

THE PERCEPTION OF THE LIFE QUALITY OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES. CASE STUDY, BORCEA COMMUNE, CALARASI COUNTY

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Abstract

For a more complete characterization of the perception of quality of life in rural communities were considered the most important features of social and economic environment, expressed through a set of criteria for analysis. To make this analysis complex with a high degree of objectivity, each field is assigned a set of criteria to highlight problems in it. The quantitative research was conducted during October 2011 - January 2012, based on semi-standardized questionnaire, applied face to face at home and by interviewing subject factors with administrative and economic responsibilities. Borcea village population survey was performed by applying the 71 questionnaires, to address subjects to learn the opinions and attitudes on population: satisfaction with life and local services, living conditions and migration, the confidence in institutions and citizen participation, perception changes and development potential of the village, projects implemented by local authorities. The results from the interpretation of these data have led to a research report and SWOT analysis of the locality.

Key words: *quality of life, rural, rural potential, sustainable development*

INTRODUCTION

Romania must adopt rural policies that contain elements of accelerating the process of compatibility with those in the European Union, especially in the regulations of the rights to property and its guarantee, but also the infrastructure improvement and education on this specific segment. But mentioning the agrarian and rural policies, it must start from the fact that the agriculture is not only an economic sector producing goods and profit, but also a way of life, and the rural area is not only an area of production but also, at the same time, a social and cultural place, with complex implications on the general state of a nation.

Under these conditions, the present paper elaborates a study regarding the perception of the quality of life in the rural communities. It is important to establish the resources, needs, opportunities, threats, competitive advantages. Without a strategy the coherence in using funds is missing, resources are wasting, but especially time, time that passes in the

disfavour of the population that lives in the rural area. [1].

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For the study of the realities of the rural area of Borcea commune, Călărași county, as it is perceived by the inhabitants of the rural area 3 methods of specific research were used: economic, dynamic, deductive and quantitative analysis; SWOT analysis; economic inquiry or participative research that supposes collecting information in the territory using as research techniques “questionnaire” and “interview”.

The start point in elaborating the questions in the questionnaire was the analysis of the social, economic and institutional situation that led to the identification of key problems the locality face with and of its potential, in order to establish a strategic orientation that supports and is according to the general goal of the Development Strategy at regional level. For the elaboration of the sustainable

development strategy of Borcea commune, the following sources of data and instruments were used to obtain information about the current state and identification of local needs:

1. Research on documents. The documents made available by local council, Calarasi County Council, Department for Agriculture and Rural Development and other county public institutions were analysed, for the **elaboration of the diagnosis analysis of the commune**, that included [2].: data about the commune situation about physical geographical characteristics, statistics and census made at local level, in demographic, labour force employment, education and culture, environment protection sectors; The General Urbanism Plan (PUG).

2. On site Research. The quantitative on site research was made in the period October 2011 - January 2012, based on semi-standardized questionnaire, applied face to face, at the subjects domicile, by interviewing the administrative responsibility factors. The research registered the opinions and attitudes of the population in Borcea commune, Călărași county, regarding: satisfaction to life and local public services; living conditions and migration; perception of changes and potential of commune development, impact of rural development programs on the quality of life in the rural area.

The questionnaire containing 13 questions, was applied on a number of 71 respondents in the commune. The sample was selected with a statistic step of sampling, based on electoral lists and Agricultural Register of local councils, aiming to constitute a representative sample from the point of view of the age groups and incomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Characterization physical geography

Borcea is situated in the South-East of the Romanian Plain, more precisely in South Bărăgan area, on the left shore of Borcea branch, with a population of 11000 inhabitants, with a surface of 30 580 ha arable and inside land, being the second communes as size according to the last statistical reports,

that is 11000 inhabitants and 3000 houses. Borcea commune borders at East with Fetești municipality-Ialomița county, at South with Constanța county, at West with Jegălia locality, at North with Ialomița county and Ștefan cel Mare locality [2]. **The economic sector. Agricultural activities** The land of a remarkable quality and crops represent the main resources of Borcea commune, the most frequent crops being wheat, maize, potatoes, oil plants and vegetables. The extended crops of sunflower and rape permit the development of bee keeping. In their own houses people raise poultry, pork, caws, sheep and goats for their own consume. The activity of this economic sector is concentrated at the level of small farms and individual producers. In Borcea commune, over 200 firms are registered that have as activity commerce with food and non food products to the population, 32 agricultural companies, from which 3 are the former I.A.S. that use over 8000 ha arable land. The outside land: 38032 ha; -from whihc:-agricultural:30499 ha; forests:3204; waters:3614; roads :506 ha; non productive:2009 ha. The economic agents in agriculture - 24 :12 agricultural companies; 12 companies[3]. **Activities of industrial type and constructions-tourism.** There is not a remarkable activity from the industrial point of view, the occupation of the inhabitants being agriculture, cereals crops and vegetables. In locality there are: a bakery that ensures bread need in the locality, 2 slaughter houses, can factory; 3 units for cereals processing (oil factories, bakery units). The complexes for cattle growing will be put into function that are at present under preservation state. Many tourists visit the locality, especially for the possibilities for hunting and fishing, but also for the possibilities of relaxing in the surrounding forests. Tourism objectives: **Hunter House** is situated in a dig precincts, provides multiple possibilities for relaxing accompanied by special gastronomic services.. on the left shore of Borcea Branch, leaving the commune, there is the forest but also a beach, that soon will be arranged to provide the commune inhabitants not only a point of pleasure, but also spending the spare time. Borcea Lake that provides

possibilities of hunting and fishing. There are three settlements that ensure to the tourists high quality services and food with hunting specific.

2. Questionnaire results are summarized as follows:

From the total of the answered persons in Borcea commune, even if the live in the rural area, 38.12% do not posses land, and those who posses land – 46.35% chose to lend it. There is also the category of respondents -4.75% who own land, but had it lent. The incomes level of the inhabitants in the rural area is low, this reaching only for the strict needs- 34.82%. from the total of respondents, 21.32% highlights the fact that they are not enough for strict need. There is another category of respondents– 7.51%, who mention that their incomes are enough to buy what they need, without restrictions. The population incomes at most respondents come from the salary -61.14%, incomes from agricultural production being almost inexistent – 3.92%

Question1. How satisfied are you?

Table 1.Results of respondents answers to question1

Question 1	a	b	c	d
How satisfied are generally the way you live?	1,75%	35,09%	35,09%	28,07

The number of people, quite satisfied, is equal to that of the “not too happy,,-35.09%.

Only 43.80% of the total subjects were satisfied with the municipality where they live.

Question 3. In the hierarchy of the operation of local public services, sewerage and roads in the village, along with medical care services are made notes of how these responsibilities. 13.96% before the public are satisfied with the roads leading to town water supply 14.16%, 11.09% of public lighting, 13.42% of health care, school and home culture 12.81% . Compared with roads only 9.54% are satisfied with the sewerage 5.42%, most believing that they need the most improvement.

Questions 4 and 5 related to the social – cultural sector. Demographic aspects. During the last years Borcea commune population is continuously decreasing. It at the end of '80s the commune population

counted about 12000 inhabitants, today it has only 8777 inhabitants from which: men - 3202 ;women - 3341 ; Children -2234 ; Pensioners - 2460 ; persons who left to work abroad -576 .

Distribution on nationalities : Romanian - 8695 ; Hungarian -3 ; Rroma population -76 ; Lippovan -3. [4].

Distribution on religions : Orthodox -8693 ; Romano-catholic -14 ; Reformed -3.

Almost half of the persons answered - 49.12% , think that young leave to town to find a job, but 47.37% mention that the young can earn a living, only if they go abroad. From the total of respondents, only 3.51 are those who and with the children remain in the commune. . Most persons answered have children – 81.19 % . from those questioned 62.91 % think that to ensure a better life for the children is in town, and 26.83% consider that they should go abroad.

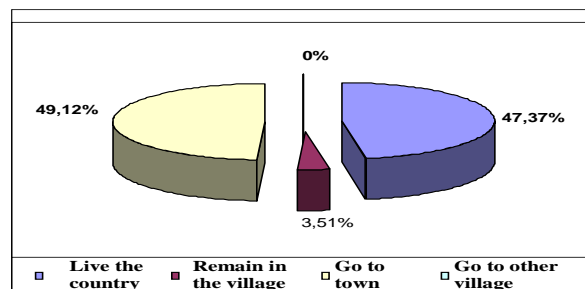


Fig.1.Results on demographic aspects

Question 6. Do you think your last child having to make a future in this village, in another village, in the city, abroad? 64.91% of respondents consider providing a better life for children is in town.

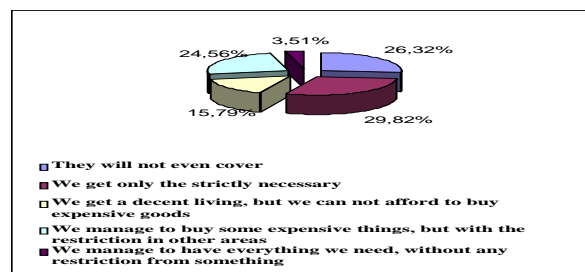


Fig.2. Repondents answers to question 6.

Question 7. Do you have land? Of all respondents, even if they live in rural areas, nearly half - 49.12% have no land, and those who owned land - 40.35% chose its lease.

Question 8. Subjective appraisal of incomes. The income level of rural inhabitants is low, reaching only the strictly necessary - 29.82%.

Question 9. Sources of income. Income population in the vast majority of respondents came from wages - 56.14%, income from agricultural production is almost nonexistent, 1.75%

Table 2.Reposndents' answers to question 9.

Question 10	a	b	c	d
What is the institution that you trust?	Town hall	The church	The school	Other
	3,51%	42,11%	38,59%	15,79%

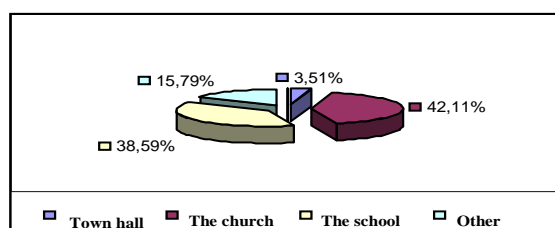


Fig 3.Reposndents answers regarding the institution they trust

The institution in which citizens have the greatest trust of the village is the church - 42.11%.

Question 11. What is the public person that you trust most?

The priest is the person in public that the public trust most - 40,35%.

Questions 12 and 13 refer to the education and age of respondent

Educational level of preparation of respondents is high, 37.40% of them have high school and 18.54% are university graduates. Of those who attended 41.38% are aged between 18-34 years, 37.6% were aged 35-59 years and 21.95% fall in the age group over 60 years.

CONCLUSIONS

By the process of questionnaire of commune inhabitants we consider that the active and continuous involvement of the inhabitants in the social economic development of the communes will increase gradually, once with the awareness of the fact that each inhabitant must involve himself actively in the development of the community he lives in.

For the economic development of the commune the next 10 years aim the following strategic directions of development : *Development and modernisation of physical infrastructure; Development of agriculture;. Capitalization of tourist potential; Development and diversification of services; Creation of business infrastructure..*

The expected impact following the implementation of the strategy aims: farmers training; decrease of average age of active rural population; opportunity equality between men and women; extension of profile consultancy services and awareness of population on their needs; appearance of new stable jobs, implicitly decrease of unemployment rate in rural area; decrease/ and or avoid of depopulation risk; increase of incomes and quality of life in rural communities; awareness, education and responsibility of rural population on importance of environment quality; real opportunities for creation of new activities; reduction and/or elimination of disparities between rural and urban area.

The interested groups that could contribute to the development of the rural communities are local authorities, economic representatives in locality interested in activity promotion and especially interested in local economic development by electronic commerce promotion, providing financial and technical assistance for the adoption of innovation solutions in private sector, teaching staff, students who want to return in the commune after they finish their studies, the initiative commissions constituted under the project implemented during the last years as well investors attracted by the facilities provided (infrastructure, potential of young population, spaces, possibility to connect to the natural gas network in a near future, inside lands available for houses building and for investments).

REFERENCES

- [1] Calarasi Statistical Yearbook - 2010 edition
- [2] General Urban Plan of the village Borcea
- [3] Statistical data from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the County Training and Employment Agency of Employment
- [4]Statistical data from the Agricultural and Rural Development