

THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE RURAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study wants to analyze the importance of management, and especially the importance of management strategies for the rural communities development, so for a better analysis of this fact we studied Ghizela commune from Timis county and based on this analysis a development model should be established. The studied commune is located in the North-Eastern part of Timis county, in the hill area of the county, at 30 km from Lugoj town and 60 km from Timisoara city. From territorial administrative point of view the commune is composed by the following villages: Ghizela, which is also the administrative center, Hisias, Paniova and Sanovita. The reason for which this commune was selected is that it does not have a high level of demographic, economic and infrastructural development and is located at an average distance from the main urbanistic centers of the county (Timisoara and Lugoj). The proposed strategy model is based mainly on solving the problems identified in the analysis of the studied commune, thus in order to facilitate the strategy development and implementation process, the identified problems were classified in different categories (infrastructure, local economy, life quality, involvement of the locals in the local development).

Key words: strategy, management, rural community

A very important element for the success of the activities is represented by the elaboration of the strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to determine the way the results will be obtained, depending on the internal conditions and the influence of the external factors. A good strategy is the one which values the strength and the opportunities, neutralizes the weaknesses and avoids the threats. The best valuation of the existing potential of the studied commune is linked to the elaboration method of the strategy for local development and to the way it is implemented.

The development or the regeneration of a rural settlement is mainly determined, on one hand, by the changes from the local economy, from the demographic structure and from the local culture, and on the other hand, the development of the community is influenced by the application of a proper management and is based on three main objectives: infrastructure development and insurance of the access to the infrastructure, social environment protection and reduction of poverty. At the same time the development of the community must take into consideration the limited characteristic of the resources, human, natural or financial, restricts the public authority in managing the community problems and their proper allocation.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The information on which this study is based on was obtained by the usual means in which the operators inform about their actual situations and the problems they are facing (newsletters, statistical reports etc) and personal researches. Also, for the collection and the interpretation of the results the following methods were used: economical analysis (the analysis of the statistical indicators and the SWOT analysis), direct observation and systematic research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the research conducted in the studied village we realized an analysis from economical, demographic and infrastructural point of view in order to have a clear image of the existent situation, this analysis is the starting point in the elaboration of the village development strategy.

Economical situation. Currently in the commune there are 16 companies which are mainly small business units. The agricultural land is mainly worked by the locals. Livestock production takes place in households, but also in micro farms. The animal breeding takes place within households, but also in a micro farms, focused on breeding milk cows, goats and sheep. In agriculture, although the village has agricultural

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land, in the last years it registered a decline amplified by the following factors: population ageing, younger generations are not attracted to work in agriculture, reduced financial possibilities of the owners of agricultural land, low prices for agricultural products. Also, the companies and the individual with land on lease were economically affected as a result low prices of agricultural products while the production expenses (fuel, fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, insecticides, fungicides) increased very much (the input value has increased).

In the South – Western part there is granite and basalt, there is also a stone pit for the exploitation and valuation of these materials. Properly equipped this can be an attraction point for those who are impassioned by geology (students, researchers, specialists etc).

After 1990 the employment structure had a constantly negative evolution, meaning that the number of unemployed people increased as a result of the abolition of some companies where most of residents were employed and were daily travelling. Meanwhile a large number of people reached the retirement age. The young people from the community don't have employment opportunities, increasing the number of people or families receiving minimum income or receive income from occasional work. In these circumstances some of the young people leave for abroad. Regarding the types of support provided by the city hall for the people in social difficulty, it provides help to 19 families who are beneficiaries of the Law 416/2001 and also there are 20 people with disabilities who require the care of a personal assistant.

The demographic situation. On the 1st of January 2010 Ghizela commune counted 1.179 inhabitants, distributed as follows: Ghizela - 336 inhabitants, Hisiaș - 89 inhabitants, Paniova - 272 inhabitants and Șanovița - 482 inhabitants.

The population is in a slight but continuous decrease, mainly due to the negative natural growth, migration to the urban environment and emigration of the ethnic groups. The migration phenomenon is most common in young adults group, including women due to the limited access to education and lack of jobs.

Concerning the distribution according to gender, 50.38% of the population is represented by women and 49.62% by men, most inhabitants are Romanian ethnics (96.69%) and 94,06% belong to the Orthodox religion and 5.96% to other religions. The lack of stable employment and income determined, on a long term horizon, the decrease of the number of marriages celebrated in the village. Even if the birth rate is increasing in recent years

because of the population ageing the natural growth was negative.

Health situation. The most common causes of death are cardiovascular diseases and malignant tumors. In the commune only the primary health services are ensured, through the medical dispensary located in Sanovita village, recently renovated, and where there is only a single physician. It should be noted that in the commune there is no pharmaceutical point or.

Religious cults. Each village has an orthodox church and a parish cemetery managed by the respective parish. The ethical and moral basics offered by the Christian cult can largely contribute to the foundation of a future development.

Public Security. The security in the commune must be strengthened, this process is not only a responsibility of the specialized authorities but also the responsibility of each citizen, this being the guaranty of stability and prosperity in the commune.

The educational, cultural and leisure system. In the commune there are the following educational institutions, financed by the local budget and by the Timis County Council:

- in Ghizela: General school from grades I-VIII and nursery school with normal program;
- in Paniova: General school from grades I-IV and nursery school with normal program;
- in Șanovița: General school from grades I-IV and nursery school with normal program.

The total number of teachers from schools in the commune is 15, but only 7 of them are titular teachers (46.66%). Even if substitute teachers have a fairly high percentage (53.34%) the quality of teaching was not affected, since the vast majority of them have specific studies, fact which is confirmed by the large number of students admitted to colleges and vocational schools. The material basis of schools and nursery schools was improved and is still improving. The physical education activity from schools takes place outdoors, because the schools do not have special rooms.

In terms of cultural activity, currently this is not very rich in the commune, but the rehabilitation and modernization of cultural centers intends to restore the cultural activity. It is particularly necessary to revive and preserve the folkloric traditions by involving all the local factors that may contribute to this. It also wanted to increase the municipal library book fund.

The analysis performed at the level of Ghizela commune shows that the development perspectives of the local community are affected by economical, social and infrastructural backlogs. These important backlogs are caused by the high

levels of fragmentation of farms, inoperable market system both for the products trading and for land trading, the large number of agricultural holdings owners located far from the farms, poor diversification of crop patterns, extremely low productivity in both the plant and in the livestock area, difficulties in procurement of agricultural and non-agricultural production services, low level of material and social infrastructure, especially in education, health, etc, inadequate farms.

Based on the results of the analysis carried out in the village, a development strategy model was elaborated for Ghizela commune. In elaborating the development strategy model we focused on generating a stable socio-economic and diversified environment, which has the capacity to

ensure the prosperity of the population and the durable development of the village. The development strategy of the village was built around four strategic directions which take into consideration the insurance and the protection of the human factor, the technical facilities and the preservation of the existing heritage. Thus, the four strategic directions on which the village's development strategy is based on are: the development of the infrastructure and public accessibility to the infrastructure, the diversification and development of economic activities, the improvement of life quality and the involvement of the population in the development of the village.

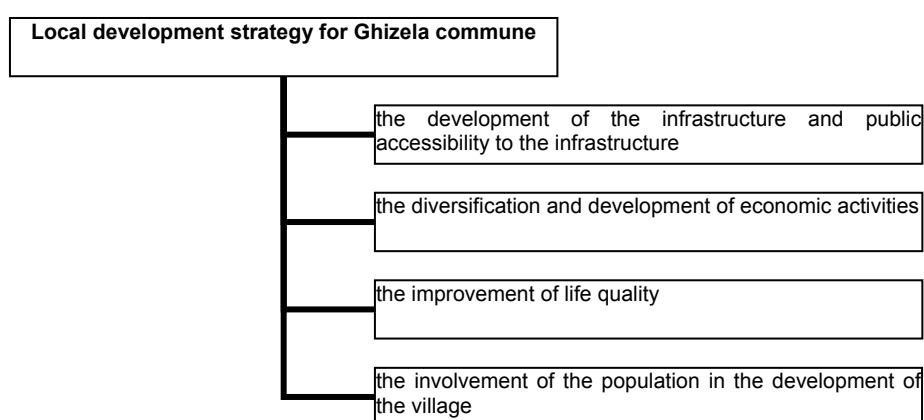


Figure 1 Local development strategy for Ghizela commune

All these strategic priorities will be realized through:

1. Ensuring the continuity of agricultural activities;
2. Preventing the increase of unemployment;
3. De-alienation of the city society – of the generations born and raised in concrete blocks and the revival of their contact with the earth;
4. The major contribution to raise the level of civilization of a large category of population by improving the hygienic and health conditions, the social behavior and the cultivation of the aesthetic orientation.

The developed strategy is based mainly on problems identified by the analysis carried out in the studied village, so in order to facilitate the development and the implementation of the strategy the outlined problems were classified in different categories (infrastructure, local economy, quality of life and local involvement in the development process).

Currently the infrastructure is not very developed, in this respect we identified several problems related to the access in the commune (the access in the commune and the belonging villages

is possible only with the locals' cars), the public services (city hall, cultural centers need to be repaired), the municipal infrastructure (only two of the four belonging villages have water supply network – Ghizela and Sanovita), the hydro technical and hydro ameliorative infrastructure. In order to solve these problems in the strategy, the following measures were set:

- Modernization of access roads to the commune;
- Paving and asphaltting the roads and sidewalks;
- Insurance of the transportation for the local inhabitants to the cities by establishing regular transportation;
- Modernization of cultural centers;
- Creation and development of water supply networks in Hitias and Paniova;
- Establishing sewerage systems in all the villages;
- Creation of a natural gas network;
- Activities for preventing and controlling the flood;
- Cleaning and maintenance activities for the ditches.

In terms of tourism infrastructure, it does not exist, although the commune has a real potential which is not valued, in the commune we can find natural, cultural, historical and religious objectives, which can be restored with minimum financial investment. Thus, the actions which should be taken in order to develop the tourism infrastructure are: restoration, protection and preservation of cultural heritage objectives, creating a thematic museum, recovery and fitting the natural sights and inclusion of the cultural objectives in the cultural and historical circuit.

For the beginning, the recovery actions of the touristic potential of the village are shy; this is the responsibility of the local administration in collaboration with local schools. Currently the tourism infrastructure is nonexistent and the environmental education can be one of the ways in which the existing natural resources can be highlighted. Particularly beneficial in this regard can be the partnerships with urban schools, museums, etc. to organize trips so that the children can understand the achievements of science and technology which should not become the enemies of the nature, these must be consistent to preserve the planet's resources, judicious exploitation of the forests, soil and subsoil wealth, in order to preserve natural beauty, clean water, air, needed by plants, animals and humans. Thus, the population households, spontaneous vegetation and fauna can be the starting points in developing tourism in the studied village.

In the strategy we paid special attention also to the diversification and development of economic activities in the commune, taken into consideration that there is little diversification both of the agricultural activities and of those non-agricultural. In this regard, the following measures have to be taken for the development of the local economy:

- support for the creation of the associative forms;
- encourage the associations and support for the creation of alternative and ecological cultures exploitations;
- creation of agricultural production and processing units;
- support for the young farmers;
- realization of collecting, storage, processing, distribution and valuation networks for the agricultural products;
- creation of zoo technical farms;
- improvement of agricultural production and products quality;
- creation of collecting centers for vegetables and fruits and their connection to the production and distribution network;
- attract the investors;

- support/creation of educational camps for the children from the cities;
- efficient exploitation of the basalt pit according to the environment requirements.

Another strategic priority is to improve the quality of life by providing public access to culture, health and education services through human capital development and environment conservation and preservation. Achieving the targets in this strategic direction is possible by applying the following measures:

- setting up and modernization of medical facilities;
- setting up a pharmacy;
- setting up a dentist cabinet;
- realization of professional training and information activities;
- encouragement of the farmers and enterprisers to ask for consultancy services;
- realization of information and promotion campaigns regarding the business opportunities;
- creation of a permanent education center;
- organization of practical and theoretical trainings concerning the modern agricultural practices;
- starting some awareness campaigns for the population concerning the environment preservation and conservation;
- promotion of the ecological education in schools;
- ecological activities;
- introduction of the waste selection system;
- increase of the forestry areas;
- identification of plant and animal species which live in the area, during some activities involving the environment study for children;
- usage of non convention energy forma in order to produce electricity;
- finalization of the ecological waste storage facility.

Normally, most of the development strategies are focused on solving problems related to infrastructure, economy and quality of life, along with those in the development strategy it is provided also a strategic direction, specifically the involvement of the population in the local development because it was noticed that the population involvement is reduced. Achieving this priority is based on developing and implementing local development strategies and strengthening the common identity by implementing the following actions:

- support for the local authorities in elaboration the strategies;
- development, implementation and monitoring of local development programs and projects;

- improvement of management and implementation knowledge regarding the local development strategies;

- development of partnerships between several administrative units in order to develop some projects in the commune;

- trainings for the young generation in order to know the history, ethnography, folklore and local traditions;

- renewal and preservation of the cultural patrimony;

- identification and encouragement of the continuity of local traditions and festivals;

- creation of local structures which should maintain and renew the symbolic values and references, structured on certain local economic activities;

- awareness of the population and local decision authorities concerning the importance of preserving and promoting the cultural and historical patrimony (example: the preservation of the local architecture);

- creation of a cultural center in order to support the cultural development of the commune;

- organization of folkloric festivals;

- organization of annual contests for folklore artists and quires;

- organization of zonal contests and festivals for: agricultural products, workmanship products, animals;

- meeting of the sons of the village;

- organization of a festival dedicated to the forest;

- training in workmanship;

- teaching of folkloric games;

- organization of hunting contests;

- organization of tourism for children with specific facilities;

- realization of a web site of the commune.

Reaching all these proposed objectives is based on management focused on development, regeneration and strategic planning and also on realization of programs and projects which should respect the following principles:

- durable development, which will have as long term results major changes in culture and attitude concerning the rational usage of the resources;

- consolidation of the institutional capacity by applying an efficient management, defining and structuring the public services according to the present financial resources, to the objectives of durable development and to the locals needs;

- realization of projects by public – private partnerships;

- realization of those projects which can not be financed by the private sector;

- inclusion of policies both on horizontal, with the purpose to realize a synergetic effect between the sectors, and on vertical, in order to correlate and integrate the local development policies with the county and regional policies;

- resources management, by the amortization of the energetic, material, financial and human resource fluxes, and also by including the energetic and material resource fluxes into the natural circuit;

- usage of market mechanisms in order to ensure sustainability, to formulate regulations and to ensure the functioning of the public utilities in the market system, the evaluation of the investments according to environmental criteria when establishing the local budget;

- establishment of some regulations for the rational usage of the land for development projects based on the general urban plan, as an instrument of planning the space;

- study of the technical capacity for the execution of the projects;

- evaluation of the financial and human resources;

- evaluation of the financial durability of a project through the realized fiscal incomes;

- establishment of the locals' needs and their priorities, the link between the elaboration, implementation of a project and the needs of the local community;

- environment protection and preservation;

- insurance of the access to information with impact in investments (land information, statistical information etc).

The development strategy is the working instrument of the local administration, agreed by the entire community, which will align the thinking, decision and action related to the proposed objectives, without deviation from the plan.

The proposed strategy model is complex, but by implementing it most of the problems highlighted in the analysis can be solved.

CONCLUSIONS

The elaboration and the implementation of the development strategy needs a budget, which can be small at the beginning, but with further financing. The insurance of the necessary funds for the entire project should be taken into consideration when selecting the projects and the programs. The financing initiatives for the local development strategy can include: local administration incomes (tax, fees, commercial space selling and land selling), transfers from the government budget, international funds, financing

from the private sector (investment contributions), financing programs of the development agencies, different international financial institutions.

In order to successfully elaborate and implement the proposed development strategy we need a proper approach of the local conditions, taking into consideration the following principles:

- Holistic approach, all the economical, social and environmental problems should be included;

- Strategy based on the partnership between groups of representative interests and a common vision;

- Short term, medium term and long term project portfolio which should consolidate the partnerships and their trust;

- Devoted local leaders and with credibility;

- Acquisition of managerial capacities, the managerial capacity is necessary for the strategy implementation process;

- Involvement of the authorities with political will in the local development strategy implementation.

Taking into consideration the durable valuation of the resources, it is recommended to focus on the achieving the proposed objectives, but also to be focused on higher results than the effort and also the durable management of the resources (natural, human, material, financial) should not be neglected so that the existing potential to be valued for a long term trying to maximize the positive effects and to minimize the negative ones due to the practiced activities. This local development model involves a strategic approach which can fit the internal environment elements with the surrounding environment.

The studied commune has real possibilities for the development based on natural, economical and human resources. The revival of the space and the durable development should take into consideration the creation of a balance between the requests for the rural environment preservation from economic, ecologic and socio-human point of view, on one hand, and the modernization tendency of all rural aspects, on the other hand. The commune must be modernized, to comply with the European civilization requirements, but in the same time it should promote the specific culture and tradition.

The insurance of the durable economical increase of Ghizela commune is based on the valuation of the agricultural land and a favorable climate which allows the practice of ecological agriculture. Also, the valuation of the natural framework and the cultural objectives can stand at the basis of scientific and pleasure tourism development. The efficient exploitation of the basalt pit must be sustained by the concern for the environment protection.

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