

THE POTENTIAL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF VÂLCELELE COMMUNE, CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY

Elena LASCĂR

University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest, 59 Marasti, District 1, Bucharest, 011464, Romania, Phone/Fax: 00 40 745 17 15 83; E-mail: elenalascar@yahoo.co.uk

Corresponding author: elenalascar@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The concept of development means all forms and methods of socio-economic development, and it is based on ensuring a balance between these socio-economic systems and the elements of natural capital. Călărași county is situated in the South-East part of the country and of the Romanian Plain, on the left shore of the Danube. It has a surface of 5088 square km and it occupies 2.1% of Romania surface. The relief is mainly represented by fields. The county depends on agriculture and economy in the rural area. In the rural area of Călărași county 49.1% of the total population in the country lives, most involved in agricultural activities or activities related to it. Communes are the most important category of administrative units, both numerically and in terms of population. The present paper presents aspects regarding the potential of sustainable rural development of Vâlcelele commune in Călărași county.

Key words: commune, county, development, region, rural area

INTRODUCTION

Călărași county is situated in the South-East part of the country. It has a decreasing population and a density of about 62.6 inhabitants/km, we must consider it as being mostly rural, counting 194,190 inhabitants in the rural area (59% of the total population in 2009) that represents with 21% more than the average of the countries that joined EU recently. Thus, the rural and agricultural development will form a solid pillar. The county success and prosperity depend on its own economic performances. The county is dependent on agriculture and economy in the rural area. The spread of globalization threatens the traditional agriculture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the presentation of Vâlcelele commune, it was processed the information taken from the Sheets of the locality, provided by the local council and information collected from the County Department of Statistics and from Călărași Department for Agriculture and Rural Development. The sheets provided by the County

Department of Statistics were analysed, for the elaboration of the diagnosis analysis of the commune, that included: data about commune situation and about its physical-geographical characteristics; statistics and census made at local level, in demography, labour force employment sectors, economic sector, education and culture, animal and vegetal production.

Also the SWOT analysis method was used for the commune regarding the development of the rural area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Vâlcelele commune is composed of Vâlcelele and Floroaica villages [1]. Situated in the North-eastern part of Călărași county, at a distance of 29 km Northwest of Călărași county, 35 km from the Danube River and 90 km from Bucharest, the village is crossed by the county road to the North-west south, crossing both villages, moving towards Cuza-Vodă commune and connects Bucharest-Constanța highway. Bucharest-Constanța highway, passes through the North of the village, at a distance of 4 km. The two villages of the commune are located 3 km

from each other, being separated by Floroaica Forest. To the North (7 km from Vâlcelele village and 10 km from Floroaica village) Dragoş Vodă is located, and Bucharest-Constanta railway line which in Ciulniţa, it branches to Călăraşi. Therefore, it has the advantage to be situated in a junction of means of communication, which facilitated trade links, and socio-cultural links.

The population is formed of 1,833 de persons, it can be seen a decreasing trend in the analysed period, in 2011 being with almost 15% less persons than in 1992.

Table 1. Population movement

Indicator	2009	2010	2011
Total population on 1 st July	1806	1800	1769
Born – live	11	17	10
Deceased	32	35	41
Natural increase	-21	-18	-31
Marriage	6	8	7
Divorce	2	2	4
Born - dead	0	0	0

Vâlcelele commune lies on a surface of 6,457 ha, of which 90.6% is arable land, the rest of 9.4% is occupied by roads 4.4%, forests 2.6%, pasture and meadows 2.5%, water 1.9%, roads 1.9% and vineyards 1.3%;

Table 2. Vâlcelele commune surface

	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture surface according to its use – hectares	5,720	5,720	5,720
Arable land - ha	5,656	5,656	5,656
Surface – vineyard and vine nursery - ha	42	34	34
Surface with water and ponds – total – ha	158	158	158
Surface with constructions total - ha	179	179	179
Surface – ways of communications and railways total – ha	234	234	234
Surface with degraded and non productive land – total - ha	-	-	-
Agricultural surface – private ownership – ha	5,919	5,919	5,919
Arable surface –private ownership - ha	5,720	5,720	5,720

At the end of 2011 it had 965 houses, by

3.8% more than in 1992 and 1,7% less than in 2002;

Table 3. Surfaces grown with the main crops in Vâlcelele commune in the period 2009-2011

Surface	UM	2009	2010	2011
Surface grown with cereals	ha	2,602	2,002	2,240
Surface grown with maize	ha	1,425	1,666	1,730
Surface grown with sun flower	ha	342	487	502
Surface grown with vegetables	ha	5	7	10
Surface grown with vineyards	ha	42	34	34

The economy, like all villages in Bărăgan area, is dominated by agriculture, the arable land provides a solid basis for obtaining various agricultural products required in industry, in food and animal feeding. Fruits and vegetables are another category of food raw materials. The subsoil is made of clay soil, at a depth of 30-50 cm, which is capable of maintaining humidity. Therefore, the vegetation is abundant and the land is fertile enough, despite the steppe climate.

Regarding the evolution of houses construction, it keeps the same trend as in the previously studied two communes, that is the period in which most houses were built is 1941-1960, with 49.6% of the total, followed by the period 1961 -1980, 20.9%.

Again we see that the period with the least constructions is the 2001-2012 and besides the possible previous explanations, we would add the increased costs of land, construction materials and lower per capita income.

In the rural area of Vâlcelele commune, there are 13 SMEs, of which 8 in agricultural sector. [2]

the most developed sector is agriculture with 8 companies in different branches of agriculture, most notably SC Ildu SRL, established in 1994, with a total number of 27 employees, specialized in the cereals crops (except rice), vegetables and oil seeds plants and SC Ilya Agro Srl, established in 1998, with 23 employees, specialized in dairy cattle; the commerce has 3 companies, also one

company specialised on en gross commerce of cereals, sedds, fodder and non processed tabaco, Sc Dany 2004 SRL;

Service sector has 2 companies, SC Florina SRL and Sc Iliuta SRL.

In the following table I presented the evolution of the animal stock in Vâlcelele commune [3]

Table 4. The evolution of animal stock in Vâlcelele commune in the period 2009-2011

Categories	MU	2009	2010	2011
Cattle	head	1604	1115	1445
Swine	head	3376	2848	2965
Sheep	head	580	395	435
Poultry	head	10800	11720	12500

Regarding the situation of the employees in Vâlcelele commune, we have a decrease in their number between the first and last year by 12%, but we note that between 2007-2010 the number increased in 2009 being even higher with almost 73% since 2006.

The number of employees in agriculture has decreased a lot, almost 35%, while the largest variation represents the workers employed in industry and manufacturing, which at the beginning were represented by a very small number, between 2009-2010 it reached to nearly half of employees (over 400% of the first year) and at the end of the period to a value approximately equal to the reference year.

I made the SWOT to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the studied commune.

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method of analysis by identifying internal and external factors that may affect the proposed strategic objectives by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of an initial reference situation.

Strengths

- people are interested in local business sector development;
- various funds can be accessed, access to which we can rely on the expertise of local staff;

- the existence of numerous companies with vegetable, livestock and agriculture services and marketing profile;

- high share of private ownership of arable land;

- possibility to use the compost in agriculture;

Weaknesses

We mention the weaknesses of the commune:

- lack of more opportunities of fun and leisure (parks and gardens);

- poor access to social services and health services;

- Poor adaptation to European standards in agriculture;

- crop diversification is little used in farms and agricultural lands are fragmented;

- lack of tourist infrastructure in the commune

- limited access to sources of information.

Opportunities

- sustainable development of the community there are various sources of funding (for economic competitiveness, rural development, environment, regional development, improve infrastructure, increase government capacity and human resource development);

- developed agricultural, vegetable, livestock and favourable natural leisure potential;

- spatial ability leisure;

- potential for organic farming;

- economic potential by selling compost or business development in the field of organic farming;

- potential for using renewable energy sources (solar, biomass and biogas);

- increased potential for projects in partnership with neighbouring communes;

- attracting potential investors;

- Potential for the development of food processing sector.

Threats

- under estimation of the rural area;

- lack of capital to support investment;

- poor utilization of the existing potential

- slow development of the rural economy;

- increasing disparities between rural communities;

- youth migration to the urban areas;

- widening discrepancies in the rural communities and their excessive depopulation;

-decrease the number of pupils, due to low birth rates, partial degradation of cultural infrastructure (community centre, library);
-the need for large and long term investments.

CONCLUSIONS

SWOT analysis highlighted as *strengths* the resources ensured by the good quality of the agricultural lands but also the activities in the livestock sector; the most important *weaknesses* of the communes consists of the poorly developed infrastructure, the lack of jobs and population aging; the main *opportunities* are represented by the respondents desire for development, the possibility to access national, intra-community subsidies and attract foreign investments; the *threats* consist of the imminent depopulation, lack of capital, lack of information that can diminish considerably the development chances;

From the above characteristics resulted the image of a community that has the desire for the development of the rural area but an aging community from demographic point of view, with poor opportunities on the labour market, but with a very high level of cooperation potential in order to achieve some common goals, including regarding the achievement of public goods.

The vision regarding the economic-social development of the rural communities in Călărași county is the creation and support of the competitive, stable, healthy and diversified social economic sector, to ensure the continuous economic growth and the increase of the quality of life of the commune inhabitants.

In the end we can conclude there is the need to use of agricultural resources by accessing funds destined to agriculture, ensure a high degree of rural population information regarding the existing opportunities and the requirements that must be observed in the agricultural sector, attracting young population to agricultural activities in the vegetal and livestock sector, restructuring and modernisation of the agricultural products processing and selling sectors.

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