and his/her own attributes in developmental tourism (Bennet et al. 2012: 756). The importance of human capital in this particular case study could be identified as owner’s communication skills: his strong interpersonal communication skills demonstrated in engaging the local community to support him, extraordinary service he provides to the guests, willingness to adopt ICT technologies and environmental friendly attitudes in his work, and promotional ideas he implements in practice. Or the way he puts it:

*To run a camping site is not just a circumstance where you happen to posses a meadow and automatically everything will be just fine, you need to commit yourself fully, 100 %. Of course, there is some profit there, but not much, and that’s not my prime concern.*

*Ljubisa Carevic, Viljamovka, owner*

During my visit, the owner proved his words numerous times by being very engaged and service minded. He abruptly interrupted our interview many times in order to make sure that the present guests were well attended to.

The knowledge dissemination in the terms of education was not extensive in the case of Viljamovka; the owner has attended one workshop in total where he experienced it being insufficient (App. Viljamovka). This educational workshop was provided by DAZ; this was the only educational workshop for the local operators in the project regardless from introductory ‘teasing’ informational workshops as CAS would call it and provided by CAS in partnership with DAZ. He briefly described that what he learnt there was certain basic tourist management and service oriented practices, something he was already doing on a more professional scale, in his own opinion (App. Viljamovka, CAS). The reasons for this could be scarcity of resources and insufficient support from DAZ On the other hand, according to CAS, the owner has been supported in many ways: presented on international fairs, interpretation support when needed, and other personal education. (App. CAS). The overall impression is that the bottom line is the unclear sharing of responsibility among key players in the first place.
Another aspect taken into consideration was the promotional segment of communication in the project. For the first time in his life, the owner has acquainted himself with ICT and Internet based communication channels. The promotion has started at a low level, primarily through the Facebook page and CAS web site. As this paper is being written the camping site Viljamovka is listed as one of Serbia’s best camping sites by numerous leading camping organizations in West Europe. Some of the other camping sites’ owners in the project have adopted this strategy in order to make themselves visible to the public. According to the CAS, the operators who adopted basic ICT and digital communicational skills were the only ones that survived. They could access and disseminate more and accurate information than the others (App. CAS).

Those who were using the digital communicational tools were basically those who survived. The camping sites in operation right now are those who were on the higher communicational level than the rest, they could have obtained more information than the others.

I: You mean they are using some kind of communicational platforms?

VD: We keep it simple. You can come quite far by using e-mail and social networks. No need for any new platform, we can just using existing ones.

Vladimir Djumic, Head of CAS

The operators at Viljamovka, Potpece and Bor were aware of this aspect, while the Golovo, Iva and Uvac understood the urge for better communication by using ICT but without clear idea of their role in the implementation of it (App. all). In her research on small scale tourism Giovanna Bertella has established a connection between the usage of ICT and small-scale tourism development. She took a case-study approach in her research, dividing it in four sections with different topics. The second part of the research is dealing with ICT usage and implications among local operators in mini-scale tourism. The data is gathered primarily by combining quantitative methods with qualitative interviews and observations, which opened a possibility for getting a holistic picture of the case study. She was focusing on knowledge acquisition and ‘why, how and with which result do formal networks of small tourism actors use social media’. In my case study, the only formal network is virtual, the one on the CAS website (Bertella, 2012: 42). She claims that usage of ICT among local operators can influence knowledge-related processes. Her study indicates that by using ICT both acquisition and dissemination of the knowledge could be improved. Study results also indicates that using social networks nurtures existing networks and creates new ones as well as maintaining and strengthening sense of
togetherness among the local operators (Bertella, 2012: 182). These segments of C4D, *diffusion and participation* elements of networking, clear communication platform for both internal and external communication, educational courses and workshops, the aspects in direct connection to my hypothesis of insufficient communication were lacking in the project of my study. Why this is the case, I will try to elaborate in the coming paragraphs.

Another important detail the owner had implemented in his operation was monitoring the communicational channels of how did the guests obtain knowledge of the Viljamovka site (see the picture below). According to the owner, the majority of the guests have found the place by simply seeing and following road signage (App. Viljamovka). More precisely, out of 771 guests in 2013, 528, approximately 70 % have answered the questionnaires. Forty-eight (48) % has found the place by following road signs, while 35 % have obtained information from the Internet. The rest of nearly 20 % belongs to those who came to the spot thanks to the personal recommendation and/or promotional material. This indicates how important these communicational tools are, and they were missing at every other camping site I visited.

![Picture 5: Info sheets and forms and price list at mini camping site Viljamovka](image)

Without road signage the mini camping sites will miss a major part of their guests.
As the local operators at Iva site mentioned discussing this issue:

_You have found us tanks to his detailed explanation, Miljko’s. Without his explanation you would find us anyway since you have GPS and the coordinates, but it doesn’t mean that someone from Europe, 68 years old would find us! (App. Iva)_

CAS has explained to me that, beside specific sites like these in rural areas, development of the camping industry in Serbia generally needs to be along main international transit routes, often towards neighboring countries, concerning mobile nature of campers. All of the sites I’ve visited are in close conjunction to the strategic artery along the Bosnian border connecting Serbia and Montenegro and further down to Croatian coastline (App. CAS).

One promotional segment of the Viljmovka is regular Royal Viljmovka Rakia liquor and local food products tasting events arranged at the site. At the time of my visit, a group of 35 Italians and Slovenes stopped by only for tasting and purchase of the local food (See the picture below). During the tasting, the owner has introduced the whole concept of Viljmovka, and handed over his promotional material. So, this could be interpreted as a sort of communication strategy to approach these short-term guests and convert them into guests that may want to return in the future.

The owner has shown a high level of environmental awareness in his work. I’ve observed and we talked about his idea of zero environmental-unfriendly waste. He told me that his interest started not in connection to some education he received from the project but after that one of the guests from Holland complained about the vinyl bags he was wrapping his home made liquor in. His guests were appreciating
his eco-friendly attitude and purchased more goods. This is another example of C4D through *empowerment*, although it was not meant to be in the form of formal education but in strong connection to abovementioned *human capital*, the owner has recognized the potential of environmental awareness being interpersonally communicated to him by a guest – fellow environmentalist. The environmental awareness was one of the main subjects of concern both for CAS and DAZ. The DAZ has emphasized at several occasions that the *preservation* and *waste management* is one of the crucial segments of the project (App. DAZ). However, beside CAS’ sporadic instructions no education in the area has been provided systematically to any of the local partners in the project I visited.

The owner of *Viljamovka* continuously emphasizes human factor as the essence of the operation. He personally considers empowering and education being an important component in the business; he has offered his knowledge and experience to DAZ in form of workshop (App. *Viljamovka*). He told me that he believes in personal networking and is fully prepared to share his facilities for promotion of other camping sites in western Serbia. He remarks that the nature of the camping guests is very mobile; they stay in a place for day or two before moving to the next one. His offer was never considered seriously.
4.2 The usage of ICT among local operators

As for the communication channel toward local site operators, the latter one is downsized to the telephone lines mainly (App. CAS). In some cases even the telephone lines were completely taken away from the camping site owners by local authorities motivated by digitalization of telephone line system where, in the case of non-operational site Golovo, the household are not compatible with the new system. This measure totally prevents site’s communication with the outer world. The mobile phone connections are bad in these remote areas so a regular phone line is a kind of necessity not only for running a camping site but also for the quality of living in rural area in general (App. Golovo).

The usage of ICT is very limited, among the sites I’ve visited, it was only Viljamovka and Bor sites who had an Internet connection. According to Serbian Statistical Office data from 2013, it is 41,7 % of households in the regions of western and central Serbia having an Internet connection, and 33,2 % have a broadband Internet connection (SSO)\(^\text{14}\). These numbers don’t not say much about Internet access in rural areas, but it does indicates a fairly low Internet usage in the areas in general and based on my observations we could assume that this usage is mostly occurring in the urban areas.

The reasons for this are many: the population in the rural areas including camping site owners is mainly elderly, without experience of the modern technology. As CAS put it, they can barely use a mobile phone, and the digital Internet communication platforms are beyond their reach. Another reason is a lack of interest among local policy makers. Describing his struggle for Internet connection, the owner of site Bor explained that local authorities in the town of Prijepolje made fun of him wanting Internet connection up in the mountain while so many households in the town are missing it. The owners of sites Iva, Uvac and Golovo expressed that it is all about corruption among local politicians. The Iva and the Golovo locals shared stories about neighbors with good political ties that got both licenses for communicational means and other logistic support, while the owners of the Uvac camping site got involved in open conflict with the local government that might end up in the court of law. The trigger for the dispute was a denial for road infrastructural support to the camping while at the same time local authorities fully supported a neighbor that recently moved in and with good relations to the local politicians. The matter of

\(^{14}\) [http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents/00/01/17/66/17_Informacione_tehnologije.pdf](http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents/00/01/17/66/17_Informacione_tehnologije.pdf) Retrieved 2013-12-29 at 15:01
corruption was a hot issue at every camping site I visited beside Viljamovka, and it was a subject of discussion with CAS as well (App. CAS, Golovo, Iva, Uvac, Bor).

The corruption is a complex matter, very hard to measure, it appears in many different forms and it’s not the topic of this paper. According to Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2013, Serbia takes 72nd place among the 177 countries in the world, and place 35 out of 42 European countries, which indicates a very high level of corruption in general (TI).\(^1\)

### 4.3 Communication between CAS, DAZ and local tourist organizations

One of the good practices in capacity building widely accepted in the development tourism has shown that certain preconditions needs to be fulfilled before development can occur. These prerogatives are clear and transparent communication, trust and legal agreements clearly defining responsibility, goals and timeline for every stakeholder in the project (Moscardo 2008: 114). For instance, in the project of UNDP for Vlasina lake (southern Serbia) tourism promotion and environmental protection, where in the period of three years (2011–2014) the overall development expects to be achieved, the empowerment of local community and raising environmental awareness is one of the essential elements of the program and project’s strategy (UNDP).

According to the CAS, the communication among the partners was the main obstacle for the full implementation of the project. CAS finds this communication poor and insufficient in the terms of both inter–personal communication and communicational means. Vladimir Djumic, head of CAS, points out the obstacles in communication with authorities on all levels, from ministry to the local tourist and regional development agencies, including DAZ lately. There are no common communication platform between parties of any kind, and no systemic monitoring of what is to be implemented or its effects. Finally, the level of trust and reliability between the partners is on decline. CAS has elaborated a detailed statute and a rulebook of the mini camping sites according to the highest EU standards for the ministry of economy and regional development as a precondition for the project to be recognized as a tourist product. The idea of CAS was to create and introduce a totally brand new tourist product, first to the TOS and later to the international and domestic audience. This product in the form of mini camping sites within rural households would provide the guest with not only possibility of camping accommodation but also an alternative in the form of rural cottage, the option used

---

\(^1\) [http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/#myAnchor1](http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/#myAnchor1) Retrieved 2013–12–30 at 19:02
This is how CAS’s head puts it:

*It is not just about place or destination; it is as much about the people and hospitality.*

*Whenever you get up in the morning, the host will always treat you to a cup of coffee and rakia (typical Serbian liquor drink), free of charge. I wanted to show three things by this project: beautiful nature, great food and great hospitality, the best of Serbia…and all for an integral development of the region.*

*Vladimir Djumic, Head of CAS*

However, the ministry according to CAS has never seriously considered the proposal. The reasons for why this is the case lay in communication failure. Firstly, the people from the ministry of economy and regional development that CAS supposed to cooperate with knew nothing about the camping industry. CAS has experienced them as ignorant and incompetent. This ignorance comes from the fact that they have been placed in their positions within ministry not as the experts for tourism but in political combinations as members of the ruling party (ibid). This leads us to the conclusion that the political unwillingness to communicate and share knowledge with the experts in the field such as CAS could be a great obstacle for full implementation of the project. Another striking example of the expertise of the officials occurred during my interview with the head of the TOP. She perceived and was constantly referring to the camping industry as being a form of sport (App. TOP). This legal framework is of outmost importance for further development of communicational segment of promotion. By being recognized as a Serbian national tourist product, mini camping sites in rural areas would enter the promotional program by national Tourist organization of Serbia (TOS) and being represented at every major tourist event, domestic and abroad (App. DAZ).

Wilkins has recognized this issue of political reluctance to change and pointed out that participation objectives might be constrained and insufficient for a social change because a shift of control to local communities and grass root level might challenge and trigger a resistance of the existing power structures. To reach a sustainable change would require institutional, normative and political–economic support (Wilkins in Donsbach, 2008: 1).

As for the communication with DAZ, in the beginning and during the establishing of the pilot mini camp the communication was excellent. After the camping site had opened, other folks replaced the initial enthusiastic team at the DAZ by political line, the situation became similar to the above–mentioned with ministry and TOS, and any communication between DAZ and other stakeholders almost ceased. The first year
promotion of the project by DAZ has expired, but while it lasted, it was performed in a way that could be interpreted as not well coordinated. The maps of the area with camping sites marked on it have been placed mostly at gas stations and restaurants along the roads and a certain number has been given to the local tourist organizations for further dissemination. No maps have been provided to the camping sites operators; many of my local informants didn't even know of their existence. Those locals who knew about the maps had found them accidentally during random visits to the local gas stations (App. all). The idea for promoting camping sites this way was not bad in my personal opinion, but both monitoring of dissemination of the maps and supply of local operators was left out of the scope. If the local operators had had an access to this promotional material, they could have handed it further to their guests and made them aware of other camping sites’ existence. This networking would probably have improved the visibility of the project and further strengthened ties between camping sites.

Cole (2006, 630) has also noticed another interesting matter in the development industry. He affirms that involving local community does not only secure a sustainability of development but also secure funding. This could be reason enough for DAZ and particularly local tourist organizations to re-evaluate their current system of cooperation and further strengthen loosed ties to the partners.

Similar to Wilkins, Bennett et al. advocates for political assets as an essential part in every development process. They underline the importance of political support, legislations and policies, governance processes and institutions that facilitate the mobilizations of all the other capitals into a successful development process (Bennett et al, 2008: 756). The overall impression from my interviews regarding local and national authorities was that the practices of politics are not encouraging to the project because they prevent smooth and transparent communication flow. According to my informants, the reason for this is simple – the corruption.

From the C4D point of view, I would suggest a building of not only a comprehensive communication platform for all parties involved but also an internal platform for CAS, DAZ local tourist organizations and ministry with great transparency where they could share the results of the project and at the same time monitor implementations of each other’s segments of responsibility.
4.4 Communication with and in-between operators/camping owners

Beside Viljamovka, every other camping site I visited experienced communication as insufficient on several levels. These levels could be categorized as educational, promotional and communication between the participants in the project.

As for the communication with CAS, most of the local residents considered it being correct, although not that frequent. It mainly occurs when they need advice or guidelines or some kind of support, often in conjunction to interpreting during foreign visits. It is visible from the excerpts from the interviews:

*Some foreigners called the other day and we couldn’t make conversation so I called Vlada and let him talk…*

*Radomir Lukovic, camping site Uvac*

*…*

*The best cooperation I have with CAS and Vladimir Djumic… I: Are you going to the fairs?*

*LJC: Yes, DAZ asked me about my promotional material, they presented my work in Holland at the fair, Vlada presented me in Germany, so that’s good thing, I believe in that!*  

*Ljubisa Carevic, camping site Viljamovka*

*…*

The organizations that suppose to manage frequent communication with locals in the field are previously mentioned local tourist organizations TOZ and TOP. The overall impression is that the local stakeholders are deeply dissatisfied by both communication and cooperation with TOZ and TOP. What differs communication of the other sites in comparison to the communication of the Viljamovka is the absence of trust and reliability for the local authorities, as well as occasional miscommunications and conflict situations. This is well depicted in the following excerpts:

*They (TOP) have signed the contract with DAZ, but have not done anything yet. They paved a road for two old ladies up there, but doing nothing for us. They are jealous of us, say we earned a lot of money…we work so much…*

*…*

*I: Do you have any initiative from authorities (local tourist organization, DAZ) regarding mini camping site, anyone with an idea to raise this project to more serious level?*
RL: No, no one. They call from DAZ from time to time to ask how are we doing, but never from tourist organization I think that they have recognized the potential and want to build their own camp. We would like to have that as well, since we have more to offer then.

ML: They never showed any interest, the tourist organization, they are afraid we will get into conflict of interest.

Radomir and Milica Lukovic, camping site Uvac

I designed a project around this, and fail on the competition. I asked the director of the local tourist organization of Prijepolje (TOP) to help me and she failed in budget projections, that was the reason of the entire failure of my project. It’s all about politics...

... I: How satisfied are you with communication with other players?

ZK: Nothing...especially TOP, I’m always first to get to them, invite them here and so on...the local authorities, they are even worse, I apply for some donation but they said I haven’t submitted my CV, and I know I have. I have a proof here, you see... I’m considering of cutting ties to TOP, because they do not help, and when they rarely send me some guest, they want me to do them more favors than it’s worth.

Zivko Kijanovic, camping site Bor

In the case of the site lva, the communication with TOZ is often a one-way communication where locals repeatedly demand their rights and fulfilment of promises such as road signage and waste management services but without any progress. On my question why they are not setting up the signs along the road, the TOZ answered that they should have done it but still haven’t. They have also informed lva and Golovo owners that the project of the mini camping sites in western Serbia is about to be abolished soon, something that neither DAZ or CAS knew about. At the same time, TOZ are building a huge three-star camping site in the middle of the Zlatibor tourist area. The locals consider TOZ’s behaviour and miscommunication as highly suspicious like they want to exclude them as potential competitors in the race for camping guests. (App. Iva, Golovo). They consider TOZ to be corrupted and perceive themselves as in need of more promotional communication so they could reach the guests on their own and be independent from TOZ. As we could see from the interview below:
The worst is that TOZ haven’t helped us with signs, we are not allowed to put signs on our own, but we did it anyway ’cause people need to find us, I begged that Miljko from TOZ so many times...

...  

Miljko from TOZ told me the other day that they will abolish this project! He also asked me whether I’ve received a letter from the ministry. No, I haven’t, I told him. Because of something, I do not know why... 

...

Ratko: When you are exposed to these actions from TOZ, you are about to lose the will to continue...

Ruska and Ratko Radibratovic, camping site Iva

In need for sanitary facilities, and being rejected by authorities for the funding on doubtful premises, Iva has set up their own improvised outdoor shower (see the picture below).
In the case of sites *Uvac* and *Bor* belonging to TOP, as depicted above, the situation is even tenser. The communication with TOP is sporadic; the *Uvac* lies in a sort of conflict with local authorities and *Bor* is struggling with TOP for getting road signage, water and waste facilities and road infrastructure (*App. Bor, Uvac*). The waste management segment deserves its own section.

Moscardo has pointed out several studies from the community based tourism (CBT) area indicating that the proponents of CBT are often naïve when dealing with existing political structures. The simple assumptions of political power suggest that they are often reluctant to changes and challenges of their power; on the other hand development experts and consultants possessing knowledge that gives an advance over local operators dominate the field (Moscardo, 2008: 5).

Some of the good C4D practices implemented in the field by UNDP show clearly how
beneficial the role of media and ICT is in the development of small businesses, especially in rural areas. They have found that there are substantial similarities across the continents in the types of information of interest to small-scale oriented business people – particularly regarding learning or knowledge acquisition, as I would define it. In order to obtain this knowledge, the incorporation of media and its diverse channels into business has become a necessity (UNDP, C4D, 95). In order to secure a long-term change and enhancement of the connection between media and the small-scale business sector, UNDP has recognized a need and implement a policy for not only strengthening local operators but also building media capacity (ibid).

When talking about capacity building for rural community, factors such as cooperation, internal communication and networking also play an important role. Richard Monypenny discusses the importance of achieving competitive advantage for local residents in tourist business, and he identified the culture of collaboration as a mean to obtain it. This culture involves mutual trust and respect, sharing of information and open communication. Doing this way, the necessary competence could be attained (Moscardo 2008: 162). This segment of networking is an integral part of the LEADER, the EU official development approach to rural development. LEADER emphasizes the role of networking in exchange of achievements, know-how and other positive practices and experiences between not only the members of local community but also between locals and development agencies, and other organizations involved in the rural development. (LEADER, 14).

The abovementioned culture of collaboration is clearly absent in the case of my study; on the contrary, at the points when the locals tried to organize and take action, the local political culture was opposing them and acting counterproductively. In the case of site Bor for example, the TOP has demanded locals to lower their prices to an unacceptable level for taking in a large group of tourist for a few days, stripping them off profit. In this particular case they could not make cooperation, and the TOP positioned itself as a competitor or a sort of middle hand in the best case, providing an obstacle for local operators’ work. However, the locals are aware of the need for joining forces in order to improve their enterprise:

...Then I believe what could be great is if we “villagers” get together and create some kind of organization where someone could make cheese and other diary products, someone else could make pastries, and so on...It’s hard to do everything on your own, if we would be in some organization I could manage to take care of the goats, or cattle, and similar...there is a man who has a cattle, there is a woman who could make pies and so on, but unfortunately that coop is pretty poor.
Ruska Radibratovic, camping site Iva

We wanted to open a small food and ethno products shop here in the village, but again some problems with the projects. I thought of organizing villagers, so that one can deliver cheese, the other one liquor, third meat products. I have the ideas, but…

Zivko Kijanovic, camping site Bor

…

Finally, I would like to tell that I’m very interested in any kind of cooperation…

Ljubisa Carevic, camping site Viljamovka

…

We could cooperate with other regions also, and make our offer richer. But this cooperation is pretty rare; we don’t have it in reality.

I: Why do you think that this non-cooperation is common?

IR: Because everyone would like to promote his or her own product, so we need to change that.

Ivana Rakonjac, Head of TOP

In her analysis of Croatian tourist potentials, Marija Ivanis has elaborated a general model on small-scale entrepreneurship, where she discusses the role of tourist clusters as of utmost importance for tourism development. A cluster implies a group or local network of enterprise/s, closely related to each other by exchange of knowledge, goods etc. The benefits of this model of cooperation are many: exchange of knowledge, experiences and human capital, integrality of competence on local level for trained human resources, participation in projects and complementary forces for completing projects that can hardly be solved individually, improved promotion of destination products, rationalization and standardization (Ivanis, 2011, 231–236). A similar kind of cluster in the form of an ICT platform would be of great benefit for mini camping sites in western Serbia since there are not any in the project.

Communication between mini camping sites’ operators is rare, inconsistent or non-present at all. Some of the operators know about each other, some have met at certain point and some seldom communicate. There is no common communication platform acting as a pivot point for the site operators where they could share the information and learn from each other’s experience. There is awareness of the need for some kind of togetherness among operators; they have recognized the potential
in mutual cooperation and the mobile nature of the guests that could benefit them all if they could recommend each other to the guests. I've been asked by *Uvac* owners to disseminate its promotional material at *Viljamovka*. Regardless from CAS web site, this essential communicational aspect is missing completely in the project.

Educational and promotional segments of communication aimed to empower local operators and their enterprise is missing almost entirely. The only promotion they have is through the CAS's web and Facebook site\(^{16}\) (see the picture below). The *Facebook page of mini camping sites in western Serbia* has 285 ‘Likes’ at the time of writing these lines. The site *Bor* also has its own Facebook page.

![Facebook page of mini camping sites and CAS web site](https://www.facebook.com/MiniCampingSerbia?ref=br_tf)

This does not include *Viljamovka*. As I stated before, it is well promoted and visible on the major sites and camping maps in Europe. The head of CAS explained to me that he strongly supported *Viljamovka* because he wanted the owner to realize the potential of the usage of ICT in the contemporary camping industry (App. CAS). They are well aware of the importance of communication in general and promotion in particular, in sites *Potpece, Viljamovka, Iva* and *Uvac* they find it being an essential component, and in *Bor* and *Golovo* they perceive it as probably the single most important element of communication (App. all). Some of their reasoning around the issue are as follows:

*I*: *Was it anything that misses in order to make this project be even better?*

*I*R*: *What’s missing is a financial support, signalization, road infrastructure, educations, guidelines from the experts and promotion, of course.*

---


[https://www.facebook.com/MiniCampingSerbia?ref=br_tf](https://www.facebook.com/MiniCampingSerbia?ref=br_tf)
I: Different kinds of communication, in other words?

IR: Precisely! To raise it all to a higher level.

Ivana Rakonjac, Head of TOP

... 

I: What do you think would happen if the locals would get more empowered? For instance, to receive more education about possibilities of funding or promotional skills?

VD: Absolutely, there is a huge gap to be filled. I could not manage it on my own, I tried in the small scale but we need systemic work.

Vladimir Djumic, Head of CAS

... 

...No use of having everything without promotion! And to make under prices if needed, just to bring the people here.

Radomir Lukovic, camping site Uvac

... 

All of the promotion is on Vladas and CAS sites, now on the Facebook too, and that’s it!

Milojko Cunic, camping site Golovo

... 

This is in close relation to another aspect of communication, the educational one.

Education, as one of the crucial elements for empowering the locals was noticeably lacking in the project. The forms for this distribution and sharing of knowledge relevant for this project could be many: from the workshops, basic instruction for using ICT and computer literacy, service and promotional skills, guides about possibilities of funding and investment opportunities etc...

According to CAS, at the beginning while looking for the potential mini camping sites, some dozen introductory educational workshops have been conducted (App. CAS). After those introductions, no trainings or similar occasions have taken place. Some of the operators have attended certain workshops, but those were in conjunction to their rural household tourism and not camping. The owner from Potpece site attended a couple of workshops mainly thanks to her engagement in several women associations and the workshops were dealing with manufacturing of
local traditional handcraft products. Similar to Potpece’s owner, the owner of the site Bor took part in one similar workshop in neighboring Montenegro as a member of certain ‘over-border’ co-op project. The owner of Viljamovka attended an educational session in northern Serbia where he was learning about the service that he was already providing to his guests, he stated (App. Potpece, Bor, Viljamovka).

By disregarding the educational part of communication in the project, the stakeholders have deprived the local operators of one of the most valuable assets in the rural tourism development, the knowledge. CAS has shown a will and interest to take action, but without sufficient funds on regular basis it would be impossible to achieve any systemic progress (App. CAS). This is what the informants said about it:

*I: Could you tell me something about the multi-level communication? We talked about education; do you think there could be more of it?*

*VD: Absolutely. The education I provided was on an initial level, single-shot, a sort of “teasing” education, and a kind of opening the door. Some of the locals started seriously to work with so little education, and they had some of the benefits.*

*Vladimir Djumic, Head of CAS*

*...*

*...We need more education! I’m young so I educate myself on my own, but...*

*Milojko Cunic, camping site Golovo*

*...*

*I’ve been to some educational meetings, but at a closer look, all I see on the country level is nothing but a money laundry, a crime!... I: Did you have any education regarding camping sites? ZK: No, nothing. We got a small pamphlet, how to organize...*

*Zivko Kijanovic, camping site Bor*

*...*

*I: Did you received any kind of education, do you feel yourself empowered for this work?*

*LJC: Once they brought me to Vojvodina to some education about rural tourism, and I was listening to a guy preaching about things I’m already doing.*

*Ljubisa Carevic, camping site Viljamovka*

*...*

*...do you have some workshops where you learn how to deal with guests and sharing experience with others?*
RL: No, such workshops don’t exist, I talk to the people on the boat and share experience.

Radomir Lukovic, camping site Uvac

4.5 C4D ‘preservation as development’ context: empowerment and the environmental awareness

The notion of preservation of environment is an essential part of development per se, but this might look as if it is lacking C4D perspective here. However, this whole project is based on environmental-friendly premises, and completely aimed for nature loving guests. Needles to say, the local operators are people from the rural areas, living side by side with intact nature for many generations.

According to Stronza and Gordillo (2008), ecotourism could be an incentive for preservation, especially if it generates certain income. The proponents of ecotourism have argued its various principles infinitely, but one thing they have in common was a consent that the great portion of the benefit should go to the local destination in order to trigger positive change (ibid: 449). This is exactly what happened in Viljamovka’s case. The DAZ’s primary motivation for the project was to make locals able to generate certain income and face unemployment. This would be achieved by targeting the tourist group identified as ‘nature lovers’, which demanded preservation of the nature as a prerogative for having them interested, which DAZ stated clearly in the interview. (App. DAZ). Although DAZ staff was aware of this, they have failed to empower the locals in matters regarding preservation and ecology. In his book on ecotourism, its practices and principles, Buckler stresses the importance of preservation of the nature as a precondition for sustainable tourism. He goes a step further explaining various measures for containing the environment non-polluted, where empowerment and education are playing the crucial role Buckler (2009, 299).

The link to C4D could be found in its absence from the project despite its necessity. The only strategy for preserving the environment, as I could understand from the interview was to limit the number of camping places per household to thirty and to provide the proper water and sanitary facilities (App. DAZ, CAS). They have also failed with the latter one, and no educational approach to this essential segment of the project.

The only way to limit is to limit the number of the camping places within certain household in order to preserve nature, and set of other factors that need to be limited in order to keep environment friendly enterprise. …In the national parks it is even stricter, but these focus
groups are usually very aware of importance to keep environment clean. Waste management is one of the most important aspects here.

Snezana Milisavljevic, DAZ Project Manager

Environmental awareness must be in the focus, and here we do not have 500 guests at the same time like in resort, but five or ten or maximum fifty.

Vladimir Djumic, Head of CAS

From the very beginning both CAS and DAZ insisted on preservation of the nature and its resources, and they say that a set of measures has been implemented in order to maintain an environmental friendly activity. DAZ has stressed at several occasions how important it is to keep nature intact; together with CAS they have agreed that none of the camping sites should have more than thirty camping places/parcels. Up to thirty units is considered manageable for local operators to keep under control waist and sewage (App. DAZ, CAS). This aspect has been nearly disregarded by local operators; they assured me they could take in many more guests than CAS and DAZ decided upon, only if there was an interest. Both DAZ and CAS appears they have missed to communicate and stress enough the importance of the environment. Other requirements for being environmental friendly were to provide adequate water and sanitary conditions, disposable materials and solar panels (App. DAZ). However, no training or education in basic waste management has been offered to the local operators, nor has the communicational platform for monitoring of the impact on the nature been established. Since some of the mini camping sites are positioned in the middle of the national park, the rules to apply are even stricter. The main responsibility lays with CAS and its rulebook, asserts DAZ (App. DAZ). This shows an unclear share of responsibility, again.

The CAS is also pointing out preservation of environment as not only a precondition in the project but also as the prime asset of the project, focusing in the first hand on environmental friendly guests. The preconditions for a friendly environment are designated in cooperation with DAZ and the pilot project Viljamovka has received support in terms of building proper water and sanitary facilities (App. CAS). However, this set of policy feels relies more on enforcement rather than empowering. Consequently, out of ignorance, one of the owners has built a cottage in concrete first and then masking it with wood to give appearance of eco-friendly cottage (App. CAS).

These environmental friendly ideas are nothing new to the development community.
It is proven that ecotourism has the potential to sustain rural development, empower local people, protect biodiversity and catalyze new development (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008: 449). In order for locals to act in an environmentally friendly way, the prerequisite is to take sufficient benefits from the enterprise that depends on protection of biodiversity (ibid). What is lacking here is the clear communicational tool focusing on environment, with clear guidelines for what is acceptable and of course, a monitoring platform. This communication platform could be used not only for environmental matters, but also for sharing the experience and transferring knowledge about protection of nature. In line with Stronza and Gordillo, Radnic et al. advocating for Croatian establishing as an eco destination on the world’s tourist map, points out the outcomes for environmental friendly tourism and its impact on local communities. They claim that the locals will directly benefit in the form of preserved not only the nature but also their traditional way of life and demographic revival of the rural areas (Radnic et al. 8). But these benefits stay beyond the scope for my case study since the DAZ and partly CAS, despite their possession of knowledge has failed to communicate it forward to the local communities.

As in many other aspects, none of the other sites I visited has received any support for this aim. In fact, despite their demands, many of the site owners have been rejected from local authorities. These local institutions were supposed to act as an extension of DAZ. Site Bor’s owner wanted toilets on the spot and when I asked the local municipality official why don’t they complete their commitment in terms of setting up the road signs and sanitary facilities, he replied that Bor site’s owner is not a proactive but a demanding person, ‘one that just want more and more’. Both Iva and Uvac have applied for the funding at JICA\(^\text{17}\) and both have been granted, but in both cases the substantial amount of money has been stopped at the local authority’s level. Both are convinced that the money has disappeared due to the corruption on a local level. In the case of camping site Iva, the situation is alarming. The latest development in their dispute with local authorities resulted in the authority’s refusal to carry garbage away, causing serious implications on the nature of mountain Zlatibor (see the picture below).

\(^{17}\text{Japan International Cooperation Agency}\)
According to my informants, none of the households involved in the project have received any kind of education in relation to waste management. It could be interpreted that the environmental part of the project was not being managed properly.
5. CONCLUSION

In this project work I found my hypothesis to be proven.

The ways C4D could help increase the potential and solve the obvious lack of communication of the project of mini camping sites in western Serbia are as follows:

- By implementing the missing aspects of communication between the stakeholders

- To build capacity not only within local operators in the field but also the capacity of other partners in the project (DAZ, local tourist organizations and CAS).

The communication is lacking between the organizers and local operators in the field, as well as the internal communication between the locals. This needs to be improved by establishing a common communication platform for all of the stakeholders. This common platform needs to be easy to access and centralized in order to overcome the obstacles such as poor ICT literacy and/or unclear responsibility sharing between the sides in the project. It could be also used as a space for sharing the experiences and good practices between the local operators, coordination of the joint venture or the flow of the guests. Doing this way, the openness and transparency of shared communicational space would probably enable monitoring of each other’s performance and automatically lessen corruption because of increased visibility.

This notion of ‘shared communicational space’ is in a close connection to Wilkins and Morris concept of participatory communication where in the case of my study, the locals in the field need to share the knowledge and empower themselves. This empowerment would be a pre-condition for a social change, but in order for social change to take a place another requirements need to be fulfilled. These requirements are knowledge transfer from experts to the local operators through a set of measures such as workshops and training sessions, a concept related to the diffusion model within development communication.

The networking and meetings among the locals are also lacking in the project. Although being a necessity from the stance of good practices within rural development, these participatory communicational elements and their implementation would probably been insufficient for achieving an overall improvement in the project of mini camping sites in western Serbia. The more holistic approach is required. As literature suggests, the support from economic–political and other power institutions is another fundamental for achieving community development. Both the bottom–up participatory model and the top–down
diffusion model of C4D need to be combined in order to transfer ‘know-how’ to the locals and then to embody it through the set of good practices in the field. First then the prerequisites for overall enhancement of the project would be fulfilled and the potential of the project expanded.

When talking of knowledge acquisition by local operators, the particular focus needs to be on promotional and educational aspects since these elements are barely presented or sometimes entirely missing in the project. Educational workshops and seminars on regular basis for acquiring basic promotional skills, ICT literacy and environmental awareness could be seen as an integral part of building of project’s capacity.

The capacity building needs to encompass not only the local operators but also all the other participants in the project. The DAZ requires better monitoring of local tourist organizations, and local tourist organizations require better understanding of processes within field of rural tourism and sustainable development. The case study has shown that reliability and the level of trust for these public institutions are very low among the locals, and even the relations between close related stakeholders such as DAZ, local tourist organizations and CAS are negatively affected by mutual mistrust. Building capacity in its physical form such as infrastructure and tourist facilities and in the form of empowerment of the locals could lead to a restoration of the confidence and accountability between partners in the project of mini camping sites.

The pilot project case, mini camping site Viljamovka has proven that when all of the communicational segments are in place and when there is a political consent on topic followed by support of existing power institutions, the outcomes of the project could be interpreted as more than satisfactory. This gives us also a glimpse of how the good practices from the area of sustainable rural tourism juxtaposed to frameworks and theories from the C4D field could be successfully implemented in development projects such as the project of mini camping sites in rural western Serbia.

The case study of mini camping sites in western Serbia is in fact a development project, which sometimes implies that the communication aspect tends to be less represented than the one of economic development. But this certainly doesn’t mean that it is of less importance for the full implementation of the project and its potential. On the contrary, what this case study has shown could be interpreted as that neglecting the communication part in the project, combined with other obstacles such as unsupportive political culture, could threaten not only the full
expression of the project but the project itself to a certain extent.

One interpretation of this case study could be that the potential of the project is suppressed, and that further disregard of the *communicational aspect* in the project will probably put the whole project in jeopardy. Without support from existing power institutions and with the relationships between the stakeholders infected by distrust and suspicion, there is probably not much time left for implementation of C4D practices. In conclusion, regardless of the final outcome of the project of mini camping sites in western Serbia, this case study has clearly shown the importance of taking C4D into consideration already in the planning phase of any project of this kind. It is also essential to follow up that the communication continues to be effective along the whole process.
REFERENCES

- Bennett Nathan, Raynald Harvey Lemelin, Rhonda Koster, Isabel Budke (2012). A capital assets framework for appraising and building capacity for tourism development in aboriginal protected area gateway communities. Journal Tourism management, Volume 33, 752–766


- Bertella, Giovanna (2012). A study about knowledge and learning in small-scale tourism in rural and peripheral area. PhD thesis, University of Tromsø, Norway


- Weinberg, Darin (2002). Qualitative Research Methods, Oxford: Blackwell