

ABSTRACT

Diploma thesis deals with the concept of geoparks, which rapidly expand worldwide as a tool for sustainable development. This paper is focused on the socio-economic and educational function of geoparks and their management. The concept of geoparks, geotourism, heritage and its interpretation is generally discussed, complemented by findings from practical researches. These researches are used to create an overview of methods, which are used in sociogeographical researches of geoparks. In practical terms are used qualitative methods, which identify and evaluate the overall functioning of the National Geopark Ralsko and its socio-economic and educational impacts. The main actors in the area are identified by document analysis and direct field observation and the geopark's education and interpretation of the local heritage is evaluated through. The main part of the research is semi-structured interviews with the actors in the territory. Based on these interview is evaluated management of this geopark, understanding and attitude towards the geopark and the functioning of the whole area. Several barriers to the development of the region and the Geopark have been identified. These barriers are discussed with the theory. Local actors also have proposed concrete steps to improve the functioning of the area and the Geopark itself.

Key words: geopark, National Geopark Ralsko, sustainable development, interpretation, geotourism