

Rosana Ščančar
Community Development

At the beginning there must be at least a wish for a change for the better

The lady in charge of fostering the development of mountain villages was new to the village and the general area of the place where the man from the above story comes from. He comes from a small valley with pristine nature, numerous gorges, and clean and cool water, with a lot of trees, an area where the conditions for farming were harsh. The biggest development problems of the region were the age and education structure of the inhabitants, and of course the non-existing and expensive infrastructure (roads, electricity, phones). She was happy that the man showed some interest, some desire, some need to change things for the better. To fulfil the potentials, which the new road into the valley brought, this energy needed to be used as quickly and in as organised a manner as possible.

Defining problems

Madam. I am from that small village that is almost empty because everyone has left. Last year they built a road to our village, and they covered it with asphalt. Now everything will be easier. We will be able to drive up to the house. We will be able to build. We can drive to work every day. Other people will be able to visit us when they feel like it. The road has opened up a connection to the world, and it also makes it possible for the world to reach us. But I would not like to go away. I would like to return there, and I would like to work and live at home. I always wanted to have a small village restaurant. People that passed by our house always stopped here. I also have an accordion. The state has always neglected us. Even the road that was made, was made very late. Almost too late. Most of the houses are empty. But some of the people would come back. Only if the state helped. If only the state and municipality gave us the money that would enable us to renovate our houses or build new ones. And I would really like to have that restaurant. The municipality should have helped us...

***Development institution:
“Developers” as coordinators of development activities***

It is optimal that besides the local leader, or the local action group, there is a developer responsible for the development of a specific local community. It is sensible that they are employed by the development agency. But because their financing is a constant problem, it would be an ideal solution that they are partly financed by the municipality, and partly through their projects. The developer always works on different levels: from the individual to the municipality, from the region to the ministries and the international programmes.

It is a demanding job since the developer:

- must be aware of the normative arrangement, national development strategies, system enforced measures as a whole
- must be able to discuss different areas and fields
- must be able to argue their position
- must be comfortable with project management and
- must have the capability to talk with everybody: ordinary people, experts, artists, politicians and bureaucrats.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, the satisfaction stemming from the successful completion of a project and the people's gratefulness is great. The coordinator of development activities must be active in all the phases of the development drive: from the starting analysis and the provision of development directions, to the systematic coverage of the implementation tasks and projects.

Their mission is also:

- the coordination of implementation priorities
- adjusting the implementation activities to the ever changing conditions
- coordination of local interests with the national and the global ones.

The developer must know how to promote partnership amongst people in the field (especially in the area of business opportunities), how to attract investments of businesses into the area, and how to guarantee the cooperation between the expert, the public and the development institutions, the NGOs and the interested individuals.

In this way the developer guarantees:

- that the development work will be done systematically and professionally
- connectedness and coordination of different interests, needs, and demands
- the currency of development measures and implementation projects
- the maximum use of municipal and system incentives for supporting the development ideas of individuals and communities and
- the applicability of development plans.

The work of the developer does not end with the acceptance of the development plan (document); it continues with the organisation of the environment in a way that it accepts the proposed plans and develops them even further with its own inner strength and interests. The developer transfers the focal point of their work on the evaluation of the achieved results, to the coordination of different activities, counselling and helping with individual and joint projects which are more and more market-oriented (new jobs). In case the development measures do not bring about the expected results, or that there are some undesired side-effects of the development measures, the developer must be among the first to notice and identify them. It is their mission to initiate the process of searching for the reasons. They must ensure the cooperation of experts and locals, so that the existing situation and trends are assessed in an interdisciplinary way. If necessary, the development goals must be re-defined, as well as the measures for attaining these goals. The constant monitoring and evaluation of development changes requires from the developer to communicate round-the-clock with different social groups and individuals on different levels. They must be up to date with the processes of global restructuring of the world, and at the same time understand and follow the development processes on the regional and local level, where all the processes inevitably have some kind of an effect on individuals. Familiarity with the natural, social, and economic environment in which the developer is active, and a constant contact with the people are of fundamental importance for the success of the development programmes.

For the developer it is difficult to always be appraised of the situation on different levels, because there is no real flow of information between the scientific-research community, the public-political community, the economy sector, and the developers. The communication with different representatives of the social system is left to the self-initiative of each

individual developer. The time spent on this is normally not accounted for as "paid work", because it does not produce directly visible results; therefore it is often regarded as a "free time" activity. This demotivates the developers, and drains their energy which might be used for professional training, which in turn reduces the quality of their work. In a world which is experiencing fast and global (structural and contential) changes, where the basic development values are increasingly include people, the quality of life and the preservation of natural habitat, in a word - human development - permanent training and cooperation of developers, and an understanding of global changes is very important for the success of the development processes. Sustainable human development must primarily rely on individual areas' resources, on the selective linkage with the outside world and on the respect for human integrity.

Local leader, local action group

Formulating proposals

You know, madam, I went through the proposals you sent last time. Because I did not want to decide alone, I called in the others and we got together and though things through carefully. Here is our suggestion: I want a restaurant and I want to go into tourism. There is an interesting gorge next to our house, and if you walk through it you come to a waterfall, that is a natural landmark. And the neighbour's old thatched cottage, with the old tools; the kitchen needs to be redecorated and opened for visitors. In summer, our river is so wonderful, so clean, and the water temperture is just right. Our neighbour has decided to enlarge his flock of sheep. I will buy some of them, so that I can serve lamb in my future restaurant. He plans to sell some to other restaurants and with the rest of the flock he can start a cheese business. The animal meat from other farms is already being processed into salami and other meats. He would also like to have a deer and a moufflon pen, but for now, that investment is too daunting. The other neighbour is already calculating if he has enough land to enlarge his cattle herd to increase the milk production so the agricultural cooperative may employ an extra farm hand. He will cut the grass on all the open areas in the valley so that the reforestation and bush growth will not be a problem. He also wanted to keep some pigs, but the toll on the environment would be

too great to be economically sound. The other villagers were not too keen on a pig farm in their midst, either. The smell and the sewage... those things somehow don't fit into our valley. And the best news is yet to come. A young family that up until now only occasionally visited their parents' farm, has decided to build a fish farm. They have already had the first analysis of the water done, and the results are excellent. We are negotiating with a foundation for environment protection to come here, check the location and give us their opinion. You know, we could use your help here. I can talk with the locals and organise us, but only you can handle these municipal representatives and experts. And be sure to tell them that this is a sustainable project, and that at some point we will merge all our options into one. This is about using what we have. We are building ourselves, our knowledge, and we are offering what we have and do, things that are interesting to others. So that we can survive here at home.

Local leader, in contact with the people in the field on a daily basis, is a very important element for the success of local development. They are the driving force and the organisers of different activities. The best combination is when the local leaders also manage successful business projects, because they are the best examples to motivate people. For a local community, a municipality or a development agency, local leaders are a permanent reference point, the best go-between for the local population, they help with the organisation of activities and recognise new ideas in the local environment, coordinate them and forward them to the appropriate institutions. In a small rural community of 400 people, located in the heart of an underdeveloped area, the owner of a restaurant took on the leading role and organized the local people. The community opted for tourism development, and due to the local leader's commitment and the developer's assistance, they have become a known and popular tourist destination. The owner of the restaurant invested in a camp, farm tourism is developing, local farmers are selling their products to local restaurants and directly to tourists, the road was resurfaced to accommodate the increased traffic, the disused local school was turned into a national accommodation and teaching centre for school children's extracurricular activities and is fully booked year-round. Without a dedicated local leader who is also a successful businessperson with a sense of social responsibility everything would have been much harder.

In the areas without a local leader or a small local action group to represent the interests of the local community and guarantee its activity, the development process is slower, and a lot more energy has to be channelled into motivating people. In such cases it is necessary for the municipality or the development agency to produce a developer responsible for the field-work and the constant cooperation with the population. A successful development programme demands somebody to be in charge of coordinating and leading the development activities at the local level, and to be responsible for the constant cooperation with the public management, the expert and the development institutions.

From division via changes to clearly articulated interests

Experts, who deal with the promotion of development, find themselves in different situations when preparing, coordinating and implementing the measures and programmes for development. Sometimes, the locals are indifferent to the events taking place in their community to the point of not having any personal wishes. In such cases, a lot of time and encouragement are necessary (meetings, lectures, different events, visits of successful individuals from other areas, financial initiatives for certain activities, etc.) to make the people participate and take part in discussions about their own future, and the future of their community.

It is very common to come across a situation in which the most vocal individuals channel all their energy into constant criticism of everyone and everything. They are angry with their neighbours, employers, local community, expert institutions, and especially with the municipality and the state. There is always someone to blame for their problems. And the others are always the ones who are supposed to solve their problems. Changing their attitudes towards their community's development and their perception of it, is the thing to start with. The most persuasive argument is a visit from individuals who have successfully carried out their projects, to effectively show that it is possible to change a lot of things even in difficult conditions, only if there is a will and interest. In such situations it is important to conduct individual discussions with the loudest critics, and to analyse with them the advantages and the disadvantages of life and society. Where the most outspoken members of the community usually express a negative and critical attitude towards their environment and its development, the developer must be especially persistent and patient in the communication with people.

Also, the municipal government must show some interest in changing and supporting the developer's activities in their local community.

In the development work it is important to build from the fact that a specific community is made of people who live there. And it is with them, such as they are, that you have to work with. It is important to awaken an interest in them for cooperating in the joint planning of the future, and for their participation in the implementation of the tasks. They have to realize that the development of their community is in a broader common interest as well as in their own private interest because it will also improve their living conditions.

People as community and as individuals; their active interest and participation are the cornerstones of change and success of development measures in local environments. People must believe that problems can be solved (a belief in the possibility of a change for the better). At the same time they must know that this depends mostly on them, on their commitment and effort, how quickly and how successfully the changes will take place (self-initiative, the use of endogenous development resources in local environment).

From a clearly defined interest to the formation of development directions

Organizing debate

Since our first discussion on the options for helping the people in our valley to achieve and fulfil their desires and needs, the local inhabitants have met frequently on several occasions. We debated our interests and possibilities, mostly about things we should do to develop (in our homes and in the valley) different economic activities, which would guarantee our long-term survival. With the help of the representative from the regional development agency, whom we call "our developer", we analysed our desires, needs, knowledge, spatial possibilities of different individuals and individual families, identified and developed business ideas. We analysed these latent ideas by way of the knowledge that a person undertaking an activity would need, their financial abilities, the conditions for the registration of such an activity (adequate space, equipment, etc.), and also from the perspective of how acceptable such an activity is for the environment. "Our developer" played the

key role at this point, because besides his advice to individuals, he provided an analysis of our suggestions from the environmental perspective, and from the perspective of the development of our community in general. Different experts have done an analysis of our area. The workshop about the shortcomings and the possibilities of our area, in which we also participated, was very interesting. They called it the SWOT analysis. They say it is important that *we present our interests and development goals, and exchange different thoughts and coordinate directions for the further development of our valley, at the meeting with the representatives of different expert institutions, of the municipality and of the broader community.* Our developer persuaded us to cooperate with the expert institutions familiar with the legal requirements in specific areas, and who are aware of the special provisions that we have to fulfil in certain business activities. And now, when we need a better marketing of our village so that more tourists visit, our developer helped us establish cooperation with other communities so that we could join our resources in joint marketing.

Origins of sustainable approach to promotion of development - how developers go about their tasks

Different processes in the world (globalisation that affects local producers, climate changes, environmental standards, communications, etc.) prove that the local and the global levels are linked. The autonomy of the individual and of the interest groups is increasing as is the amount of information available to an individual (the process of individualisation). At the same time their interdependency is increasing as well, along with the influences of the outside world (globalisation). The new information technology and the widening disparities between territorial units (as a negative effect of economic growth, whose only goal is profit) have made us realize that the planning of development must overcome the partial and narrow interests of smaller groups, because this causes dependency. The planning of development must take into account both the global (world, national) development trends and the local development potentials. Gradually, the hierarchy of values is changing: from favouring economic growth and consumer ideology towards an awareness of our dependency on nature, on other people and cultures, and about the long-range effects of environmental

deterioration. Our planet (natural environment and social system) should be left in a state that will enable our descendants to live on it. The paradigm of the continual industrial growth has been exchanged by the paradigm of the sustainable development. The equilibrium between economic, social and spatial development is becoming more and more necessary and desired.

An active partnership in the organisation of an individual's life and of a community's life (local, regional, national, and international) is the basic paradigm on which today's local democracy and the programming of development is based.

Active partnership means connecting, coordinating, integration, cooperation and trust amongst individuals and communities, and between different public-management, development and expert institutions and economic actors.

Development is a process: a long-term and gradual change for the better, successful when we approach it as a whole i.e. when we include, coordinate and connect different facts, interests and possibilities in the natural, economical and social environment on the basis of equality; it means including and acknowledging the appearance of these factors on different levels, from the local to the national and the global ones. In the development process we must act consciously, actively, and in an organised manner.

Our story, which began years ago and is still going on, is the same as all the current cases of the promotion of development, local democracy and regional agencies:

- we upgrade the analysis and prognosis of the situation, based on simple statistical indicators (economic, demographic, social, environmental), and on the extrapolation of the development trends with the method of qualitative know-how, practical experience and our own judgment. Such an analysis is based on the integral and qualitative indicators, and on the ability to grasp the multitude of local/regional and global development trends. The assumptions of such research are comparability, sustainability, its systematic nature, and causality, although it is often hard to get the needed statistical or qualitative indicators and we have to conduct our own research to obtain them
- we put great emphasis on motivating people with the intention to include them into the debates about the future, so that they can realise and activate their development potentials in their own environment, become involved in the development planning, and

start thinking about business possibilities of their own family; in short, our goal is their self-initiative

- we promote participation (cooperation) of individuals and different interest groups in the planning and the implementation of the development tasks
- we formulate the development programmes that:
 - are sustainable (they refer to all aspects of life and work)
 - are based on the use of endogenous (internal) development potentials of the area
 - take into account the global and the national development trends
 - are applicable, i.e. that the development strategy with long-term and short-term goals is realizable in the implementation part of the programme, which consists of the operative development measures and the implementation projects for the achievement of individual goals
- we guarantee partnership and coordination between different individuals and institutions, and protagonists of individual projects in all phases of planning and implementing the development programmes
- we monitor, counsel and help with the use of different stimulative measures and forms of help, that are accessible at the local, regional, national, and international level for the implementation of individual projects.

Situation assessment and valorisation of development potentials (SWOT analysis)

In the sustainable approach to the planning of development, the developer must answer the question of how to combine different aspects (economic, social, demographic, spatial, environmental, cultural, historical, etc.) and analyse the whole range of events and actions in a certain social space. The developer must do this on the basis of the given methodological principles. The developer must take into account different indicators of social standard and natural environment, assess the consequences of the existing processes, and compare them with the situation and processes in the wider area. The SWOT analysis is an important methodological tool that - through the discussions in which representatives of different fields participate, along with the representatives of different interests and sciences - identifies, ranks and assesses development strengths and weaknesses of the

local environment. At the same time the SWOT includes analyses of the development opportunities and risks that appear in the outside environment, and that should be taken into account.

The key role of the developer is to include into the assessment of the situation all expert and other institutions that are active in the area in question, or that are interested in the area in question. An explanation of the reason why their help is needed has to be prepared and given to these institutions. Normally their participation is not an issue, at least in the preparatory phase of the analysis, because the analysis is connected to their "narrow" expert themes. But it is very difficult to ensure their participation in the integral valorisation of a certain space and in the dialogue about the development measures. At this level it is necessary to take into account different interests and possibilities of the local environment, and at the same time to take into account the possibilities of implementing individual ideas and projects. This demands compromise, a trying process (coordination of development goals and implementation tasks), especially in the areas that are highly valuable from the standpoint of environmental protection, poorly equipped with infrastructure, and where potential economic activities demand interventions into space and affect the environment.

Encouragement and motivation

People become interested in the development of their area gradually and only if they associate these changes with better opportunities for themselves and their families, and the inner social circle. A dedicated developer starts cooperating with the locals when the local community senses a problem and wants to deal with it, or when a representative of a certain area clearly expresses a desire for assistance from the public and development institutions with the implementation of their ideas. When the local people are disinterested, it is important to motivate them, or to bring an investment into the community (renew an interesting facility, manage tourist infrastructure, co-finance a business project, support the activities of non-profit organisations, offer training to people in tourism, etc.). The developer must see to it that the people are timely informed about all the important decisions, and that they have a chance to actively participate in all the phases of the programme preparation and implementation: from the analysis and assessment of development potentials (their own, and of the community), the formation of the development goals, the strategy and the operative development

measures, to the agreement on the activities for the implementation of agreed goals.

The leaders of the implementation projects should primarily be from the local community; if none are available, only then should we look elsewhere. In the areas with weak potentials for development, the outside initiatives and assistance are needed at first. Also the outside bearers of activities represent an influx of fresh energy and initiative. We motivate people by organizing counselling and workshops, by checking the conditions for developing new economic activities, by providing the conditions for an adequate use of the comparative advantages of the area, by counselling in the preparation of technical documentation for buildings and for obtaining financial resources, by helping with the organisation and functioning of local action groups and NGOs, whose priority goals are development, protection of economically unprofitable public services (village schools, health centres, care for the elderly), and with other measures that depend on the needs of individual areas. All training, counselling, organisational, financial and business assistance must result in concrete aid to individuals and groups in the implementation of their ideas and projects. The biggest motivational effect on the locals who lack courage are successfully implemented projects. In the areas where people were not motivated and included into the development activities (people's participation), and where, consequently, they did not become their carriers (self-initiative, organised activities of local action groups), the development incentives did not have long-term results e.g. a small industrial town where the state aid enabled the launch of a development project, and the elaboration of a development plan and the priority development projects. Foreign and national experts were hired to prepare the plan and the development projects. Although some local people participated in the workshops and public meetings, they did not really take the ownership of the project. When the experts left and the implementation was supposed to begin, there was not enough will and capacity to bring the projects to their completion.

People: key element of development

It is the duty of development institutions to protect the long-term interests and the integrity of the people in the area where they are active. The interventions into a social space must not degrade the conditions of living and working of the locals. *People as individuals, and people as a*

community living in an area, are the key factor of development work. The inclusion of people into the processes of planning and implementing of development programmes is enabled by the understanding of different specialties in real environments, which guarantees the feasibility of development measures and their successful implementation. Individuals are the ones who take the brunt of the impact of the development measures. Therefore it is imperative that their interests and their possibilities are given priority when setting up both the long-term and the short-term goals of development. When the interests of the local population are short-term, and do not take into account the negative side-effects on nature and the social environment it is the duty of the developer to expertly, and in an appropriate fashion, explain to the people the unacceptability of their suggestions for the long-term sustainable development of their area.

The assistance and the stimulative measures should suit the features of the environment, and the capabilities of people to use them. The developers who are responsible for the development promotion at the local level must constantly monitor the changes that occur at the regional and the national level, and at the same time they must be active in the debates, the decision-making and the implementation of concrete development projects at the local level. Their advantage is that besides the theoretical know-how they also have a lot of practical experience, and can proficiently defend the suggestions for changing the normative regulations and system incentives. The legislation is formed on the basis of the indicators that show the average values of a phenomenon. But life, just like any real environment, is full of differences and distinctions. In specific environments, the normative generality causes incoherencies and negative side-effects. The laws and systematic incentives are drafted by people who sit in bureaucratic government institutions and cannot foresee the effects of individual measures in different environments and economic activities. The measures of economic rationality in urban areas are automatically applied to rural and sparsely populated areas, which is totally inappropriate, because the extent of the accessibility of individual goods and services in the rural areas is quite higher than in the urban environments. An interdisciplinary approach to the formation of a system of development measures, the linkage of different ministries and the inclusion of developers, who work in the field, and deal with the formation of systemic solutions, is proceeding very slowly, though it is of fundamental importance for the new paradigms of understanding development which, in contrast to the principles of industrial growth, underlines the autonomy of the individual,

the humanness of interactions, the respect for legality, safeguards the equilibrium in the natural habitat, and protects the differences and specifics as an important basis for innovativeness in the process of guaranteeing a positive sustainable development.

Agreement on implementation of accepted measures and development projects

Programming the development is an integrated, dynamic, and multidisciplinary process. The drafting of sustainable development programmes must not end with the analysis, the formation of strategy and the definition of development measures. *The key part of the document for the development process is the plan of the implementation of the proposed measures. The implementation activities and projects must be operative, and the proposed solutions useful, so that the locals are willing to accept them and capable of implementing them.*

It is important that in the programme formation stage, the search for the people who would be responsible for certain tasks is already under way, and that the possibilities for the necessary financial resources for the implementation are being looked into. The key people in the discussion about the preparation of the plan for the implementation of the development programme are the people who came up with some suggestions in the first place, the development agency, and the municipality. In the opening phase of the implementation, many activities are connected with the organization of the infrastructure (and other) investments, and it is very important that the municipality with its own budget supports these projects. The implementation plans of the development programmes must be shown in the annual budgets of the municipalities and of the region, and they must also be visible in the annual programmes of development and sometimes even expert institutions. If the municipality is short of funds, it should start with small projects that give more immediate results, and in the meantime intensively search for the ways to obtain co-financing from the regional, national or international sources and private capital. To get support from the council members for a development project, it is important to explain to them the benefits of the project again and again so that over time they develop the right attitude towards the development activities. The developer has to be active in this as well and if the municipality cannot afford to establish its own development institution, it should be formed at the regional level.

Adopting a development plan

Listen, madam. Last time we had a hard time convincing the environmentalists that the expansion of cattle and sheep herds will not cause a big erosion of farming land on the banks of the river, although they are a bit steep. Well, we can't have too many animals anyway. How would we feed them? And what about those flowers? They have been growing here for hundreds of years, and why should they be endangered now, just because there will be a bit more tourists in the summer. They won't walk on the steep terrain where they grow. And some fish... I didn't even know that they are so rare. Well, this water of ours must be really good then, eh? You know, the fact that we have convinced our neighbour that a pig farm is not a good idea for our area, is a big success in my opinion. He didn't mind too much, don't you think? The experts advised him that it is better if he goes into sheep and goats. And he could make cheese as well. If it is good, he will be able to sell a lot of it in my restaurant. You ask me if I'll be coming to the municipal assembly session when our development plan is going to be adopted? Sure, I'll be there. I'll tell them why we need it and how much effort we've put into the preparation. How many hours it took for us to agree on what we want, and how we can go about achieving it. And all that coordination with different experts! You shouldn't do that, that isn't good, you need an OK from the third expert... I thought it'd never end. It's good that our developer chaired most of those meetings. I hope that the municipality will now find it easier to help us. At least if we get all the paperwork done faster and the money comes in a bit faster as well...

Monitoring and evaluating programme implementation (indicators)

The wholesome approach to the promotion of development includes the availability of an on-site developer, even after the programme has been accepted. In the implementation phase, the developer counsels and helps those responsible (individuals and groups) for the development projects and monitors the results of the implemented tasks. They must organise an efficient system of monitoring of implementation activities and of the evaluation of its effects. The evaluation of the effects and

taking into account the changes happening in the wider, global environment, are a basis for the correction of development goals and for the preparation of the implementation projects in the next programme stage. It is a dynamic process and requires a constant cooperation with all the partners included in the development programme.

The development indicators are a special problem in a comprehensive analysis of a certain space, and they also present a problem later on in the process of evaluating the consequences of the development measures. There should not be too many indicators. We should sensibly choose those that are most relevant for an area and for the goals set for that area. By all means they must measure the situation in different segments of social and natural environment. Usually the most basic, generally accepted indicators for economic, social, spatial, and environment protection are used. For the understanding of the specifics of individual areas it is sensible to use compounded indicators (a bigger number of basic indicators and their interdependency), and the findings of the public opinion surveys (polls, interviews). In this way, the evaluation of the quality of satisfying the material, social and spiritual needs of the people and the condition of the natural environment are more relevant, as is the planning of future measures. When using the indicators it is important to know that certain indicators in different environments represent a totally different quality of the measured phenomena. The selection of indicators appropriate for analysing a certain space and their interpretation has to be done by means of a close cooperation among the experts from different institutions, the developer and the local experts who are familiar with the situation and have a tacit knowledge about the affected space.

Partnership, accountability, constant monitoring from the developer

The developers, especially those active at the local level are in favour of a sustainable, multidisciplinary, and active approach to development. We try to monitor global changes on different levels of social development (the relationship to environment, the natural and cultural heritage, the meaning of the spiritual dimensions of human life, the demand in the tourist sector, ecology as an important share of economic investments), and we try to take them into account in a sensible way, when we plan and implement the development measures. In real life we usually try to assist those areas that need our help most. In the process

we cooperate with individuals or social groups which seem to be the protagonists of progressive development. We base the development on the internal resources of a specific environment and on the people who live in this space. The outside stimulants and the mechanisms for help available at the level of the region, state, or at the international level, are always sensibly used when they can help us to hasten the implementation of development measures. *The developers on the local level are expected to have a constant, active, conscious, expert relationship with the individuals and with the area in question. They are responsible for their work (proposed solutions, counselling, conception of projects, evaluations of the situation, evaluations of the consequences of different measures).*

Implementing decisions

Madam, what if everything falls apart? If we don't manage to come through with our investments, if people won't be able to work as we are planning now? What if somebody changes their mind? Who'll be accountable? Last time a very educated gentleman told us in his lecture that everybody is responsible for their own decisions. Well, it's all right for the decisions. But all the other stuff is not just up to me, or just up to us as a community. You will continue to help us, won't you? Can you believe that I am more afraid now about how our projects will end, then I was when we planned them. This is for real now. We all invested quite a lot of money into different analyses, documentation, business plans... Well that's what I am saying. We mustered courage to put our desires on paper, we made the plan how to reach those goals step by step, so we will do it. But you'll have to help a bit. We are going to need our developer for a long time to come. You know, we want to do some things the old-fashioned way. And then the inspections will come, and the penalties, and the EU standards, and the rest... Will you please make sure that he'll be able to give us an hour or two of his time in the future also?

All the other partners also carry the burden of responsibility, but the developers are the ones who coordinate, connect and execute things. The closer the partnership, the bigger dispersion of the responsibility for the adopted development decisions. It is easier to carry out corrections and modified decisions. In our experience the most successful development programs are those where a developer is constantly

present. In those situations the community as a whole is progressing faster, because the planning of development is an ongoing process. The implementation activities (joint projects and small-business projects) use the maximum of all available resources. There is a constant search and training for the carriers of future tasks. Where there is no developer that would coordinate development activities, local leaders and local action groups slowly lose momentum. The energy needed to organise development activities slowly diminishes. To avoid this, the region and the municipality must take their own share of responsibilities and ascertain the continuation of expert help for the development processes in local areas.

An example of how to deal with local community development is given below. The case is a report on the results of the Urban Institute "Local Government Reform Project", that took place in the city of Pula, a medium-size Croatian town on the Adriatic coast. It is an example of a successful local community development project, which is still being implemented. In this case the role of the developer was taken up by an external (foreign) actor, the Urban Institute.

Best practice examples

Pula, Croatia: City that has been changing its identity

Today, Pula is a city that is changing its identity, a city that strives to promote democratic society and to make the most important decisions concerning Pula at the local level, strengthening Pula's autonomy as the freedom for community, together with all civil freedoms for all its citizens.

Pula today has reasons for optimism due to the visible results of intensified economic activity. Pula, through some loan-giving programs, has been trying to transfer the overall conduct of business to entrepreneurs and is supporting investment into production and new jobs. One third of the companies on the territory of the County of Istria are registered in Pula. Pula is responsible for a significant chunk of Istria's foreign trade as a predominantly export-oriented city, mostly due to shipbuilding.

Pula today is a dynamic city development-wise and its budget reflects this. Pula's municipal administration, with its development and social management approach, is trying to balance the citizens' wishes and requirements and the realistic possibilities, starting with the application

of a system of modern methods for improving the municipal management and for creating a solid and reliable local government, using the methods and experiences of the Local Government Reform Project (LGRP) in Croatia.

Neighbourhood Councils - partners in civil society building

In the 2001-2005 mandate, the city of Pula will provide the premises for the neighbourhood councils: spatial, technical, professional and other conditions for the neighbourhood government activities on the municipal territory, to enable the citizens to access the municipal administration from every neighbourhood council via the Internet. The city of Pula will in this mandate, through the elections for the remaining neighbourhood councils in all parts of Pula - as partners in local government development and civil society building - involve all its citizens in the process of decision-making regarding the development of every part of the city, continuing with the management changes and the improvements through which a more efficient city administration service-providing is to be achieved.

The city of Pula, in cooperation with the neighbourhood councils, will go on with the projects of city planning through reconstructing the facades as well as through some communal programs and the required zoning documentation, the organization of the existing and new residential and business zones and the secondary sub-centres of the city, increasing the level of urban culture and activities.

Biggest projects and biggest challenges: sewage system and waste depot

The city of Pula has launched two big communal projects: the building of the sewage system and the reconstruction of the Kaštijun waste depot. Although this year the budget will not be burdened with the additional two percent for building the sewage system, the funds raised up to now in combination with other funds will be used for building a sewage system on Stoja, where 4 million kunas will be invested this year and about 14 million next year.

According to the findings of the state audit, the discretionary use of the funds for the Kaštijun depot was the responsibility of the previous

government that in the period of 1997-1999 spent 12,9 million kuna on other facilities instead of on the reconstruction of Kaštijun. The funds for the reconstruction of the Kaštijun depot will be secured primarily through the return of the funds raised so far, which also means to conduct an investigation of those responsible for the spending of the 12,9 million kunas from 1997 until 1999. In the centre of the city, the challenging tasks of the belated and long overdue cleaning and reconstruction of the draining rainfall system, neglected for 50 years, are underway.

The municipal administration is trying to solve the basic infrastructure and traffic problems, by focusing the development of that segment on constructing parking garages, improving public transportation and parking, revamping the public transportation system by purchasing six new buses and improving traffic signalization. The bus station has been moved from downtown to Šijana, new, urban-style bus stops have been set up and a roundabout built at the entrance to the city.

The city of Pula pays particular attention to the improvement of the services provided by the utility companies, but is facing unpredictable costs concerning the infrastructure due to a prolonged no-investment period - wherever some work commences, it turns out there is a need for a complete overhaul of the existing infrastructure - which slows down the planned work dynamics.

Not to repeat mistakes: Anticorruption Council

Learning from the mistakes from the previous periods and aware of the fact that to successfully fight corruption, political will and decisiveness as well as political commitment and responsibility to voters and citizens are of utmost importance, the city of Pula Board formed its Anticorruption Council, since the fight against corruption is the basic component of the process of democratisation, the modernization of administration, the establishment of fair conditions on the market and the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms. Pula is the first Croatian town to have launched an anticorruption programme at the local level and the main tasks of the Anticorruption Council are detecting potential sources of corruption, taking preventive measures in enterprises and educating employees and the public.

Protection of municipal land, urban planning and space

Pula has taken a firm stand on the protection of the municipal land on which - since the process of privatisation - certain private companies have set their eyes on. The local government, the government closest to the citizens, has the right to defend its citizens' heritage, for we have no other heritage. In the process of economic transformation, the companies have not assessed the value of their land, nor have they entered that value into their assets, which results in the requests that this unresolved right be conferred on the local government by means of certain legal and other modifications.

Parallel with the completion of urbanistic documentation, the city of Pula has collected and analysed the archive materials in order to valorise and mark sites. In doing so, the city authorities get assistance by means of their international cooperation with sister-towns as well as through their own initiatives e.g. establishing the Council for the Protection of Fortification Architecture which listed some 60 fortifications and cannon nests in order to protect them and put them to some civilian use. The city of Pula, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, is trying to identify all the locations that might further the city's development and are no longer important for the defence, in order to re-designate those locations for tourist purposes, new apartment complexes, and for the tertiary sector as well.

The municipal administration completed its preparations for creating a database of the business premises owned by the city and the assets owned by the state, plus the updated utility companies' ownership records. By improving the regulation and the criteria for the reimbursement of the funds invested into the municipal premises, Pula has attempted to find a more satisfactory solution for the relationship between the landlords and the tenants.

Pre-school, education, sports, health, welfare and culture

Almost one quarter of the budget is allocated for pre-school care, education, sports, health, and welfare. The improvements in the quality of education in Pula have been achieved through different programmes under the umbrella name "quality school", through the individual approach, the work with talented children, the foreign language learning from the earliest age, the additional training of the professional

staff in educational institutions, the prevention of drug addiction through the curricula and the extracurricular activities.

During 2002, certain improved practices of primary school asset management were initiated in such a way that a significant shift was made in investing into the capital facilities and the investment maintenance. The program of non-profit organizations' grants to the citizens has been realized by awarding 115 student scholarships and by subsidies to non-profit organizations.

The amount of 9, 24 million kunas has been allocated in the budget for sports, including the sports recreational programme "Sports for all". In order to more efficiently manage the available sports facilities, the sport public institution was set up in Pula.

The swimming pool on Pragrande is under construction (preceded by a competition for the design of the entire complex), as is the reconstruction of "Dom mladosti" and the gym at the primary school in Stoja - the facilities in which an exceptionally important international sporting event is to take place: the European Boxing Championship for seniors in 2004. That is a great responsibility, but also an excellent opportunity for the sports, cultural and economic promotion of the city of Pula, Istria and Croatia.

Pula has a strong welfare programme that provides assistance to meet the basic needs of the impoverished, the invalids and other needy persons. 2010 poverty-stricken people plus 2250 more are taken care for by 16 disabled persons associations, the beneficiaries of Pula's generous Welfare Program.

Significant funds have been siphoned into the Faculty of Philosophy and the construction of the Faculty of Economics and Tourism. This year, another great educational and cultural facility will be finished: the City Library.

Various cultural manifestations, such as transforming the former military barracks "Karlo Rojc" into a multi-cultural student centre with a plethora of activities, have put Pula on the cultural map, which has had a positive effect on Pula's development. Soon, within the future center, some 80 city associations will be active; in the next phase, a student canteen will be opened and a hostel built.

The promotion and protection of human rights and the rights of minorities and the building of civil society are part of the strategic approach to Pula's development in which the latest international legal, constitutional and legislative solutions in the area of protecting parity and identity of all minorities living in Pula have been adopted and applied.

Citizen create urban identity - lifetime education for the administration

By involving the citizens of Pula into joint project realization, they create the city and its urban identity, shape the present and the future together with the administration, based on dialogue, tolerance and cooperation. It is thought that the permanent education of city employees is necessary at present because of the rapid changes of all technologies, including the managerial ones.

Therefore, the following is required of all the city administration employees - first of all to identify the administration's human resources in order to improve them. More than 50 percent of Pula's civil servants in the administration were trained in the use of information technologies for administrative purposes. Furthermore, the city statute requires that the administration's activities be transparent by means of using information technologies. Pula's city administration heavily invests into the education of the civil servants, convinced that Pula's development depends on the creative, efficient and lifelong acquiring, expansion and use of knowledge - and quickly accepts the offers of consulting services, aware of the fact that outsourced consultants bring dynamics into the administration and enrich it with new knowledge, skills and solutions, particularly in pressing situations.

Therefore, for the administration of the city of Pula, the following priorities remain:

- education of its own and entrepreneurship management
- investment into construction and development of infrastructure capital
- developing interactive relationship with citizens - consumers and buyers

- strategic positioning of development, supporting development projects to overcome technologies of low-capital intensity
- openness to green-field investments
- faster adoption of other solutions and
- supporting high productivity and innovations (within the city administration as well).

Local development agents: the case of Timis county, Romania

Local governments are interested in enhancing their capacity of action and in fulfilling the expectations of the community in which they work. In small municipalities, the capacity to act and be successful is hindered by the lack of sufficient partners, staff and finances to develop projects. One of the success models, developed in EU countries is the „local development agent“ (or facilitator - see www.caledonia.org.uk/communit.htm). Romania has recently adopted this model, with the hope to aid rural communities and small towns to attract national and international projects, relevant for their development. Of enormous help was the expertise provided by the Agency for Economic Development of Nordrhein Westfalen, Germany to develop a Romanian-adapted concept of „local development agent“, with tasks such as:

- strategic development
- project management
- community development
- fundraising for projects relevant to the community
- marketing and promotion of the municipality
- ensuring inter-institutional local and international co-operation
- other tasks, arising from newly identified needs of the community.

So far, in Timis county only 24 local development agents have been employed by the local governments in small towns and rural settings, but similar projects have been developed in other counties, such as Cluj and Bistrita Nasaud (it is important to state that some of the Romanian local development agents had already exchanges of experience with

similar agents from Bekes county, Hungary and from Saratov region in Russia). Of great help proved to be the PHARE programme, since EU financed, through the PHARE RO 0104.03/2.2 the project „Local development agent - an actor for stirring local development“, within the component „NGO development“. After four years of work, local development agents in Timis county succeeded to obtain financing for 35 projects developed by them as follows:

- for infrastructure projects 2.872.603 euro
- for social services 512.586 euro
- for environment 432 euro
- for cultural projects 1.150 euro
- for public administration moderniyation 84.141 euro.

Other activities: participation in national/ regional contests for projects, creation of 4 community associations, development of strategies for 15 municipalities (see also: www.adetim.ro; unfortunately the English version does not contain the descriptions of projects).

In one small town only, for instance, Jimbolia, the most Western town of Romania, situated in the vicinity of the Romanian-Hungarian border, the local development agent, operating since January 2000, succeeded to carry out projects such as:

- *ROMA Access - a step forward to improve the social status of Roma people in Jimbolia*, project financed through PHARE with 16.500 euro (consisting of training offered to Roma people, in order to access the labour market)
- *Creation of the microregional association Banat Ripensia for developing municipalities*
- *Councelling center for citizens* - a project financed with 19.550 euro
- *Development strategy of Jimbolia - an instrument for dialogue in local partnerships etc.* (www.jimbolia.ro, yet the projects are not available in English, but the mayor is available for further references).

Similar European experiences can be studied from the following references:

www.observaonline.net/html/inglese/ingl.htm - Italy

www.lefs-leonardo.org/project/lefsen.htm - Spain, but for partners in UK, Greece, Poland, Italy and Spain, for creating a network of local development agents

www.cal.ngo.pl - Poland

www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/monroe/cnred/documents - USA, for Community Resource Development Agents

casnws.scw.vu.nl/publicaties/venema-councillor.html - Senegal, for rural councillors who would act as local development agents