

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FROM THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*Local development is the process of development, primarily economic, in a certain region or administrative-territorial unit, which causes an increase in quality of life at the local community, meeting the requirements of the current generation and making future generations fulfill their options, is sustainable development. Sustainable development aims to reconcile two fundamental aspirations, namely the need for economic and social development, and protecting and improving the state of the environment. From the perspective of development, governance is a process of collective decision therefore involves cooperation between different institutions and local communities to exercise their responsibilities and powers to carry out a long term global strategy. Local public services are defined as all activities of public utility and generally undertaken at the territorial-administrative units under the management, coordination and accountability of local government, to meet the requirements of local communities.*

**KEYWORDS:** *local community, sustainable development, governance, public services, development strategy.*

Governance today involves a unique philosophy which aims to transform the citizen into a major player of the development planning. The state is seen as an "ecosystem with a plurality of dimensions - social, environmental, urban, economic, political, cultural, etc. and a plurality of interacting actors"<sup>1</sup>.

Word "governance" has many meanings. One can speak about a "world government" closely related to the processes of globalization or about an "European government" which aims the reform of European institutions and the relationships between local communities and these institutions. We can speak also about "local governance" to define territorial practices which aim the exogenous and endogenous development and the mobilization of the local development actors in line with state or European policies.

From the development perspective, governance is a process of collective decision therefore involves cooperation between different institutions and local communities to exercise their responsibilities and powers to carry out a long-term global strategy.

Deriving from a pure economical outlook which regarded the production increase through industrialization, the term is defined today as a process that leads to increased prosperity. Economic activity and material prosperity are important, but development is not limited to the growth of gross national product. Education, health, culture and environment are equally important<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Dossier documentaire, „Gouvernance”, realizat în august 1999 de către Centre de documentation de l'urbanisme (CDU): Nathalie Holec, Association 4D – Dossiers et débats pour le développement durable et Geneviève Brunet-Jolivald, Centre de documentation de l'urbanisme.

<sup>2</sup> Glossaire des Outils Economiques de l'Environnement, Rénate Husseini, Christian Brodhag, 'Ecole des Mines, 2002

Development corresponds to a process of mobility, of a shift with a deliberative character to achieve the economic and social objectives. Experts<sup>1</sup> identify two phases of development - the virtual (DV) and real (RD) development. Virtual development involves taking the following steps: creativity, project idea, the confrontation with reality, project superstructure and infrastructure definition, the integration in other projects and in the environment and the institutionalization of the project. After these phases, the virtual development transformation in real development is accompanied by economic growth, a process mediated by management performance.

Local development is "the economic development process of a certain region or administrative-territorial unit, which determines an increase of life quality at local level<sup>2</sup>. Development aims "economic prosperity and social welfare creating a favorable environment for business while integrating into the community of vulnerable groups, using the endogenous resources and developing the private sector.<sup>3</sup>

Local economic development (LED) is the process through which local government and/or groups-based community, manages the existing resources and gets into a new commitment or partnership with the private sector to create new jobs and to stimulate economic activities in a well-defined economic area<sup>4</sup>.

Economic development involves "the development of regional or local economic capacity and the formulation of the response to economic, technological and social changing<sup>5</sup>..."

Local social and economic development (LSED) is a development process in a given region or geographical area, which has the effect of improving the life quality at local level. LSED concerns the development of a regional or local economy to stimulate stable economic growth, thus creating jobs and conditions to maximize their opportunities specific to rapid economic, technological and social change.

LSED major objectives are to contribute to economic prosperity and social welfare by creating a favorable environment for business while integrating into the community of vulnerable groups and promote a dynamic and positive attitude of people towards the development of their regions. LSED considers social and cultural aspects of development.

LSED actors include government authorities and public administration bodies (from local, regional and central level) in charge of sector policies (industry, environment, labor, public works, transport, etc.), educational institutions, NGOs, media etc.<sup>6</sup>

Regional development represents all the short, medium and long term policies of central and local public administration authorities, developed to improve economic performance of some geographical areas set up in "development regions".

Sustainable development is the development that meet the requirements of the current generation, facilitating the fulfillment of future generations options<sup>7</sup>. Sustainable development aims to reconcile two fundamental aspirations, namely the need for economic and social development, protecting and improving the state of the environment.

Under provisions set out in Rio conference, each local authority is required to develop their local strategy for sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> Dumitrescu M., *Strategii și management strategic*, Ed. Economică, București, 2002, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Lat. Disolveree – a crește, a evolua.

<sup>3</sup> Parlagi A., *Dicționar de administrație publică*, Ed. Economică, București, 2004, p.86.

<sup>4</sup> *Dezvoltare economică – O modalitate strategică pentru administrația publică locală*, Don Morrison, ICMA, citându-l pe Edward J. Blakelz, *Planning Local Economic Development: Teory and Practice*.

<sup>5</sup> Matei L., *Strategii de dezvoltare economică locală*, Ed. Economică, București, 2004, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> „*Participarea cetățenească în luarea deciziei – Manual de instruire*”, USAID-RTI, București 2002, Coordonatori Matei L., Dincă D., p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> Ionașcu G., *Dezvoltarea și reabilitarea așezărilor umane din România*, Ed. Tempus, București, 2003, p. 12.

Local Agenda 21 is the process by which local authorities work in partnership with all sectors of the local community, focusing on community participation and on the enlarged local democracy, providing a way to integrate the social, economic and environmental issues. It must lead to the definition of objectives, policies and actions at local level.

Therefore, the concept of sustainable development refers to a form of growth that satisfies the society needs of welfare on short, medium and especially long term. It is based on the grounds that the development must meet present needs without jeopardizing those of future generations. In practical terms, this means creating conditions for "economic development in the long term, while protecting the environment". Sustainable development is a way forward that seeks to balance environmental, social and economic factors.

Concerns related to environmental protection play an increasingly important part in providing public services. These concerns influence especially the sectors of urban, transport and energy services, but they are exerted at levels that are not necessarily those of the management of public services.

Policies concerning the environment are generally national and local, but the environment protection acquires an increasing international character. The development of these concerns is an element of the management of public services, which requires taking into account the levels that were not previously envisaged.

This aspect is translated into increased demands in terms of rules and constraints, combined with a restriction of service operators freedom of action. The ecological approach of the public services supports their function of ensuring optimal flow of the substance.

This goal is quite difficult to achieve, especially since many public services are involved in the material flow: the flow of water through services of water supply, quality and circulation of air, soil, vegetation, urban waste, etc.

The central concept used in environmental services is that of sustainable development<sup>1</sup>. Key issue of sustainable development is the "reconciliation between the two fundamental human aspirations: economic and social development, social protection and the improvement of the state of the environment, the only way for the welfare of both present and future generations<sup>2</sup>."

Therefore, the concept of sustainable development refers to a form of growth that the company needs in terms of welfare in the short term, medium and especially long. It is based on the grounds that the development must meet present needs without putting at risk those of future generations. In practical terms, this means "create the conditions for economic development in the long term, while protecting the environment<sup>3</sup>."

The classical meaning of public service has improved with new points of view - economic, sociological, environmental, technological and managerial views. Integrating these points of view, we can define public service as the activity performed by a community (local, regional, national or European) by the power entrusted to them or by the power of a third party, which contributes to the value achievement of a public good or the supply of a necessary service (existing or new), which can not be done or performed solely by market rules.

This requirement may arise from a common strategic interest or from the need of solidarity and equity. Public services activities contribute to sustainable development and involve the local community using new technologies and management processes to increase

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<sup>1</sup> În anul 1992, în cadrul Conferinței de la Rio, 170 de state, printre care și România au recunoscut în mod unanim și au căzut de acord asupra nevoii urgente de a adopta o strategie globală pentru secolul următor, denumită „AGENDA 21”, a cărei opțiune să fie aplicarea principiilor dezvoltării durabile.

<sup>2</sup> Asupra conceptului de dezvoltare durabilă – Preda D., *Ocuparea forței de muncă și dezvoltarea durabilă*, Ed. Economică, București, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Moga A., *Dezvoltarea durabilă – Concept, Principiile enunțate în Raportul Brundtland*, Forum-supliment Arhitect Design-3/2001.

performance. Financing public services is made from the budgetary or non-budgetary sources, combinations of the two or by self-financing.

In Romania, the public utilities services are defined as all activities of public utility and of generally interest, undertaken at the communes, cities, municipalities or counties levels under the leadership, coordination and accountability of local government, to meet the requirements of local communities, to provide the following utilities<sup>1</sup>:

- a) water supply;
- b) sewerage and sewage treatment;
- c) collection, sewerage and disposal of pluvial;
- d) production, transmission, distribution and supply of heat through a central system;
- e) settlements sanitation;
- f) public lighting;
- g) management of public and private administrative-territorial units, and others;
- h) local public transport.

Local and regional partners are interested in solving the local communities problems from their areas of action, being in a partnership that aims to increase the satisfaction of the general interest, which resulted in the establishment and functioning of the inter-community development associations.

Development objectives must meet several requirements:

- to be specific to community;
- to be measurable in the sense that they presuppose the existence of qualitative and quantitative measurement;
- to be adaptable, i.e. to take account of internal and external environmental changing of the community;
- to be realistic in their formulation of purposes based on the analysis of the local potential
- to be well-defined in time.

Local development strategy is a complex endeavor, the result of collaboration between development actors, which involves an extensive effort in the objectives formulation, identifying strategic ways of achieving them in line with resources that may be involved.

Application of the development strategy implies the existence of resources: financial, human, material, information. Development should be based on endogenous resources and have in the foreground the human resource and its creative potential. State and local authorities are responsible for creating the mechanisms for the development of local resources.

Any approach which aims the local development involves phases of evaluation, the results of which are points of departure for the next stages. Evaluation can be done by each actor involved in the processes of development, but an important role must be assigned to the community, to citizens.

Being considered a traditional subject of the municipal and regional actions, local development has lost its impetus after the Second World War, when progress was identified with the formulation of solutions for central economic development. This subject reemerged when that view that international economic changes tend to affect the internal stability. Far from being considered an expression of particularity that should be kept away from any confrontation or any competition, this trigger strategy of strengthening the foundations of society, this theme is a strategy trigger of strengthening the foundations of society, being situated in the center of social and cultural strategies, economic and political strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Legea nr.51 din 8 martie 2006 a serviciilor comunitare de utilități publice, art. 1, publicată în M. Of. Nr. 254/2006.

Experts identified the following characteristics of local development:

- local development is also economic, social and cultural;
- local development oppugn territories whose size and status are not necessarily equivalent;
- local development implies the combination of all those involved in economic and social life in order to establish projects;
- local development differs from traditional development strategy through enhancing endogenous resources;
- the success of a local development depends on the speed with which information and specialization are assured.

Therefore, we consider local development as a complex process of increasing the welfare of territorial level, by concerted actions of local, regional and national actors, actions aiming areas like environmental protection, social development, market economy, governance, institutions, information, spatial planning, education and training, science and research, based primarily on the potential of that territory.

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