

# FORMATION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE HUMAN RESOURCE POTENTIAL AS A STRATEGIC FACTOR FOR RUSSIAN TERRITORY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

Olga V. Rogach<sup>1</sup>, Elena V. Frolova<sup>2</sup>, Tatyana M. Ryabova<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Assistant professor at the Department of Management and Administration, Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia, <sup>2</sup>Doctor of sociological sciences, docent, professor of the Department of Management and Administration, Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russia.

Email: <sup>1</sup>rogach16@mail.ru, <sup>2</sup>efrolova06@mail.ru, <sup>3</sup>tani-87@inbox.ru

Article History: Received on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Revised on 01<sup>st</sup> September 2019, Published on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## Abstract

**Purpose:** The development of municipal service professional staff units is one of the most significant factors for Russian territory's sustainable development.

**Methodology:** The information base of the research includes the results of sociological studies conducted by the All-Russia Council of Local Self-Government (ARCLSG) through the sending of questionnaires via the Internet: "Human Resources of Municipalities" (June-July 2013, N = 915); "Human Resources of Local Self-Government" (March-April 2016, N = 582).

**Result:** The results of the expert survey showed that the leaders of local authorities are not fully satisfied with the level of municipal employee professional training. Evaluating the effectiveness of training programs implemented in recent years, most experts chose the following answer: "not all of the required issues have been covered, only a few things can be useful in practical activities". In modern conditions, it is necessary to specify the content of education, taking into account the specifics of the territory, its social and economic problems, the overcoming of a narrow theoretical orientation of the courses.

**Applications:** This research can be used for the universities, teachers and education students.

**Novelty/Originality:** In this research, the model of formation of municipal service human resource potential as a strategic factor for Russian territory sustainable development is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

**Keywords:** *sustainable development, local government, municipal employees, advanced training.*

## INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions of the high level of risks, the actualization of regional and global threats, the problem of socially sustainable development provision is especially urgent. Despite the fact that the concept of sustainable development was first introduced as the response to environmental threats, its definition was based mainly on traditional theories of economic analysis, which tend to leave environmental problems on the periphery of their attention (Castro, 2004). However, the importance of such problems as climate change, the loss of biodiversity, the lack of freshwater, social inequality and poverty develop new criteria for economic activity evaluation.

The analysis of sustainable development theories proposed in recent decades makes it possible to identify a range of key problems that are primarily related to a peaceful and conflict-free interaction, justice, economic growth and environment preservation ([Androsova et al., 2016](#)).

Targeting future generations and their needs determines the consideration of economic growth issues in the context of environmental safety requirements. Leading scientists, analyzing the ongoing global transformations, believe that a new "stability revolution" takes place, which can be compared and opposed to the Industrial Revolution ([Burns, 2015](#)).

Sustainable development can be seen as a political vision reinforced by the theory of ecological modernization. This implies four basic principles: the use of scientific achievements and modern technologies for the purpose of "economy ecologization"; epy application of market-based instruments to "save the environment"; the transformation of the state role in the issues of human resource mobilization, the development of corporate social responsibility; the increase of social movement and organization activity level, their development as the key subjects of sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development is based on such elements as economic growth, social development, and environmental protection. Accordingly, the idea of social, economic, humanitarian, legal and environmental aspect integration concerning the society development is fundamental one. In modern conditions, first of all, local authorities, as the closest ones to the population, have special difficulties in balancing the demands of economic growth, social justice, and rational nature management. The contradictions between the needs for employment, the creation of jobs, the development of industry and the environmental consequences of production increase; between the need to build new

<sup>1</sup> The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project № 19-011-00565.

housing and preserve the natural environment; between the growing needs of residents in the development of social infrastructure and local budget insufficiency are most clearly traced at the local level ([Anatolievna et al. 2018](#); [Kvet & Matiasko. 2018](#)).

The improvement of environmental conditions and the planning of sustainable development for the future ([Mosier, Ruxton. 2018](#); [Makeeva et al., 2017](#)) are the strategic tasks faced by local authorities. In many ways, the effectiveness of administrative management determines the possibility of sustainable development goal achievement in the conditions of limited resources, the increase of poverty and inequality. Modern challenges, the need to adapt to the risks of external environment, initiate the importance of such competencies of municipal employees as problem solving skills (the highlighting of problem components and the determination of constraints), risk forecasting, vulnerability analysis, the knowledge of territorial specifics and development strategies ([Luo et al., 2018](#)).

In this context, the training of municipal administration staff, the development of competencies that ensure the sustainable development of a territory, the equilibrium with respect for environmental, social and economic needs, the preservation of population, business and government balance of interests are crucial.

## METHODS

The information base includes the results of sociological studies conducted by the All-Russia Council of Local Self-Government (ARCLSG) through the sending of questionnaires via the Internet. The first study "Human Resources of Municipalities" was held in June-July 2013. The sample included 915 experts. The analysis of identified problems concerning the professional training of municipal employees actualized the need to conduct repeated sociological measurements, to clarify the positions of experts on the development of professional and personal competencies of municipal employees, to ensure the effectiveness of programs for their retraining and advanced training. The second study "Human Resources of Local Self-Government" was held in March-April 2016, the sample included 582 experts. The wording of the research topics and their content was determined by the ARCLSG expert council with the author's participation.

## RESULTS

Defining the strategic directions of municipality sustainable development, the experts, first of all, noted the need to improve the population's life quality, to create the conditions of meeting population vital needs. At that, the interviewed heads of local authorities gave very pessimistic assessments for the functioning of some social infrastructure branches of the territory that ensure the development of favorable living conditions. According to experts, the highest level of development is characteristic of educational and social provision system. Health care, roads, landscaping, engineering communications had the lowest estimates in the responses of local authorities. In the process of the most significant territorial problem ranking, the experts singled out the issues related to the basic needs of the population concerning the obtaining of housing, communal, medical and transport services in the first place. The issues of environmental safety have not taken the leading positions in the rating of problems, which is attributed not so much to their low significance as to the inadequate resources of local self-government bodies. A weak material and financial base determine the boundaries of administrative influence initially, which focuses the attention of the authorities on the problems that are most actualized in the public consciousness, which appeal to the basic needs of the population. The obtained results correlate with other studies. In particular, opinion polls illustrate that within the events and phenomena that cause the greatest concern among the population, the first positions are occupied by social problems and the issues of material security. 56% of Russians are worried because of housing and utility tariff increase, 51% - because of poverty, low salaries, and pensions. Such problems as the quality of medical services (44%), alcoholism and drug addiction (37%), the accidents on the roads (39%), the lack of housing and the inability to acquire a new one (38%) are quite important. Russians are concerned much less about environmental security issues, technogenic accidents and the threats of terrorist acts ([Yudin et al. 2016](#); [Ulandari et al., 2019](#)).

The experts considered the following factors as the limiting factors of sustainable development: insufficient financial base of local self-government, the problems of staffing, and the dysfunctions in the system of interactions with regional authorities.

The limitation of municipality employees' numbers is one of the most significant problems of local self-government. In the survey of 2013, almost 2/3 of the interviewed experts noted inadequate staffing to some extent (43.7% is enough, but not fully, 21% is insufficient). At that, 42.5% of local government officials are not fully satisfied with municipal employee education levels. In the survey of 2016, the assessments did not undergo significant changes, which indicate the relevance of this problem.

The heads of local authorities noted the lack of municipal employee legal and economic training. In particular, they determined the directions which have the need for training according to experts: the financial and economic foundations of local government, the development of municipal targeted programs, the organization and the conduct of tenders to place the orders for state and municipal needs. When the answered the question about the key management problems typical for modern municipalities, the following answer was the most popular one (32.3%) - "lack of professionalism among the management personnel of the municipal service". According to experts, local government officials are not fully competent

to implement the strategies of the territory's sustainable development. Existing practices of advanced training and retraining do not provide compensation for these problems. Evaluating the effectiveness of the training programs implemented in recent years, most experts (64.3%) chose the following answer: "not all of the required questions were covered, only few things can be useful in practice." The opportunities for experience exchange between municipal entities, the specification of training content, taking into account the specifics of the territory, its social and economic problems, the overcoming of a narrow theoretical orientation of the courses are considered as the factors for training program effectiveness increase (see Table 1) ([Garavan, T. N., Carbery, R., Ardichvili, A., Zavyalova, E., & Minina, V. \(2012\)](#)).

**Table 1:** Distribution of answers to the question: "In your opinion, what would contribute to the effectiveness of training programs for municipal employees?" %

Answer option	%
The overcoming of a narrow theoretical focus of training programs	5,75
A more detailed consideration of legal aspects, which allows more effective adaptation to new conditions of the municipal government	18
Consideration of municipal government best practices;	23,25
The specification of programs taking into account the realities of a particular municipal entity activity, its socio-economic problems;	16,5
The organization of interaction between municipalities and local self-government bodies with the aim of experience exchange and inter-municipal cooperation practice expansion;	18,75
Distance learning;	6
Individual approach, the level of training program variability increase, taking into account the educational needs of students in a particular field (economics, marketing, law or another field);	9,75
Other option	1,25
Difficult to answer	0,75

Modern leaders of local authorities, regard the increase of training program efficiency as strategic guidelines, first and foremost, those that would ensure the exchange of experience, the familiarization with the best practices of municipality development. Such a factor as "the concretization of programs taking into account the realities of a particular municipal entity activity" is equally significant. These estimates indicate certain limitations of traditional occupations, in which trainees acquire already "known" knowledge (Jain, 2005). Extremely dynamic conditions of the external environment imply the need for their constant update and the acquisition of new competencies. Accordingly, knowledge itself does not always provide opportunities for their integration and the "relation" with professional, practical skills becomes the deciding factor. "The accessibility of information and almost zero cost of its storage and transfer" initiates a turn to such forms of training that develop skills to assess and solve the problems in specific territorial conditions (Jones, 2008)

Constantly changing legal framework, new requirements for local self-government, the need for a balance between limited financial resources and the population needs put the heads of local authorities in a rather difficult situation. In these conditions, the professionalism of management personnel, the willingness to innovate, and to search for new solutions in the situations of uncertainty is a key factor to ensure sustainable development of the territory.

In modern conditions, there is a certain contradiction between those requirements for municipal employees, which are formed under the impact of new socio-economic and environmental risks and real professional competencies, the level of management training. The achievement of sustainable development goals is impossible without competence in the field of human resources management, environmental education, and economic planning. The skills of harmonizing the interests of various social groups, resource consolidating ([Cárdenas Erick, ByrdLauren, Duffy, 2015](#)) are of particular importance.

In the course of the study, the limiting factors of local authority staffing were divided into two groups: institutional and organizational. Institutional factors should include a high level of activity intensity, determined by a significant number of control and surveillance activities carried out by state authorities, an excessive workload, the conflict risks in the interactions with regional and federal authorities, inadequate local budgets, and the restrictions of local government autonomy.

The results of local authority head survey revealed the significant limitations in the autonomy of local self-government, a high level of human and organizational resource diversion from really significant problems of a municipality to ensure the

interaction with state authorities during control and supervisory activity conduct. The overwhelming majority of experts noted an unacceptably overestimated number of inspections and control measures conducted by public authorities.

The total number of controlling bodies exercising control and supervisory measures in relation to local self-government bodies exceeds two dozen. At that, the statistical inquiries of various monitoring bodies often duplicate each other in content, differing only in reporting form, which was noted by many experts during the survey.

A high level of regional elite influence on the activity of local authorities in the matters of interbudgetary transfers of authorities control and transfer strengthens the destructive processes of municipality staffing. In modern conditions of power centralization, a paternalistic model of local self-government is developed, stimulating the development of such qualities of municipal employees as the lack of initiative, conformism, the orientation towards a formal result and the evaluation of higher authorities, and not local residents, in whose interests administrative activities should be carried out.

Organizational factors are caused by an insufficient efficiency of training, retraining and advanced training programs for municipal employees, and by personnel policy dysfunctions. Existing restrictions of the regulatory and legal framework reduce the effectiveness of local authority personnel training and retraining in many respects. Thus, the procedure of municipal order placement and trade conduct leads to training quality decrease in a number of cases in view of the cost criterion priority, negates the possibility of a long-term relationship with one educational institution. This factor initiates the fragmentation of training, the lack of consistency in the training of municipal employees ([Kutsenko, E. \(2015\)](#)).

## DISCUSSION

The normative consolidation of a long-term (at least 5 years) strategic partnership of municipalities united within a territorial cluster with a higher education institution can be a promising mechanism for an effective municipal service cadre corps development.

The main goal of social and educational cluster development is not only to raise the professional level of elected persons and the officials of local self-government, but also to achieve a synergistic effect on their interaction in the interests of a municipality sustainable development. The diversity of municipalities, a high level of regional differentiation, the specificity of territorial problems reduces the effectiveness of a unified approach to the organization of municipal personnel training significantly. Moreover, in modern complex socio-economic conditions not universal theories of state and municipal government, but practical-oriented training based on deep knowledge and research of particular territory-specific problems is the most popular.

Long-Term cooperation of a number of municipalities united within a cluster and a higher educational institution has a number of advantages:

1. The possibility to develop a concept for a continuous update of municipal employee professional competencies, taking into account the socio-economic specifics of the territories included in the cluster;
2. The provision of educational program content relevance for municipal employee training concerning the social and the economic needs of the territory ([Bobilev, N. \(2009\)](#));
3. The expert support of local authority activities by the teaching staff of a university;
4. The provision of accumulation and the transmission of long-term experience, the best practices of municipal government, the creation of conditions for experience exchange and the organization of inter-municipal cooperation.

The latter activity trend is particularly relevant, given the economic problems of local budget provision. The consolidation of financial resources will allow meeting the population needs more efficiently. One of the limitations concerning the processes of inter-municipal cooperation in Russian Federation is an insufficient level of interaction between local government bodies, which is determined, first of all, by the lack of an organizational mechanism that ensures the integration field of municipality horizontal links. The functioning of social and educational clusters will allow to establish stable communication links between the heads of local authorities, providing also an expert assistance to the representatives of the scientific community, which will reduce together possible conflict risks, certain socio-psychological barriers to the implementation of cooperation, and will enhance the professional preparedness for its implementation.

There are the following tasks of a higher educational institution activity in the framework of a strategic partnership:

1. The organization of research, the analysis of territorial problems, constraints, and resources for sustainable development.
2. The development and the implementation of advanced training programs relevant to the actual needs of a municipality. The development of an advanced training plan for each employee based on the implementation of systematicity and consistency principle in the learning process. The participation in competitive commissions for the certification of personnel, the assistance in personnel policy development for municipality administration.
3. The provision of consulting services, expert assistance and the assessment of local authority activities, project activities aimed at a territory sustainable development.



4. The provision of interaction processes between the heads of local authorities, public organizations, the experts in the framework of conferences and seminars. The development of an enabling environment for the implementation of inter-municipal cooperation processes.

## SUMMARY

The formation of a professional cadre corps for the municipal service is one of the most significant sustainable development factors of a territory. The complexity of the task posed determines the need for attraction, the fixation of highly qualified management personnel at municipal service, the creation of conditions for their professional development. The need for a constant update of the cadre corps knowledge of local self-government bodies is determined, on the one hand, by the constant complication of operational tasks arising in the course of management activities, and, on the other hand, by the most important things, the importance of professional competencies ensures a municipality sustainable development. According to the results of surveys conducted by local government managers, an insufficient level of municipal employee training is not fully compensated by retraining and advanced training programs. In modern conditions, it is necessary to specify the content of education, taking into account the specifics of a territory, its social and economic problems, the overcoming of a narrow theoretical orientation of the courses. A key mechanism for these tasks solution can be the conclusion of a long-term strategic partnership of municipalities united within a territorial cluster and a higher education institution. A long-term cooperation will allow implementing the concept of professional competence continuous update for municipal employees, taking into account the territorial specifics, to develop a plan improving the qualification for each employee on the basis of systematic and consistent training principle, to provide an expert support for local authority activities, and to promote the best practices of municipal government.

## REFERENCES

1. Androsova I.V., Melnichuk A.V., Bondaletov V.V., Vinichenko M.V., Duplij E.V. (2016). On the Issue of State Support of Agriculture: Regional Aspect. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*. 6 (S1): 114-119
2. Anatolievna, M. E., Alexandrovna, O. V., Petrovna, T. V., Petrovich, T. A., & Arkadievna, S. M. (2018). Concert repertoire as a precondition for performance competence formation of music educator. *Opción*, 34, 133-148.
3. Burns T. R. (2015) Sustainable development: Agents, systems and the environment. *Current Sociology*. Vol 64, Issue 6, pp. 875 – 906. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392115600737>
4. CárdenasErick D. A, ByrdLauren T., Duffy N. (2015) An exploratory study of community awareness of impacts and agreement to sustainable tourism development principles *Tourism and Hospitality Research* Vol 15, Issue 4, pp. 254 – 266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358415580359>
5. Kvet, M., & Matiasko, K. (2018). Temporal Data Performance Optimization using Preprocessing Layer. *Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management*, 3(2), 13. <https://doi.org/10.20897/jisem.201813>
6. Luo, C., Li, M., Peng, P., & Fan, S. (2018). How Does Internet Finance Influence the Interest Rate? Evidence from Chinese Financial Markets. *Dutch Journal of Finance and Management*, 2(1), 01. <https://doi.org/10.20897/djfm/89590>
7. Makeeva D. R., Kryukova E. M., Shadskaia I. G., Mukhomorova I. V., Egorova E. N. (2017) The Economic Aspect Of Development Of Sphere Of Services Of The Russian Federation On The Example Of Ecological Tourism. SGEM International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference On Social Sciences And Arts. 2017. Book 1, Vol 4. P. 793-800. <https://doi.org/10.5593/sgemsocial2017/14/S04.102>
8. Maslikov V. A. (2017) Organic model of sustainable development of society. *Social policy and sociology*. Vol. 16. No. 1 (120). P. 114-122. <https://doi.org/10.17922/2071-3665-2017-16-1-114-122>
9. Matraeva L. V., Vasyutina E. S.(2017) Sustainable economic growth in Russia: prospects and system calls. *Social policy and sociology*. Vol. 16. № 3 (122). P. 29-40. <https://doi.org/10.17922/2071-3665-2017-16-3-29-40>
10. Mosier S., Ruxton M. (2018) Sustainability university–community partnerships: Lessons for practitioners and scholars from highly sustainable communities. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. January 8, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654417749593>
11. Ulandari, L., Amry, Z., & Saragih, S. (2019). Development of Learning Materials Based on Realistic Mathematics Education Approach to Improve Students' Mathematical Problem Solving Ability and Self-Efficacy. *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education*, 14(2), 375-383. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iejme/5721>
12. Yudina T. N., Frolova E. V., D. K. Tanatova, Dolgorukov, I. V., O. V. Rodyakin (2017) human Security and victimization concerns. *Journal of sociology and social anthropology*. No. 1. P. 114-127. <https://doi.org/10.31119/jssa.2017.20.1.7>
13. Kutsenko, E. (2015). Pilot innovative territorial clusters in Russia: A sustainable development model. *Форсайт*, 9(1 (eng)). <https://doi.org/10.17323/1995-459X.2015.1.32.55>
14. Trukhachev, A. (2015). Methodology for evaluating the rural tourism potentials: A tool to ensure sustainable development of rural settlements. *Sustainability*, 7(3), 3052-3070. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su7033052>
15. Nonaka, I. (1994). A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation. *Organization science*, 5(1), 14-37. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.5.1.14>



16. Popkova, E. G., Dubova, U. I., & Romanova, M. K. (2013). Designing the territorial marketing strategy on the principles of cluster policies. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 22(4), 571-576.
17. Garavan, T. N., Carbery, R., Ardichvili, A., Zavyalova, E., & Minina, V. (2012). Human capital development: comparative analysis of BRICs. *European Journal of Training and Development*.
18. Bobylev, N. (2009). Mainstreaming sustainable development into a city's Master plan: A case of Urban Underground Space use. *Land Use Policy*, 26(4), 1128-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2009.02.003>
19. Suopajarvi, L., Poelzer, G. A., Ejdemo, T., Klyuchnikova, E., Korchak, E., & Nygaard, V. (2016). Social sustainability in northern mining communities: A study of the European North and Northwest Russia. *Resources policy*, 47, 61-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2015.11.004>
20. Kovalenko, E. G., Polushkina, T. M., & Yakimova, O. Y. (2015). The mechanism of the state regulation of sustainable development of rural areas. *Asian Social Science*, 11(8), 181. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n8p181>