

Community Participation In Village Development: a Case of Latvia

Edgars Pudzis ¹, Sanda Geipele ², Ineta Geipele ³

¹⁻³ Riga Technical University, Latvia, edgars.pudzis@rtu.lv, sanda.geipele@rtu.lv, ineta.geipele@rtu.lv

Abstract

The research provides an insight into the village development planning essence, at the same time looking at the village planning from the point of national planning framework. Also local settings of the village development have been taken in account. The research provides information about possible approaches for local community involvement in development decision making.

Keywords: Village planning, community development, community involvement

Introduction

Over the last decades after the Republic of Latvia regained independence there has been significant changes in the country development. There has been established a democratic country, advancing a new base of regulatory enactments to ensure development of the country, as well as devoting major effort to the development of civil society. Taking into account the positive changes, as well as necessity of the continuous process development, there is a need to encourage the system of regional improvement in the country, in the direction that would make local communities in its lowest territorial levels to participate more actively in decision-making as well as to participate in the development of its area. This article aims to look at the current situation in the involvement of local communities in the progression of local territories and to present proposals for public involvement models participate more actively in decision-making as well as to participate in the development of its area.

Methodology of Research

The primary method used in the research was logical and historical access method. In addition, analysis of the factors, induction and deduction methods were used in the research.

Findings and Results

In performing a more thorough analysis of national legislation, international context and principles of sustainable development 3 models of local community participation in development decision-making were identified. During the analyse and comparing of these models, authors created conclusion that most effective way of community involvement is composite model with formal and informal features.

Conclusions

Based on this research following conclusion are made:

1. Europe and the world has experience with village planning approach to foster local development – both through private initiatives, as well as with the common national policies. At the same time the planning system of Latvia does not lay down specific terms of local (village) development planning.
2. In the planning system of Latvia is not intended for village development level, although the local society is best aware of its local problems and are able to find the most effective solutions to prevent them. At the same time has to be aware that the highest added value to the village planning (including implementations of plans) can provide mutual cooperation, because there are advantages in the hands of each side (for example, local society - knowledge of local problems, but local municipality – material and non-material resources). Use of common advantages in combinations to the qualitative administration could find better solutions, as well as increase the life quality of the village citizens and satisfaction of their residence.
3. Using the mixed village planning model and involving wider range of sides interested into village development, it can be obtained widest possible range of views (and the needs), to promote shared public responsibility of the village development, as well as find the most effective (in financial terms as well) solutions, which could considerably increase citizens of village satisfaction with the living space in the future.

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