

THE USAGE OF THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK METHOD IN ESTABLISHING THE PROJECTS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES' DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study tries to highlight the importance of the logical framework method for the planning process of the projects and implicitly the role of the projects for the rural communities' development. For the study and analysis we selected Ghizela commune from the North – Eastern part of Timis county. The entire Romanian rural space and the analyzed rural community faces infrastructural, demographic and mainly economical problems, the agriculture is the main source of income for the members of this community. Thus, by this study we would like to solve one of the problems this community is facing: the lack of incomes from alternative activities, a project based on the natural, human, cultural and historical resources which can be found in Ghizela commune. Also the proposed project is meant to encourage and to stimulate the local initiatives, taking into consideration that the members of the community don't have initiatives in starting small rural businesses which could provide incomes from other activities. The allocated budget is small because the project is based mainly on the involvement of the community members so that they can gain confidence in their own forces.

The project is based on practicing tourism, especially agro-tourism, at a smaller level because the tourists are children from the schools from Timisoara. In fact, by this project we try to attract children from schools to the rural environment in order to know the rural life with all its aspects, during this period they will perform both didactic and leisure activities. The local farms will be involved in the project; they will provide accommodation and meal for the "small tourists", offering natural fresh products produced in their own farm.

Key words: logical framework approach, project, development

The rural development and improvement is one of the most complex problems of the present, and this is due to the fact that it involves the realization of a balance between request of economic, ecologic and socio-cultural preservation of the rural space, on one hand, and the modernization tendency of the rural life, on the other hand. In the same time, the rural development and improvement is at the junction between the expansion tendency of the urban, the industry development in the detriment of the rural space and the request to maintain as much possible the rural environment at its actual sizes. So, the rural development and improvement, which registers the modernization, Europeanization tendency at the level of each country, is focused on the maintenance and the preservation of the national characteristic of the rural space and culture and where there are serious local, regional and national damages, the areas have to be restored, meaning bringing them back to the rural standards.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The information on which this study is based on are taken from different sources: specialized literature, information obtained through usual means where the operators inform about the current situation and the problems they are facing and personal research. For the elaboration of the project we used the logical framework method, but also other management specific methods and techniques and we applied also the direct observation and the systemic research. In the planning process of the proposed project, we went through the following steps: description of the current situation, problems analysis, objectives analysis, SWOT analysis of the project, elaboration of the logical framework matrix and of the action plan of the project (Gantt diagram).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of Ghizela commune highlighted beside the natural, human, historical

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and human resources, a series of problems from which we selected the lack of incomes from alternative activities of the locals, generated mainly by the lack of initiative of the local community, the lack of investors, the reduced degree of natural, cultural and historical resources valuation for touristic purposes, all these have a direct impact on the local economy.

In the present we can notice a poor diversification of the locals' activities, they are practicing mainly agricultural activities in their own households, but which, unfortunately do not offer benefits. So, in order to have a clear image of the situation, the purpose of this study is to identify the causes of this problem and its effects. Based on this analysis we realized the problem tree represented in figure 1.

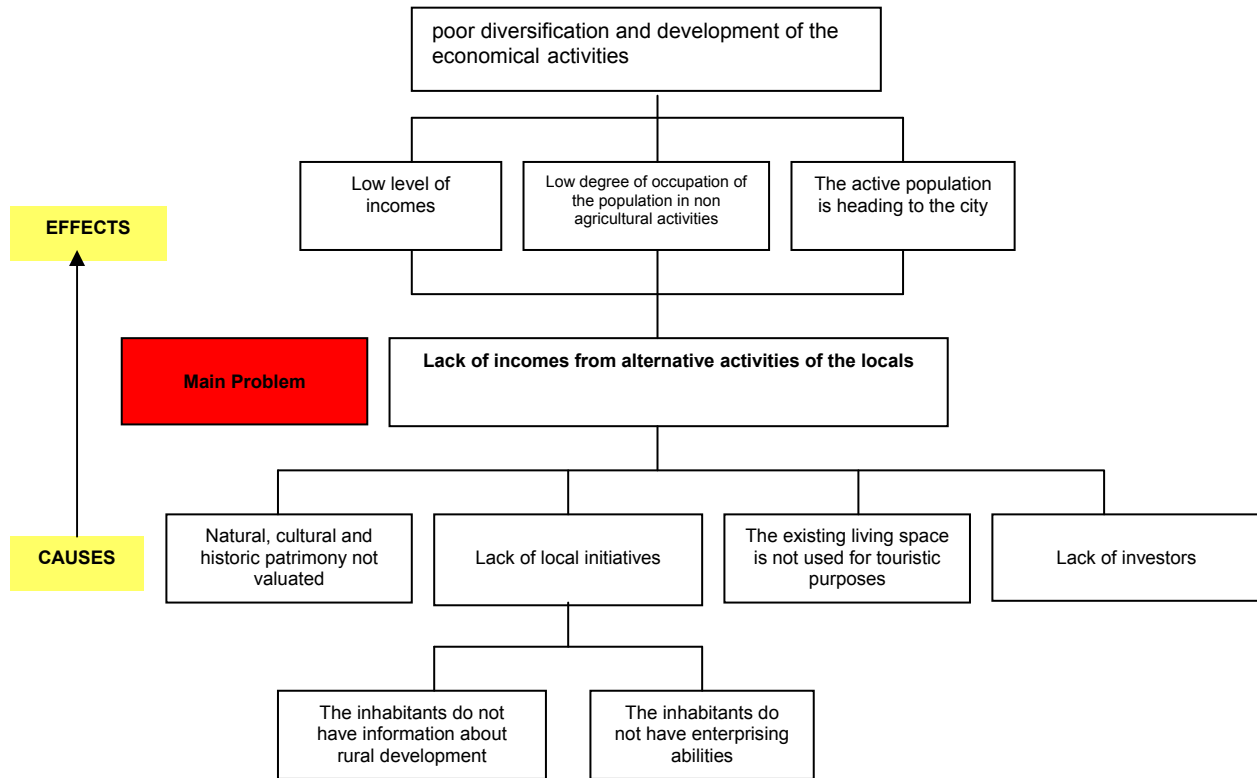


Figure 1 Problem tree

This problem tree presents the full image of the existent negative situation which is intended to be improved by the implementation of the proposed project. By realizing the problem tree, the causes of the lack of alternative incomes were identified: lack of local initiatives, natural, cultural and historic patrimony is not highlighted; the living space of the locals is not used for touristic purposes, lack of investors. In the same analysis we mentioned also the most important effects generated by this problem which lead to the poor diversification and development of the economical activities.

We should mention the fact that even if some of the causes were identified, not all of them can be solved by the project which will be proposed because they do not belong to the local community competence or they can be the starting points for other projects. Based on the problem tree, through the positive reformulation of the problems which became objectives we realized the

objective tree. The objective tree offers a clear perspective of the future improved situation (figure 2). By realizing the objective tree we identified the general objectives of the project which will be proposed: development and diversification of the economical activities, a higher level of incomes of the locals, increase of the degree of population occupation, involvement of young people in the activities of the commune.

The activities from the proposed project will be focused on achieving the proposed objectives, meaning attracting students in the rural environment with didactic and leisure purposes by promoting the initiative, by using the households for the students accommodation, by valuating the natural, cultural and historical patrimony, by initiation courses in agro-tourism for the household owners and by involving the locals in different leisure activities.

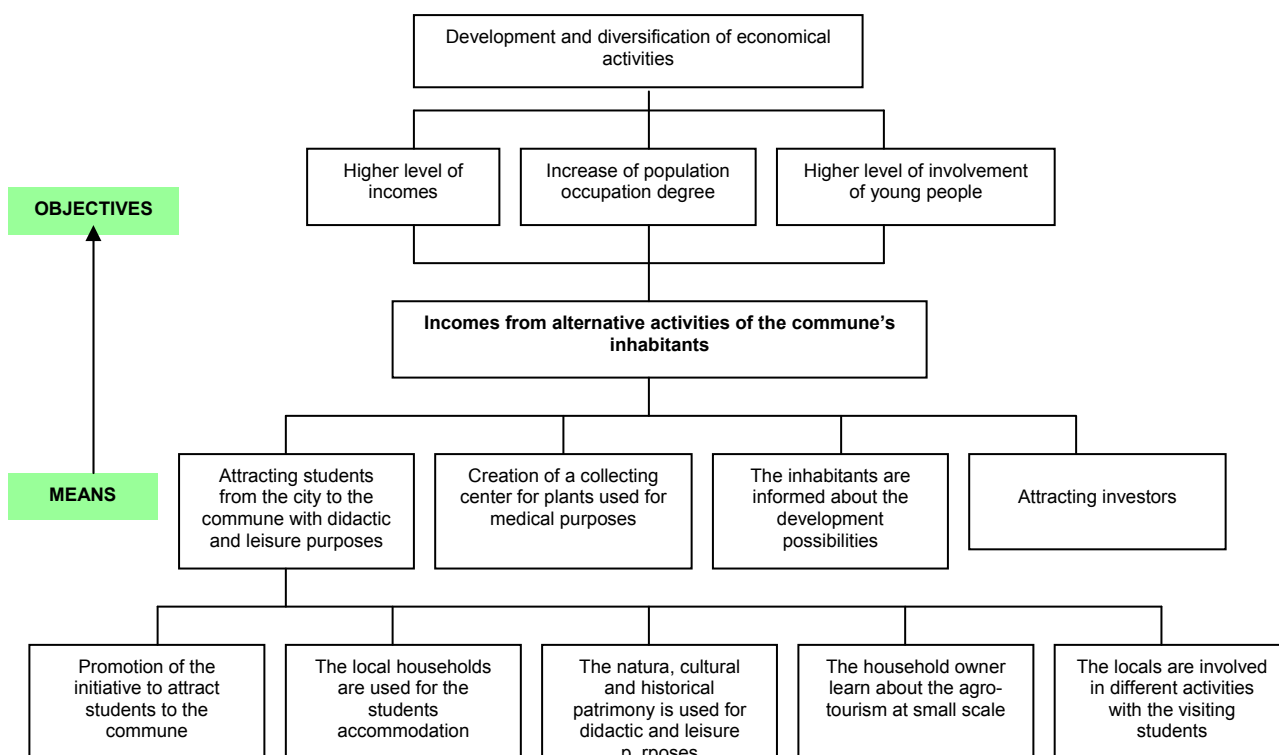


Figure 2 Objective tree

The idea of the project came from the need to ensure incomes from alternative activities for the locals, taking into consideration the existence of the natural, cultural and historic patrimony which still not valuated and of the living space which can be used for touristic purposes based in the same time on the excessive modernization of the cities revealing amazing situations like children who don't know to identify in reality some plants or animals, who don't know from where the products they are consuming come from, who don't know how to socialize and who are spending most of their time in front of the computer. Also, the elaboration of the project took into consideration the fact that in the area there is no precedent in practicing tourism and the investments needed for the tourism infrastructure would be very high.

The project is also focused on the creation of a center for the students from the city where they can spend a part of their summer holiday, the local communities and the educational units are responsible with the implementation of this project. Thus, any household which can offer accommodation and meal for the small tourist can be involved in the project, being paid according to the number of students which receive accommodation. The target clients are the students from the schools from Timisoara from I to VII grade.

As localization, the project concerns Ghizela commune and its villages. The project is initiated

by the local authorities and financed from public funds. The total costs of the project are 2300 lei and the implementation period is may – august 2012 (4 month).

The proposed project is addressed to any household which fulfils the following conditions: practices agricultural activities and offers a certain level of comfort for the small tourists (water supply, bath room, TV, etc). By implementing the project, the locals have the possibility to learn what agro-tourism means, at a small scale, and how important can be this activity for the incomes of the household. Also, by this project, the local initiative is stimulated by offering a valid business model and the locals will gain confidence in their own.

The target groups affected by the implementation of the project are the households from the 4 villages of Ghizela commune which are the direct beneficiaries of project, the local authorities and the educational units which are responsible with the implementation of the project, and also all the students who will have access to the services of this center. The beneficiary of the project will be the local economy by increasing the occupation level of the population, increasing the population incomes and increasing the interest for practicing non agricultural activities. Also, the small tourist can come back to the households together with their parents ensuring the practice of the real agro-tourism.

These activities are focused on the involvement of the locals, to offer them an image of the agro-tourism practicing, even if the initiation courses were budgeted with 500 lei and the presented notions will be immediately applied in practice. So, for the presentation of the history of the commune we choose an elder inhabitant. Also, we involved locals who will provide trainings in artisan activities or dancing. All the activities are complying with the objectives of the development strategy which are focused on the involvement of the locals in the local development. An important place is held by the popular costume parade, presentation of the local traditions and gastronomy where the main actors are the local children, coming from the host households. And, because the purpose of the center is not only a leisure one but also didactic all the activities will be materialized in exhibitions and festivals of the small tourists on the last day in the camp.

For a clear image of the situation we realized the SWOT analysis of the project we want to implement. The most important advantage offered by the implementation of the project is represented by the alternative incomes obtained by the households, which is also the purpose of the project, beside this the project ensure the usage of the living space for touristic activities, the valuation of the natural, cultural and historical patrimony, the strengthening of the local identity, the valuation of the productions obtained in the household. Another strength of the project is the social impact on the small city children who will be qualified as small tourists and who have the possibility to leave for a period the city environment with all its advantages and disadvantages. During this period the students have the opportunity to socialize with children of the same age and to discover the beauty of the rural environment.

The weaknesses of the proposed project are the lack of knowledge in practicing tourism, mainly agro-tourism, and the poor development of the infrastructure.

One of the opportunities of the project is the access to European funds, taking into consideration that up to date the Romanian absorption degree related to the community fund is very low, and the fact that through projects like this one the local community will gain confidence and in the near future will focus on accessing these funds to implement projects for local development. Another opportunity of the project is represented by the practice of agro-tourism at a larger scale, determined by the parents visit to the households

with touristic purposes; this is the first step in the development of agro-tourism in the area.

The risks of the project are related to the low natural potential of the area for practicing agro-tourism, the involvement of the local authorities and of the community in the infrastructure development is necessary. Another risk of the project, and maybe the most important, is the parents' attitude toward this type of spending the vacation. We consider that for the attenuation of this risk, the advertising campaign should be also true not only convincing and the offered conditions should be exceptional and if these conditions are respected the center will continue to function also in the following years. If the project will be successful, the activities of the center can be extended, collaborating with the schools from Timisoara to organize trips focused on ecological and nutritional education of the city children. Also, trips for the commune children can be organized for visiting museums, botanic gardens, zoological parks, cultural objectives, etc.

The planning process of the entire project is summarized in the logical framework matrix, were we present: the global objective, the purpose of the project, the measurable objective indicators, the checking sources, the risks and results of the project.

From the logical framework matrix we can notice that for the realization of the global objective, the diversification and development of economical activities, the following indicators were set: increase of the involvement degree of the young people with 30% in the period may – august 2012 and the increase of the percentage of the incomes from non agricultural activities with 20% related to the total incomes. Achieving these indicators can be checked using the local statistics. The risks which can alter the achievement of these objectives are the international crisis which is affecting all the sectors and the natural disasters which can influence the diversification and the development of the activities and the project implementation (table 1).

For the realization of the specific objective, the alternative incomes for the households, we forecasted a 10% increase of the locals' incomes from non agricultural activities and a 20% increase of the products valuation degree, taking into consideration that the small tourists will consume products from the host household. The sources which can be used for checking are the local statistics, and as risks we identified the natural disasters.

Table 1

Logical framework matrix of the project “generation of alternative incomes for the households from Ghizela commune”

Summarized description	Measurable objective indicators	Checking sources	Assumptions (risks/constrains)
Global objective: diversification and development of economical activities	- increase of the involvement degree of the young people in the commune's activities with more the 30% in the period may – august 2012 - increase of the percentage of income from non agricultural activities with 20% from the total incomes	- local statistic (town hall)	- international crises - natural disasters
The purpose of the project (specific objective): Alternative incomes for the households	- 10% increase of the locals incomes from non agricultural activities, during the period may – august 2012 - 20% increase of the products valuation level	- local statistics (town hall)	- natural disasters
Results: 1. the initiative is advertised in the schools from Timisoara 2. students accommodation in the local households 3. the valuation of the natural, cultural and historical patrimony with didactic and leisure purposes 4. the household owners learn about small scale agro-tourism 5. the locals are involved in different leisure activities	- printing of 1000 leaflets in order to promote the project - accommodation for 20 students/series (80 in total) - trip organization - specialized contests - leisure activities organized by the locals	- invoices - requests - participation diplomas for the specialized contests - exhibits, festivals	- the existence of much more attractive camps - the parents reservation toward the way of spending the vacation
Activities			Costs
1.1. the realization of presentation movie			50
1.2. elaboration and printing of advertising materials			200
1.3. meetings with the teachers and parents from the schools from Timisoara			200
1.4. collaboration contracts with the schools which are open to this initiative			-
1.5. starting to make the lists of requests			-
2.1. presentation of the household and family			-
2.2. accommodation and meal			-
2.3. involvement of students in family activities			-
3.1. the restoration and set up of the cultural and historic objectives			600
3.2. organization of trips in the surrounding area			250
3.3. leisure activities			250
3.4. awareness activities concerning the environment preservation and protection			-
4.1. organization of training courses			400
4.2. elaboration and multiplication of training materials			100
5.1. presentation of the commune history by an elder			-
5.2. popular costume parade			-
5.3. initiation in artisanal activities and dancing			100
5.4. performance of the children from the commune schools			100
5.5. organization of contests with different themes			50

In the same way we established the measurable indicators, the checking sources and the risks for the results of the project. Thus, for the promotion of the initiative in the schools from Timisoara we established as indicator the printing of 1000 leaflets, the checking source is the invoice from the print shop. For the students accommodation we established as indicator the accommodation for 20 students per series, as checking source we can consider the parents request. In the project we included also the valuation of the natural, cultural and historical

patrimony with didactic and leisure purposes realized through trips.

Another result of the project is the specialized knowledge acquired by the owners of households; this result is realized by the participation of the members to the specialized training courses, the participation diplomas to these trainings are considered as checking measures. The last result foreseen in the project is the involvement of the locals in the leisure activities materialized in exhibitions and festivals.

The risks and constraints in achieving the results are represented by the existence of some specialized and the attitude of the parents versus the way of spending the vacation.

Each result has a series of activities on which depend the achievement of the result. All these activities can be noticed both in the logical matrix and in the action plan of the project.

In the action plan of the project beside the activities which have to be performed, we mentioned the deadlines, the persons responsible and the costs. For most of the activities, the persons responsible are the project coordinator, its team and where necessary collaborators (advertising companies, teachers or locals). The project team is composed by the local administration members, teachers and locals. The costs of the project are supported mainly by the local authorities.

In the evaluation process of the project we took into consideration the following aspects: relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and durability of the project.

Relevancy. The project is considered relevant because the studied problems are real: the lack of alternative incomes for the locals' households, the lack of initiative of the locals and the degree of involvement of the young people in the commune's activities.

Efficiency. By implementing this project, the level of the locals' incomes will increase and implicitly will increase the level of involvement of the locals in non agricultural activities, ensuring the best valuation of the natural, cultural and historical resources of the commune. The investment needed for starting the project is small and it can be recovered in a short time.

Effectiveness. The stated purpose (creation of an educational and leisure center for the students from the city) can be achieved.

Impact. The project has both a local and zonal impact which contributes mainly to the local economy development of Ghizela commune. The project will become an example at zone level, being the first project of this kind.

Durability. Once started, the project can continue in the following years, the number of the students receiving accommodation in the locals' households and the accommodation requests are the guarantee of the project durability. The continuity of the project is strictly related to the existence of schools in the city, so if there are schools in the city there will be students willing to spend their vacation at the center and willing to

learn the life from the rural environment. An aspect which cannot be entirely foreseen is the proportion gained by the project in time because it depends on several internal (related to the project management) and external (level of parents' incomes, similar offers) factors.

CONCLUSIONS

Logical Framework Approach (Logical Framework Approach - LFA) is a planning and management instrument used for development projects. This method summarizes in a standard form what does the project try to realize, how will be realized, which elements are needed for the success of the project, the methods to be used to measure the evolution of the project and the possible problems which can appear. As a management approach the logical framework represents an analysis system for the problems and needs, realization of a hierarchy means – purposes and selection of the appropriate implementation strategies.

The proposed project has the role to revive the studied commune from economical and social point of view. Thus, the proposed project is focused on ensuring the locals' incomes, attracting young people in local activities, stopping the rural – urban exodus based on the natural, cultural, historical and human resources. In our opinion the proposed project represents the first step in the local development, the local community involvement is very important.

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