

SMART PEOPLE CREATE SMART TOWN



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Abstract. Liptovský Mikuláš is a beautiful town. It is not only a town, but also a wonderful place to live. The closeness of Tatra Mountains is felt throughout the year like nowhere else in the world. Not everyone was lucky enough to be able to settle in the centre of this viable town. If anyone asked what it was rich for, they would get a clear answer. It was not gold or silver, but the jewels of the spirit which were hiding in the modest Mikuláš's families. The history of traditions of this town can become a source of its new spiritual development. The task at present is to optimize the living conditions of the town's population and, at the same time, with regard to their great diversity, to awaken their interest in the city in which they live.

Keywords: *Town, town's history, city, population, availability of services, civic amenities, improving people's lives*

Introduction

Let us not forget that the city is not just buildings but also the people living in it. People make up its natural core. Without them, any ideas on the city's development wouldn't make sense. Cities are people's stories. The basic statistics claim that, in the last century, only 10% of the population lived in cities, in 2050 it will be around 75%, which is around 8 billion people. (*/architektura/urbanizmus/mesta-su-pribehmi-ludi, 2018*). We cannot be indifferent to this prognosis.

We must ask questions not only about the globalization of the city, the urbanized way of life, but mainly about the understanding of the lives of people in this area. There is talk of returning to nature, but the tendency is different - urban structures are becoming more and more agglomerated. This will be the basic space for the people of the third millennium.

1 The city is a living organism

The city has become the most elaborate form and the most comprehensive manifestation of human and social life in the history of mankind. The city is a specific form of building of a human settlement, which was subject to the dynamics of the changes of its time and the development of the material and spiritual needs of its society. Nevertheless, many cities managed to preserve their cultural values, even though these were mostly related to their material wealth.

Healthy cities, municipalities and regions require introducing of sustainable development principles at local level. Their main goal is to develop processes that will have a positive impact on the quality of life, not only of

the current inhabitants, but also on the lives of other generations of its population, all in cooperation with the public. Another requirement is to strengthen the activities and interests of the citizens about public events, with regard to sustainable development and the desires of the people.

A healthy city is therefore to be understood as a whole, consisting of local government, businesses, institutions, organizations, associations and, above all, its citizens.

Urban planners, architects, philosophers, but also the leadership of our town, seek the answer to the question of how to plan a city which is suitable and desirable for living and working (*inspiracie/chcete-dobre-mesto-pozerajte-beznych-ludi, 2018*).

Do we want to live in a prosperous city? The answer to this question is simple – let us look at ordinary people. What makes them create a community? Gradually built relationships based on day-to-day activities and interaction. People not only get to trust each other, but the relationships make the community strong in difficult times. The city must work for ordinary people in particular. No scientific principles work unless the city's design does not consider and observe the life, interests and opportunities of its residents. Everything else is an excess.

What is a role of a citizen in this? If citizens themselves are not active and interested, their problems cannot be solved. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Unfortunately, at present, there are many citizens who have been socially struggling for a long time, have lost their motivation, hope and gave up. They became passive recipients of social benefits and services. Others expect the problems to be solved by the government or the state. The challenge for us is to awaken their determination and to give them the tools to escape from the vicious circle. It is a demanding and long process which requires financial resources, social workers and, of course, that all such people take the responsibility.

What the town government really cares about

What our town government really cares about are people, their opinions, wishes and desires. Where is Liptovský Mikuláš heading? The city, that's not just houses, squares, streets. Without its people, every city would be just a cold wasteland, for the city without people is like a body without a heart (Kultán, 2018, p.1).

It's time to think about where our town is heading. Where people who walk its streets every day are heading; people who go to work every day, children who are hurrying to school or discovering new playgrounds, mothers pushing strollers along the sidewalks, seniors going for a walk, runners, cyclists and all sport enthusiasts, every man who gives our town a heart. That is why the opinions and wishes of people are what really matters to the town government. That is why the largest survey so far of the wishes and desires of the people of Liptovský Mikuláš has been prepared. Once it is known what people really care about, the leadership can take the first steps to start shaping the future of our town.

Foundation to the education about the relationship to the city is the education about its traditions

Traditions represent a certain meaningful content of human activity which overlap the past and the present. They represent not only a link of the past with the present, but their great educational significance lies in the fact that they provide the foundation for the future (Oberuč, 2009, s.80).

Traditions can influence, motivate and regulate the thinking, feeling and behaviour of living generations. One of the basic traits of the traditions is their link to a particular time in the past and social events. They are the means of maintaining socially important resources.

History can be understood as an unpopular record, a list of years and dates of more or less significant events that the city has witnessed during its development. However, history can also be perceived as a phenomenon of Genius loci (a spirit in Roman mythology which protected a certain place). Today, this term is often used to describe a certain characteristic atmosphere of a place where we live, which we visit and pass. The touch of the past is present with every step, whether in the form of historical monuments, natural artefacts or in the way of how local people live.

The history of the town dates back to 1286 (Komárová, Lipták, Škrinárová, 2015) when the village was documented by writing. It was a property of Pongráč family and became the cultural and economic centre of their manor. The town bears the name after its patron, Saint Nicholas. At that time the town consisted only of a building of a Roman Catholic church and a few surrounding houses. History revealed three different names of the ancient seat: Latin Sanctus Nicolaus, Slovakian Saint Nicholas and Hungarian Szent Miklós.

The earliest history of this region began to develop much earlier, in the Stone Age. It was followed by a millennium of Lusatian culture, which is documented by bronze objects, ramparts, fortifications and the well-known Ondrašovecký treasure.

In the first century BC, the Celts with their advanced culture and crafts settled in the valley of the river Váh. Findings of ceramics and jewellery in central Liptov confirm the permanent Slavic settlement of the middle and western part of the Liptovská basin during the Great Moravian period.

It was during this time the Christianity became widespread. It was spread by the Benedictine monks from the pilgrimage sites scattered around Liptov. Some of the names of the hills and sites named after them remained until today (Svorad, Mních). Benedictine monastery in Sielnica was the centre for Central Liptov.

From the 14th century, Liptovský Mikuláš evolved as a principal seat; in 1677 it became the seat of the Liptov district. A legendary Slovak hero Juro Jánošík was executed here in 1713.

The town played an important role in the development of Slovak culture. In the 17th century, J. Tranovský, G. Fejérpataky-Belopotocký, M. M. Hodža worked here and on 27th August 1844 they founded association Tatrín. On 10th May 1848 in Ondrašová, they publicly revealed a document called *"The Demands of Slovak Nation"*. In 1897, the publishing and bookshop association Tranoscius was founded.

Inhabitants of the town were farmers and tradesmen. Tannery was the most developed of the crafts; there was a textile and chemical factory and alcohol refinery. Liptovský Mikuláš was one of the most important centres of the Slovak Labour Movement. 1st May was celebrated by workers as soon as 1890. On the eve of the commemoration of 1st May, 1918 (this year we celebrate its 100th anniversary), the flames of the bonfire shone over the city from the nearby hill Háj. Demonstrators from all over Liptov met in front of the building of Čierny Orol in that May morning. After the parade, over 2000 participants gathered in the court in front of Čierny Orol for a rally meeting where not only social and civic demands were voiced but, for the first time in Slovakia, the participants joined the idea of the common Czech and Slovak state (Güntherova, 1967, p. 239). This significant event is reminiscent by the memorial board which was put up in 1928. (see picture)



Figure 1 Memorial Board on the historical building of Čierny Orol

Liptovský Mikuláš was one of the centres of the national liberation struggle also in later years. Heavy battles over the town were fought in World War II. On 4th April 1945 after two months of fighting, the town was liberated by the first Czechoslovakian military corps in the USSR.

In 1970, 41.1% of economically active people worked in industry. 61.7% of flats, a hospital with a clinic, schools, cultural-educational, tourist, recreational and sport facilities were built during the years 1946 - 1970. (Encyklopédia Slovenska, 1979, p. 74)

Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology which is unique in Slovakia needs to be mentioned, as well as the Jánošík exhibition of the Vranovský manor house in Palúdzka.

Where is our town heading?

It is normal that most people are looking at the town from the short-term point of view. One of the main reasons of why people prefer living in the town is a long-term individualisation of the society. People are more anonymous, which, for some, is a very important aspect. This particularly suits to young people who would finally like to break away from their families and enjoy their anonymity in full.

For this reason, the town is paying great attention to housing construction. Living in the town rather than the village is more important for young people in an attempt to build their careers. A smaller flat in town might be just enough for them. As there are more job opportunities in towns and cities, this is often the main reason why people prefer to settle there.

Another advantage of living in the city is often a financial difficulty, because the best option for young families who do not have enough money to build or buy a house are flats. While construction companies offer small-scale houses at lower prices, the final amount will often be up to three times higher after counting in the land and other additional parts and accessories.

There is also intense restoration of the housing fund. It is always useful to invest more when it comes to the reconstruction of block of flats. House owners who have agreed to renovate, even at the expense of a repayment, usually do not regret their decision. If to reconstruct, than the sooner and in a larger extent, the better. This was particularly true for those owners who are currently using money from the State Housing Development

Fund loans. Those who decided for multiple types of reconstruction works, such as insulation, exchange of old heating pipes or lifts could have gotten a zero interest rate, and that is a really good deal. At the same time, the renovation of the building will bring significant savings on energy usage, such as heating, hot water, electricity in common areas or gas in its own boiler room.

Convenience of living in the city is mainly in a tempting vision that the inhabitants do not have to worry about anything. The apartments in the city are connected to functional engineering networks; residents don't experience issues with the supply of heat, electricity or water. If failures occur, they are removed as soon as possible.

The advantage of living in the city is also the availability of services and civic amenities. That's why some of the parents prefer schools or nurseries located in the city because the choice is wider than of those in villages. Children have also an easier access to leisure activities, such as attending Primary Art School, Leisure Centre and various courses.

Another notable advantage of the city is better cultural possibilities of spending free time. There are more shops, restaurants, cinemas, banks, hospitals and many other institutions. Simply put, life in the city is more active and more dynamic, and it is not necessary to commute for work as much as when living in a village.

People living in the city also appreciate the proximity of the offices and authorities in which they can handle their affairs. There are more nurseries, daycare, primary, secondary

and high schools and they are closer. Reach to health care is also faster. An unbeatable argument for living in the city is the opportunity to engage in various kinds of cultural and sporting activities.

If people feel that the town is lacking peace and quiet, or activities in nature, Liptovský Mikuláš is at the heart of tourism. Any part of the town or the surrounding areas of the Low Tatras can be reached by walking or local public transport.

Northern slopes of Chopok have always been the symbol of skiing. The demanding slopes in Jasná, Závažná Poruba, Jánska and Žiarska valley brought up Slovakian, Europe and World champions in skiing. Currently, Alpin skiing athlete Petra Vlhová and snowboarder Klaudia Medlová are the hopes for the champions who come from Liptov.

World known is also Ondrej Cibák's Wild Water Resort, where Michal Martikán and Elena Kaliská were training to become the Olympic winners. For this reason, from 3rd December 2004, Liptovský Mikuláš became the first town in Slovakia to use the honorary name "City of Olympic Winners".

Two of the world ice hockey champions Jerguš Bača and Marek Uram, Stanley Cup winner Martin Cibák and several other World and European champions live in the town and pass their knowledge and experience to the youth.

The Mayor emphasized that promoting sport and the Olympic thoughts, as well as a healthy lifestyle of children and youth in our town, is one of our priorities. (Liptovský Mikuláš is the City of Olympic Winners, 2004).

Conclusions

Children gradually collect information about themselves and the world around. They receive the perception about themselves from the people who care for them. It is mainly the family, mother and father. Their positive responses support the child's perception of them being loved, worthy of interest, which has a positive effect.

Family not only forms a social group, but its main function is to link people, as an expression of their interpersonal relationships, by which it becomes one of the most important parts of the natural system of human relationships. Family, as a factor of socialization and personalization of the child's personality, "is focused on the analysis of the problem of the relationship between family environment and the process of socialization and personalization of the child's personality".