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Development of Inbound Tourism for Disabled People from Finland to the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarkoe Selo.

Thesis 2013

Abstract

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Development of Inbound Tourism for Disabled people from Finland to the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo, 26 pages

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The purpose of the research was to develop detailed information on the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo as a potential disabled tourism destination for Finnish disabled Tourists. The information was gathered from literature regarding disabled and accessible tourism and tourism industry, and articles some of which were translated from Russian language. The main concern of the empirical part of the study was to give recommendations to the management of the partner company.

The data for the empirical part was collected by qualitative research methods as observation and desk study.

Based on the findings I was able to describe the Home of Assisted Living as a tourism destination for the disabled tourists from Finland. Recommendation to the Home of Assisted Living were made during research. The results of the research can be utilized by the partner company.

Keywords: disability, disabled, disability tourism, accessible tourism, Tsarskoe Selo, Pushkin

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1 Introduction

This study will look at the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo as a potential disabled tourism destination for Finnish disabled tourists. An other aim is to develop the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo internationally wise while taking into the consideration local competition. The other aim is to look at the area in general and find what can attract disabled tourists into the area. The thesis will try to find the development decisions for the Home of Assisted Living and to give recommendations on developing distribution channels.

Disability as the condition of being unable to perform as a consequence of physical or mental unfitness creates the new segment of a tourism market – Disabled /Accessible tourism.

This study will concentrate on the tourists with mobility impairments only. Mobility type of disability has been chosen because only the physical condition of the tourist is different to the other tourists which creates an ability to use usual tourism information sources in the study plus the fact that tourism for mobility limited customers was found as the most interesting subject for the respected study and interesting aspect of industry. Basically mobility limited customers are having same reasons to travel as other tourists but only their demands are different.

After defining disability more widely, theoretical part of thesis will describe tourism market segment oriented on disabled and accessible tourism. In order to be plan accessible tourism activity for the disabled customers there must be all activities designed while taking into the consideration the disability factor. Buildings and accommodation places must have easy access, organs of transportation must be equipped for the disabled people, guiding and special assistance provided, medical treatment and control must be provided.

1.1 Justifications for researching the topic

Disabled tourists have an opportunity to travel abroad in order to have a tourism experience and qualified recreational and medical services (*Westcott 2004*).

Disabled tourism is a developing sector nowadays all over the world. It grows and has become popular in Russia. Disabled tourism in Russia is extremely young comparing

with numerous countries, however, it has a potential of a relatively vast growth. (Buhalis & Eichhorn & Michopoulou & Miller 2005) .

Tsarskoe Selo region is three and a half hours away from Imatra if to come by bus and 20 minutes away from Saint-Petersburg international airport. This makes it very convenient destination from the point of view of transportation. Tsarskoe Selo is one of the fastest growing and developing areas of Saint-Petersburg. Tsarskoe Selo is an attractive tourist destination and very often visited by tourists from Europe. (ORTU 2013.)

Disabled tourists do have a great chance to combine their holidays with needed medical and recreational services provided by the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo.

The idea of topic arose during my time spent in the Tsarskoe Selo area where I have seen the group of tourists in the Ekatereninsky park, one of the tourists have been a disabled person in a wheel chair and others were able to walk. I had a guess that probably the one in a wheel chair would like to travel with tourists who are disabled as he is, but probably could not find a nice offer. After all I had a discussion with the general manager of the Home of Assisted Living which is situated just in the Tsarskoe Selo area. During the discussion we both came up with decision that the development of tourism activities in the area and particularly in the Home of Assisted Living is very interesting and critically important for both parties.

1.2 Disability

First of all it is important to define disability and its aspects.

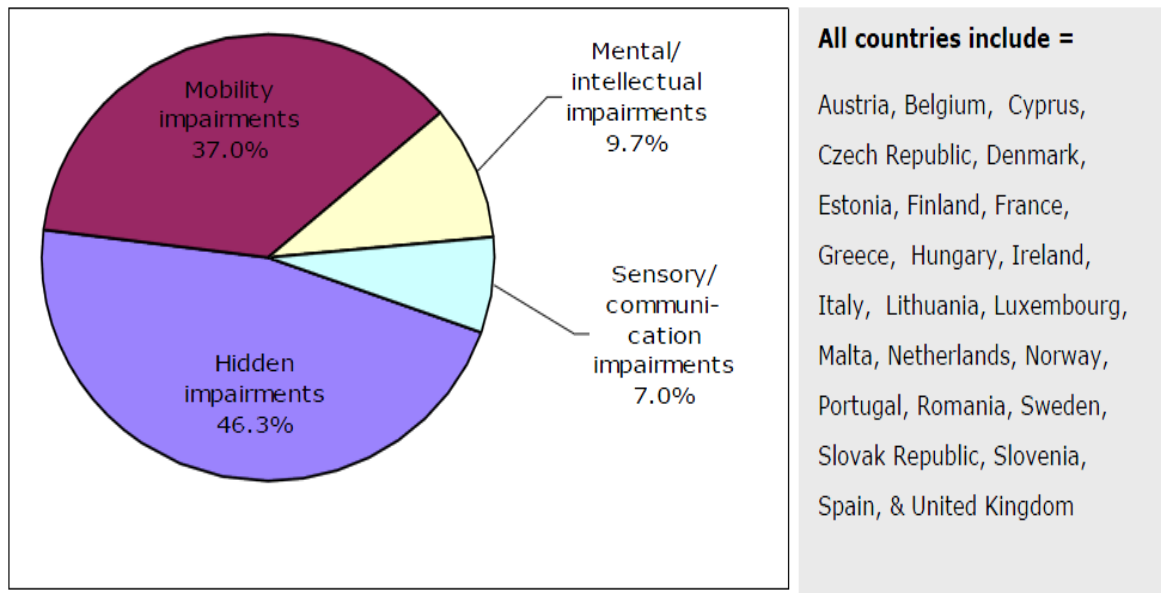
There is a big variety of definitions of disability; the following definition is the most common one.

“Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by contemporary organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities” (Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation 1975).

Disabled person is a person with the limitation of activities connected to the everyday life. There are four major types of disability: mobility impairments, sensory and

communication impairments, mental/ intellectual impairments as well as hidden impairments. In the Figure 1 we can see the distribution of four major types of long standing health problem or disability (LSHPD).

Distribution of major four types of LSHPD (all countries)



Source: Eurostat, 2005b

Figure 1 Types of LSHPD (Buhalis et.al. 2005).

In fact, most people will experience some form of disability, either permanent or temporary, over the course of their lives. Only a small percentage of persons with disabilities are born with their limitations. (Buhalis et al. 2005)

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) annual report 2005 the population of Europe is ageing. One of the main reasons is the baby boom started in 1945 and finished in 1965 after which the birth rates of EU countries started to decrease. (OECD 2005)

The reason provided by OECD is very clear. As our bodies become older we have fewer abilities in physical actions which makes the majority of old people disabled in comparison with youngsters.

The highest percentage of people with long-standing health problem or disability (LSHPD) can be found in Finland (32.2%) (Buhalis et al. 2005).

1.3 Research problem and research questions

An objective of the research is to create a knowledge concerning development of disabled tourism from Finland to Tsarskoe Selo.

The main research problem of the thesis work is: How to develop disabled tourism from South-Karelia region to the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo?

In order to solve this research problem I formed three research questions which are the following:

How to attract customers to go for a trip to Home of Assisted Living?

What is the service concept (accommodation, travel, medical care) Home of Assisted Living can provide for disabled tourists from Finland?

How to organize trips on business to business (B-to-B) level in collaboration with Finnish organizations?

Theory part will describe relevant concepts and will reveal the current knowledge and situation related to the disabled tourism, Home of Assisted Living and Tsarskoe Selo. Three major research questions are going to be lead through the thesis.

The first question deal with the disabled tourism area of expertise and its specialties. Disabled tourism will be studied as a part of international tourism. Aspects like disabled tourism development, marketing, products and other related issues are to be discussed. At this point, needs, interests, expectations and travel profile of a disabled tourist are to be described in order to get a more suitable service concept for the Home of Assisted Living. The second question deals with marketing of the Home of Assisted Living as a destination for disabled tourist from South-Karelia region of Finland. At this stage the benchmarking tool will be used in order to analyze service concepts of companies in Finland similar to the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo. The third question deals with B-to-B marketing. The possibility and concept of B-to-B relationships will be examined in the case of disabled tourism from theoretical and implementation part at the Home of Assisted Living. B-to-B part is going to tell about distribution channels, marketing decisions, various marketing tools which can be handy when promoting disabled tourism on the B-to-B level. Theory part will also include a picture of Tsarskoe

Selo and particularly the Home of Assisted Living as a disabled tourism destination and its tendencies to grow and attract tourists and related companies on B-to-B level.

The empiric part will show how thesis was handled in practice. As mentioned previously, one of the main questions is “How to attract customers to go for a trip in Home of Assisted Living?” To get an answer there is a need for several researches to be conducted. First of all, the current condition of disabled tourism market in South-Karelia region of Finland should be analyzed. Services provided in homes of assisted living in Finland are to be studied. Since the objective of the thesis is to attract disabled tourists from Finland to come to the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo, the disabled tourism market, buying behavior of Finnish disabled and related companies on B-to-B level is to be researched. Empiric part will study the Home of Assisted Living as a destination and compare the services to the corresponding companies in Finland. As a practical part of the study, a lot of information is needed. The potential factors which can stop disabled tourists from travelling will be seriously taken into the consideration.

Table 1. Research process.

Research question	Theory framework	Research
How to attract customers to go for a trip in Home of Assisted Living?	<u>Accessible/Disabled tourism</u> - Relation to disabled tourism in Finland -Description of destination and facilities - Barriers - Infrastructure	Disabled tourism market review. Infrastructure for the disabled tourism at the destination . How to create the motivating factors on the destination?
What is the service concept (accommodation, travel,	<u>Product/Concept</u> - Attitudes - Facilities	- Development of service concept according to the

<p>medical care) Home of Assisted Living can provide for disabled tourists from Finland?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barriers - EU standards <p>Destination: Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo</p>	<p>consumer needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of service concept similar to EU companies
<p>How to organize trips on B-to-B level in collaboration with Finnish organizations?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Marketing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very margin market specifications - Types of distribution channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What are the sources of information for disabled tourist and info's significance? -Development of recommendations for the Home of Assisted Living .

Table 1 reveals connections between research questions, theoretical framework issues and research process.

1.4 Research methods

Scientific consideration of theory is the initial stage of the research. It gives a scientific understanding of the subject. Disabled tourism is quite a new phenomenon in international tourism. Documents and literature about the subject are crucial while conducting a qualitative desk research. The main aim of the research is to create the service concept which will be successful in the chosen market niche. Research contained qualitative marketing research part including desk study, benchmarking and the close cooperation with the Finnish companies related to the topic and the Home of Assisted Living and the Academy of Science of Russian Federation. Marketing research is a tool to define the needs of potential customers and after defining to create the service concept to meet those needs is created (Bennett 1995).

Research studied the service concept of companies already providing tourism services for disabled customers and analyzed their distribution channels in order to create the distribution mix for the service concept in Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo. In

general the secondary research is very important for this study. Secondary data sources are external and coming from online libraries, databases or provided by the partner company.

The second part of research is qualitative. In the cooperation with partner company answers and solutions for the research questions were developed based on the previously finished secondary research. SWOT tool was applied for the Tsarskoe Selo as a tourism destination and for the Home of Assisted Living.

2 Theory

This chapter describes a tourism destination and its attractive factors, tourism system connected to the destination and the general information about the Tsarskoe Selo.

2.1 The main attractive factors of a tourism destination

Tsarskoe Selo can be considered a resource based tourism destination and actually represents one of the symbols of Saint-Petersburg. Being a part of Saint-Petersburg countryside area, Tsarskoe Selo is still well-known among tourists and is perceived as a must-see place when travelling to Russia. The tourism board of Saint-Petersburg constantly maintains the condition of the place and undertakes multiple renovation and renewal projects to be implemented in Tsarskoye selo.

Tsarskoe Selo is a national natural reserve, therefore it taken good care of the governmental organizations. It is a stunning sight of the world architecture and of the garden art. (tzar.ru 2011)

The “Russian Center of development” implemented a special project on reconstruction and development of the sight. The aim of the project was to increase significantly the stream of visitors, targeting at both foreign and Russian visitors, and expand the access to the cultural heritage of Tsarskoe Selo by creating of museum-information-expo system, which provides preservation and recording of collections, make the museum management modern and equip new exhibition halls with modern exhibitions technologies. (<http://www.pushkin-town.net> 2012.)

During the project implementation the following things have been created:

- Structure wire network, which united 33 automated work places, multimedia terminals at new exhibition halls, server with a database and internet access
- Complex automated museum information system, which is a database for recording museum collection items
- Multimedia terminals at new exhibition halls at Jewelry storage and Lambre amber.
- Information center with interactive guide, available in 5 languages.

These innovations allowed to improve internal record systems and improve service for Russian and foreign tourist groups.

Special attention has been given to facilitation of museums with devices for hearing impaired people. Moreover, most parts of museums are facilitated with ramps for special needs tourists for them to move around freely in their wheelchairs. (<http://www.pushkin-town.net> 2012.)

Installation of information kiosks and plasma panels in new exhibition halls and at the Info center will provide visitors with access to the information about museum items and collections. The system will not only modernize museum information infrastructure (which will improve the museum tasks implementation) but also will attract visitors to see new exhibitions, will optimize the stream of visitors during summer peak season and will increase the quality of information services. These will shift the museum to a new quality level on both – short term and long term perspectives (The Official Site of the St. Petersburg administration 2009.)

The project cost estimated is 231,369 USD.

More and more citizens are striving to move to countryside from a hectic city. Pushkin is one of the most popular areas. Recently the government has approved the biggest construction development project which is aimed for construction of upper class and elite blocks of flats. However, understanding that Pushkin is a natural reserve, the governments put a strict eye on contractors so that they would not exceed the terms and keep the construction works within ecologically acceptable limits. (merchant journal www.kommersant.ru, 2011)

2.2 The type of tourism system is connected to the destination

Tsarskoye Selo is an inbound and national tourism destination. Below are the basic elements of the Pushkin and Tsarskoye Selo: Mass tourism attractions (Ekaterininskiy Palace, Alexandrovskiy Park, etc).

Ritchie and Crouch (2005) identify a number of factors influencing the attractiveness of a tourism destination. They are natural beauty and climate, culture and social characteristics, sport, recreation, and education facilities; shopping and commercial facilities; infrastructures; cost of living; attitudes towards tourists; and accessibility of the country.

There are individual attractions like Sofiyskiy temple, Moskovskiye gates, Jewelry storage in Tsarkoe Selo. Russian tourists travel to Pushkin as it is a famous place.

Plenty of important Russian history events took place at Tsarskoe Selo. Local schools and universities bring groups of students for tours around famous and significant places. All Russians are acquainted with famous Russian poet – Alexander Pushkin. His lyceum is one of the places of interest for Russian students.

Russians from Saint-Petersburg choose Pushkin as a recreational tourism destination since parks of the area provide plenty of space for barbecue, outdoor activities etc. For them it is a delightful destination within a short car drive. Saint-Petersburg government also developed routes to Pushkin in order to offload the main highway which used to be the only gateway to and from Pushkin. The system of public transport has also been developed – as buses and route taxis, as well as country trains, developed their routes to Pushkin and Pavlovsk.

Foreign tourists choose Pushkin as their travel destination as the place is one of the best known among all foreigners. We can often see Pushkin on postcards and on tourists websites dedicated to tourism in Russia. Many foreigners perceive Saint-Petersburg and its suburbs as a royal place with magnificent palaces and in their minds it appears as something that cannot be left out of the itinerary. Most of the travel agencies offer group tours to Saint-Petersburg suburbs. Therefore Pushkin is considered as a tourism destination attractive by its royal history, massive palace architecture and natural beauties.

Speaking about customer segments we can clearly divide them into foreign customers and Russian customers. Russian customers can be further divided as “local” Russians meaning those who travel to Pushkin from Saint-Petersburg and other Russians who do internal tourism in Russia, traveling to bigger cities and Saint-Petersburg being one of them. The characteristics of “other Russians” segment are similar to Foreign customers segment as the main motive of traveling is to see the cultural heritage of the place including palaces and parks. Meanwhile “local Russians” segment is slightly different since their major motives include recreational outdoor activities in this destination. Another segment, discussed previously – Russian students, goes under both categories of Russian customers – “local” and “others”. Such groups travel to Pushkin in order to access Russian cultural historical heritage for educational purposes.

Division into mass tourist segment and individual tourist segment can be quite subjective. At the destination itself we can see large groups of foreigners taking tours to

palace and parks. However, this statistic does not exclude the possibility and the actuality of individual foreign tourists of visiting the places. Nowadays, obtaining the information about places to visit in Russia is not a problem; additionally, with the introduction of modern information services available in several languages allows individual tourists to be able to obtain information and take tours without a guide.

Taking into account the behavioral specific of Russian tourists we can claim that most of them travel in families – therefore one of the major tourists` customer segment appears to be Russian family tourist.

Another large segment, as we ascertained previously, is the Foreign group tourists. Let us not exclude a growing tourists segment – foreign individual tourist (FIT).

Thus we highlighted the major segments for Pushkin as travel destination.

Further on let us see factors that are influential for travel planning for such segments:

Foreign mass tourists: probably less demanding out of all segments, since the whole planning is done by the supplying agent. Their major concern is to be taken care of. Regarding the rest – they put the responsibility and fulfilling expectations to the agent and fully trust on this matter. One of the things that they look at by themselves – is the location and accessibility. If they could see if the place is too far from Saint-Petersburg a lot of them would not dare to go. Another motive for a tourist to apply for a guided group tour is unfamiliarity with the place and ways of getting to the destination. Traveling inside Russia by themselves can be challenging for foreigners due to many factors, such as safety, language barrier and stereotypes.

Foreign individual tourists: location and the accessibility is the first thing they look at. Places descriptions at the destination itself must be very clear and available in English. The territory of Pushkin is quite large and it would be much easier for them to move around if there were clear signs all over the place.

Local Russian tourists: they look for facilities. Pushkin has all the facilities that local Russian tourists (including Russian families) look for. The main thing is to constantly maintain them in order to support the condition and avoid negative effects on tourism.

Other Russian tourists: their “factors” represent a mixture of those that are with foreign mass tourists and local Russian tourists. They would also look for a hotel or a hotel-type

sanatorium to stay at, however, as the statistic shows, most of the tourists prefer to stay inside the city therefore the demand for the hotels is not large.

2.3 General Information about Tsarskoe Selo

Pushkin formerly used to be called "Tsarskoe Selo". The town had been renamed in 1918. Pushkin is located 25 km to the South from Saint-Petersburg - about 707 km from Moscow. It is a large both international and local tourism, science, educational and military-industrial center. The town is one of the sites protected by UNESCO as a part of "Saint-Petersburg historical center and related sites complexes". (Wikipedia, 08.2011). "Tsarskoe Selo" has been a royal residence during two centuries and there are numerous historical significant monuments preserved in parks of a total area of more than 600 ha. The main attraction is the Ekaterininskiy palace which impresses by its splendor and solemnity.

Population of Pushkin town is 123 thousand people which is more than 80% of the total population of the area. More than half of the population consists of incapacitated persons - pensioners and disabled people. The average age of citizens is 40 years old. Social-demographic characteristics indicate the ageing of population. The number of incapacitated persons is said to increase by 30% in ten years. (Pushkin Info 2013.)

Structurally, Pushkin is a part of Pushkin Administrative area of Saint-Petersburg. Pushkin area has a developed transport infrastructure with its suburb trains and both social and commercial buses. Pushkin is an internationally recognized agriculture center. Several large research institutes implement unique studies on agricultural studies in Pushkin.(Pushkin Info 2013.)

3 Development of disabled tourism services in Tsarskoe Selo

The first travel company in Russia for people with disabilities has become a travel agency "Liberty." St. Petersburg Regional Public Organization of Disabled and the creators of the urban socio-political newspaper for the disabled "We are a part of society" are the founders of the company "Liberty". During the research I have managed to reach the company`s manager by phone and to get the following information.

One of the goals of the company is to promote the idea of accessibility in tourism. At the moment, Tsarskoe Selo is not developed for travelers with disabilities. Only few equipped places for disabled tourist are mentioned: park and a toilet for the disabled on the ground floor of the Catherine Palace. Installation of special elevators is only in the plans of the administration of the museum (Russia without barriers 2012.) In October 2009, the festival of fine arts for people with disabilities "Tsarskoe Selo Opening Day" had organized tours. Participants from Finland were able to visit the Catherine Palace and Park, Alexandrinskiy Park and the famous Pushkin Lyceum.

12 trips were organized . Sightseers acquainted with the sights of Tsarskoye Selo.

In the excursion programs participated 73 people from among the adult population, of which:

- Visually handicapped - 34 people.
- Deaf - 34 people.
- Physically Handicapped - 5 people.

The tours were organized with the assistance of non-governmental organizations. On each route near the trippers were their attendants, who coordinated them, helped and followed their health. The tourists were provided with insurance, meals, additional services according to the program of tours and excursions.

In order to travel from Finland to Tsarskoe Selo specially equipped buses were used. Buses were equipped with air-conditioning, audio and video systems, anatomical seats with adjustable backrest and they met all requirements for a comfortable and safe journey.

It was considered that people with disabilities sometimes cannot use technical equipment. In this regard, before the tour starts compulsory briefing about safety rules

during the trip in the bus was organized. Everyone was informed about the availability of its technical equipment and instructions for their use and application (The Official Site of the St. Petersburg administration 2011).

Currently, the domestic tourism industry continues to focus on recommendations of tourism organizations in the Soviet period. In order to ensure the safety of tourists and to improve the quality of tourism service there is at least one assisting person for the group of 10 tourists.

The duty of the assistant is to accompany the tour guide during the excursion, control the situation on the route, monitoring the condition of the tourist, make sure that everything is safe during a tourist trip. In the selection of candidates to accompany, preference is given to pensioners, health officials.

During active recreational tourism activities the group gets an additional "personal assistant". Assistant helps people with disabilities in the sanitary self-care, with transport, as well as pedestrian movement.

An important element of any trip for disabled people is travel information. Preparing the trip information and excursion texts intended for disabled people, also has its own characteristics. The quality and manner of presentation is particularly important for the blind and deaf tourists. In preparing the information tour organizers receive advices from professionals working with similar categories of citizens, such as "The Russian society of the blind and the deaf". For an adequate perception of the tour materials by disabled tourist the guide uses a special technique with more emotional flow of information.

Tour organizers described problems of infrastructure that reduce the quality of tourism:

1. Lack of recreational areas (green landscaped parks, equipped places for rest in museums);
2. Lack of conditions for movement of impaired, handicapped tourists ;
3. Lack of parking for tour buses close to places of interest;
4. Lack of public toilets and sanitary hygiene seats adapted for the disabled .

Providing tourist destination for people with disabilities requires the development and implementation of innovations, which include the definition of social tourism policy in the

region, adoption of new laws, creation of social infrastructure, education of the staff, including the organizers.

3.1 Presentation of the partner

The Home of Assisted Living belongs to the Academy of Science of Russian Federation and is highly interested in the respected study, as it will be very useful for the company.

3.1.1 General information

The Home of Assisted Living offers a comfortable accommodation in a green suburb of St. Petersburg. This modern 3-store hotel providing 100 rooms with single and double occupancy and is located in a beautiful area, in the town of Pushkin officially named Tsarskoe Selo in half an hour from St. Petersburg.

According to the governmental license home of assistance living is provides nursing, pre-medical and medical care. Residents are provided with four meals per day. If necessary, meals are delivered to the rooms. Individual nursing observation is possible as well.

Cozy atmosphere, service, qualified medical aid, professionalism provide emotional comfort for guests especially for travelers with disabilities. (Pansionat 2012).

3.1.2 Facilities and activities for disabled customers at Home of Assisted Living

During my visit at the Home of Assisted Living I examined the area for the comfort and accessibility. Following information describes amenities and facilities found at the Home of Assisted Living.

Car Parking:

- Has wide car parks;
- Car parks are close to rooms and main building units;
- Wheelchair ramp;
- Access to the Unit/Room:
- No stairs leading up to the front door of the room/unit;
- Level surface outside room door to enable access;
- Doorways are wide enough for wheelchair access;

Bathroom Access:

- Toilets and showers are equipped with grab rails;
- Shower seats provided;
- Non-slip surfaces used;
- Doorways are wide enough for wheelchair access;

Transport at the destination:

- There is a specially equipped car for wheelchair access with 11 passengers;

Activities enjoyed and participated in by disabled tourists include:

- Relaxing/getting away from everyday routine;
- Enjoying scenery/sightseeing tours;
- Walking (rolling) ;
- Restaurant;
- Visiting parks, museums and other tourist attractions (provided they can participate)
- Sport;
- Concerts and shows (with accessible seating where their partner or friend can sit with them);
- Library;

The booking process for accommodation by disabled persons varies, to ensure availability some will book up to 6 weeks in advance with a help of verified travel agency, in case a tourist is a foreign citizen.

Price varies from 40 euros to 65 euros per day including 4 meals and medical care.

Together with the Head doctor of the home of assisted living we had a discussion and came up with crucial barriers which do not allow to provide Finnish tourists with comfortable stay without preparations and training. First of all, the majority of personnel are either certificated doctors or nurses, the rest are kitchen workers, drivers, handy-men. None of the staff members had neither education nor experience in international tourism, plus only one staff member is fluent in English language, no one from the staff speaks Finnish. We came to the conclusion that in the case of serving foreign tourists the Home of Assisted Living has either to hire a Finnish speaking staff, which is very

difficult, or to train existing staff, which is expensive and time consuming. The only option was to invite the Russian-Finnish translators, together with a group and also to limit the number of tourists in the group to provide the highest quality of service and to pay more attention to each member of the group.

3.2 Potential customers from Finland

Approximately 120 thousand Finnish tourists visited Russia in 2012 (ORTU 2013). Finnish tourism groups are very often seen walking in the Ekatereninsky park and excursions are offered in Finnish language as well.

Approximately 10 % of Finns are permanently disabled in Finland. The number of elderly people, as a proportion of the population, is growing. According to estimations every fourth of Finns is over 65 years old in 2025. (MIT report 2010).

Based on this information I assume that disabled tourists from Finland are a growing market segment in the near future.

Tourists from Finland are more tempted to good service for people with disabilities provided in European Union. In Russia, there are barriers that may affect the decision-making process of potential tourists with disabilities from Finland.

The following barriers apply specifically to people with a disability travelling to Russia from Finland by bus/train:

- Language barrier
- No accessible toilets on bus/train
- The lack of barrier-free public transport
- The lack of accessible accommodation on the destination
- The lack of accessible tourism attractions on the destination

4 Results

Result chapter contains of 2 SWOT analyses, marketing part and recommendations for the partner.

4.1 Tsarskoe Selo SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or in a business (Humphrey 2005). SWOT analysis can be understood as the examination of an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, and its environments opportunities, and threats. It is a general tool to be used in the preliminary stages of strategic planning (Johnson et al., 1989).

In order to finalize the results of research SWOT analysis is chosen as a most useful tool. Further SWOT analysis is done for the Tsarskoe Selo as a tourism destination, in the paragraph 4.3 SWOT analysis is done for the Home of Assisted Living.

Strengths

At the moment tourism is vastly developing in Saint-Petersburg and its suburbs. Government is paying a lot of attention to the development of lands and are generous for investments. Pushkin definitely has a source of funding which is quite deep. Natural resources and historical heritage provide huge space for tourism attraction. Immediate proximity to Saint-Petersburg makes Pushkin easy accessible for all tourists who stay in the city.

Weaknesses

Huge territory which had not been fully taken care of limits the development of the destination. Right now, as we got to know, a lot of construction and renovation is being done, however, it still does not let the destination use its all tourism capacity. Old-fashioned technology applied in museum and information systems does not let the destination function as an accessible tourism destination. Lack of facilities for disabled people and lack of information and services in foreign languages is also a weakness.

Opportunities

Government is interested in constructing new sites at the destinations plus enable facilities with modern technology for foreign tourists and disabled people. The capacity of the place allows opportunity to hold large events in order to attract more tourists.

Threats

External threats such as climate change and financial crisis can delay the development of the tourist site.

4.2 Marketing

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals (Bennett 1995).

At the moment the Home of Assisted Living does two types of marketing activities. First is business to customer marketing, which is based on the search engine optimization, the process of improving the visibility of website in search engine's search result, or paid advertising (paid placements, context advertising etc.). Second is business to business marketing, which is based on agreements with specialized tourism agencies and hospitals.

So far, the Home of Assisted Living has got only one experience of getting a group of disabled tourists. The group has purchased a trip from Moscow from the specialized tourist agency. 35 of 40 tourists were able to move only on a wheelchair, others have been not disabled relatives. During the interview, the Head Doctor of the Home of Assisted Living have described that case as a positive experience and told that feedback from the tourists was quite positive. Since that moment, there have been none requests for a group accommodation. The Home of Assisted Living has agreements with major tourist agencies which organize trips for disabled tourists, but usually they get either couples or individual through that distribution channel.

At the moment, all marketing activities are done only in Russian language. During the interview plans for international marketing were mentioned by interviewee.

4.3 SWOT analysis of the Home of Assisted Living.

In cooperation with the general manager of the Home of Assisted Living and based on research done I have prepared a more detailed SWOT analysis of the place as a destination and accommodation for disabled tourists from South-Karelia region.

Strengths

At the moment international tourism is developing in Tsarskoe Selo. The Home of Assisted Living is only 3 kilometers away from the most visited tourist attraction in the area, also, it is the only one place in the area providing accommodation and catering services for disabled customers. Professional medical personnel is always on duty in case of emergency. Leisure and sport activities, especially designed for the disabled customers are organized on the everyday basis. The capacity of the place allows opportunity to serve groups up to 70 people at the same time.

Weaknesses

So far, one of the most crucial weaknesses is the fact that staff of the Home of Assisted Living is not experienced in providing service for international customers, plus to that the staff is neither English nor Finnish speaking.

Opportunities

General manager is highly interested in serving international tourists, it is planned to make a next research on available partner companies in Russia and abroad providing Finnish speaking assistance staff. It is also planned to focus on building distribution channels with tourism agencies in Finland organizing trips for disabled customers.

Threats

Threats such as the lack of partner companies can delay the development of the service. Finnish tourists might prefer other destinations, so the demand will be critically low.

Infrastructure for tourism for people with disabilities is missing.

4.4 Recommendations for the Home of Assisted Living

In the course of investigating the possibilities of serving tourists from Finland with disabilities I highlighted the potentially significant barriers. Now I will look at a number of actions required to minimize these barriers.

First, the management needs to hire the necessary personnel to be ready to serve Finnish tourists. For high-quality services for tourists from Finland are required the following: personnel with knowledge of the Finnish language: reception manager, doctor, at least two nurses, waiter. Also the group of tourists would need a Russian to Finnish (simultaneous) translator for a more comfortable stay. Hiring the staff is the first stage of overcoming the language barrier. It is not necessary to hire all the staff full-time, it is possible to employ them temporary when the group is coming. The other part of language barrier are promotional materials and signs, for instance, information, plaques, signs, brochures and booklets are recommended to write in Finnish language. These will make already arrived tourists more comfortable and similar materials should be sent to specialized Finnish travel agencies in order to promote the destination.

The language barrier is the most crucial barrier of the Home of Assisted Living as international tourism destination. The second important barrier is the lack of experience of serving international companies. Special trainings and courses are recommended for the staff to be involved in. Management is already working on exchanging experience and networking with similar homes of assistance living in South-Karelia region. During the research a Head doctor has visited three homes of assisted living in Lappeenranta and according to the interviews with Finnish side the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo is meeting Finnish accessibility requirements .

It was recommended to translate the official web-page of the home of assistance living into Finnish language in order to provide potential Finnish customers with the information about the disabled tourism in Tsarskoe Selo.

5 Conclusions

The study looked at the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo as a potential disabled tourism destination for Finnish disabled Tourists. Research was managed in a close cooperation with the management of the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo.

During my research I encountered a lack of sufficient theoretical information about tourism for people with disabilities in Tsarskoe Selo. The only two practical cases that can be referenced in the study are the bus tour without accommodation provided in Tsarskoe Selo organized for 73 disabled people from Finland in 2009 organized by social organizations and the other case is an organized bus tour from Moscow to the Home of Assisted Living for a group of 40 people.

During the study, regular interviews were organized with the staff of "Liberty" company which was the first to organize tour for the disabled tourists from Moscow to Tsarskoe Selo and with the management of the Home of Assisted Living in Tsarskoe Selo.

After research I must admit that at the moment infrastructure for tourism for people with disabilities in Tsarskoe Selo is in a very bad condition, at the same time the Home of Assisted Living might satisfy requests of Finnish tourists for the accessible accommodation and leisure.

In order to develop the Home of Assisted Living as a destination for Finnish tourists with disabilities the list of general recommendations was developed and discussed with the partner's company management.

To my mind, being the only accessible accommodation place in Tsarskoe Selo, the Home of Assisted Living has a great chance to develop internationally and to start from the geographically closest country Finland.

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