



PLANNING RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH A FOCUS ON CULTURE

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What is planning?



What is rural development planning?

It is about organising the local community's ideas for future development, usually with the help of experts, so that these ideas can take a shape and be realised

We focus on local development planning, which

- is area-based: refers to a defined geographical territory**
- falls within a wider policy framework defined at regional and national level**
- should be guided by a strategy for local development**

Rural development planning is about forming strategies

- Defining what the needs of the people are
- Defining the resources and assets that give this area its “comparative advantage”
- On the basis of the above, defining the objectives, or the “vision” for the next 10 or 20 years
- Put this vision in the context of the wider environment, i.e. the regional and national policies and the legal and regulatory framework
- Give this vision a “physical” dimension i.e. defining the places –sites, buildings, etc- that are most important for the vision

Rural development planning is also about forming an action plan and a physical plan to implement the local development strategy

The action plan should answer such questions as:

What types of activities need to be developed?

- For raising the income and the employment in the area
- For improving the quality of life of people
- For connecting the area to its wider environment – regional, national, global

What steps should be taken to introduce these actions - timetable?

Who is to be involved – the stakeholders?

What would be the sources and volume of funding?

Where would the activities be located within our territory and what would the restrictions be according to planning regulations?

By adopting a focus on culture we aim for

- **an integrated strategy of local development that includes a cultural strategy**
- **An action plan that is based mostly on the development of the cultural resources of the area (tangible and intangible, heritage and creative etc)**

Culture can be considered as the goal to local development if the aim of development is to improve the well being of the local population in all the dimensions of human existence

Cultural diversity is recognised as a central objective of local development planning by UNESCO

As defined by UNESCO in its declaration (2001) and convention (2005)

“Cultural diversity refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression”

In the UNESCO 2007 World Report on Cultural Diversity, this concept is made more specific by referring to three elements:

- a. Diversity of identities and origins of culture creators, producers, distributors and audiences**
- b. Diversity of artistic or other cultural content**
- c. Diversity of actors that are involved in decision making and funding cultural development**

Local Agenda 21 for culture was agreed in Barcelona in 2004 by many local authorities around the world, who took part in the IV Porto Alegre Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and expressed their commitment to encourage cultural diversity as an objective of multi-culturality and cultural democracy

A local strategy based on cultural diversity should have the following features:

- 1. define the contribution of both public and private sectors (profit and non-profit) to cultural production and cultural development**
- 2. move from a logic of “deficit funding” to “investment funding” of culture**
- 5. adopt an inclusive approach to culture, accepting multi-culturality as an asset for contemporary societies**

The process of drawing a local cultural strategy

- Analyze local cultural resources (heritage, creative, landscape, entrepreneurial...)
- Elaborate a vision of development for the next 10-20 years with a focus on culture
- Define the objectives of development
- Think about the means to realise the objectives
- Build into the strategy the objectives of social inclusion and social cohesion
- Mobilise the local community and encourage their participation, so that they “own” the strategy.

the community's vision for the future

how do we want our area to be in 10 or 20 years?

how do we want our life to be?

what is most valuable for us, what are we prepared to strive for?

the objectives of development

how are we going to make the vision work?

what opportunities we want to offer to the younger generations?

what do we want to keep and what to change?

the means that would bring about the change

how can we bring about the change?

what are the risks the community is prepared to take?

who are our allies?

the stakeholders within the community

who has an interest in the success of the scenario?

who is negatively affected?

How can we include all members of the community in the strategy?

Forming an action plan to implement a cultural strategy

1. Plan the necessary activities and investments

Select types of activities that draw on cultural resources

- **Attracting visitors / tourists to heritage sites and events**

- it is often seen as the “obvious” solution to earn revenue out of the local heritage, but

- tourism is a highly competitive and unstable sector that calls for a separate tourism strategy

- **Producing cultural products**

- Stimulate the traditional or modern crafts industry

- Encourage modern design

- Produce distinctive food and drink

- **Creating cultural infrastructure**

- Creating new infrastructure (e.g. museums, information centres etc)

- Refurbishing old buildings for cultural uses

Forming an action plan to implement a cultural strategy

2. Define the steps that should be taken to introduce the planned actions

Step 1. Inform the local people through workshops, discussions and campaigns; boost the self-confidence of local communities as “cultural producers”; increase their awareness of alternative options of cultural activities/products.

Step 2. Mobilise the local networks and the existing social capital in local communities.

Step 3. Plan the cultural activities / products in relation to employment, preservation of local heritage and identity and quality of life. Define the complementary facilities and services that are necessary and perform an audit to find out what is available and what more is needed. Define the necessary skills and organise training.

Step 4. Allocate responsibilities for the implementation of the planned actions. Conduct business plans and marketing plans.

Step 5. Exploit ICT to take part in the “global village”

Forming an action plan to implement a cultural strategy

3. Search for sources of funding

- **link to national and European policies and seek funding related to these**
 - A good practice example is provided by the UK: the local authorities that produce a cultural strategy get priority funding from central government and from the National Lottery for cultural services and infrastructure
 - The 4th Community Support Framework includes also some competitive funding for culture-based activities and infrastructure, provided that they form part of an integrated local development plan
 - The CULTURE 2000 Programme provides also some opportunities
- **seek private investment by encouraging local entrepreneurs to expand their activities or start new ones**

Forming an action plan to implement a cultural strategy

4. Consider carefully the physical planning dimension of the activities

- Check whether the location of the planned activities is allowed by the local town plan
- Check the planning regulations and the restrictions on land use
- Make sure that planning permission can be obtained for new buildings, extensions or refurbishments of existing ones and for other types of infrastructures (e.g. roads, footpaths etc)

5. Use the idea of projects to experiment with new things

- A project consists of several inter-linked activities, which support one another (e.g. restoration of a historical building, training on restoration skills, establishment of a museum and a tourism information centre in the restored building, production of information and publicity material, set up of a museum shop, support provided to local artists and craftsmen to produce artefacts for the shop, etc)
- Projects have a unitary budget and include a coordination and management function
- Projects are usually implemented by a partnership of private and public organisations, strengthening cooperation between the local stakeholders

6. Build in a social inclusion component , that recognizes and support multi-culturality and cross-fertilisation of different cultures

Culture is considered as a facilitator of social inclusion (Council of Europe) but in practice the social integration of minorities through culture needs to be assisted by a “social inclusion” component within a cultural strategy

An action research project in Santorini, Greece, gives some indication of the actions that help the cultural inclusion of minorities

Components of a cultural inclusion strategy

- Raising the visibility of the minority culture to make such a culture known to the wider local community.
- Promoting networking between the different cultural groups and with those local actors that can influence the community, e.g. local authority or NGOs.
- Building the capacity of the minority cultural groups to express their culture, exercise their creativity and reinforce their identity.
- Creating opportunities for joint production of culture between the minority and majority groups of the community, so that at least part of the local cultural is “shared” by all.



7. Strengthen the involvement of the local communities and implement a bottom up approach throughout the planning process

Involving a local community in crucial decisions about their own future is not easy:

The individual stakes are often in conflict with the interests of the community

There is a need for:

- Negotiation**
- Reconciliation of interests**
- Resolution of conflict**

How to mobilise the local communities

Public participation in policy decisions: THE “LADDER”

SELF-MOBILISATION

the citizens are encouraged and empowered to take initiatives, with support from government, NGOs or private companies

PARTNERSHIP

the citizens are invited to participate in decisions through external agencies

CONSULTATION

The opinions of the citizens are sought, but without obligation to take them on board

INFORMATION

The citizens are informed about what has been decided/happened

8. Encourage labeling of cultural products or activities, including tourism activities

- Labelling has been connected with the protection of cultural products and the safeguarding of their authenticity.
- An alternative approach has been favoured by some countries by introducing labels allowing creators to achieve greater visibility and to make use of existing protection mechanisms in their own country. An example of this is the “Living Heritage Enterprise” label in France.
- The intention behind labelling is to recognise the specific features of a craft or an enterprise and highlight the originality of the knowledge, skills and artistic input, as well as its economic vulnerability

Promoting tourism through a quality label that reflects respect for the local heritage

Tzoumerka, Greece

A small but dynamic group of tourism entrepreneurs in a remote, mountainous area of Greece, were brought together to an association, aiming to upgrade the tourist product in their area and to promote joint marketing efforts through quality labelling.

They have agreed on 5 quality criteria (use of traditional furniture and decoration, traditional cuisine and traditional architecture, respect for the environment, high standard services) and have put in place a quality labelling system controlled by a Regional Committee consisting of representatives of the local and regional authorities and the local LEADER LAG

They are now enjoying better business and are proud of their new role as guardians of the local heritage and tradition.



Examples of local development strategy and action plans based on tourism and heritage, prepared by 5 villages in north-eastern Sweden



The five neighbouring villages, situated in the counties of Vasternorrland and Vasterbotten are all remote, facing typical rural problems of unemployment, depopulation and declining services. They came together in to develop tourism in their area, by planning and implementing a number of projects. They prepared a common "action plan" as well as individual village plans, and elected a project leader from each village. The plan proposed specific investments that would improve the tourism facilities of the villages, such as building a snow board track, a bird-watching tower, disabled facilities in a fishing ground, restoration of buildings of cultural interest, development of thematic package tours or weekend events etc. Several months were spent preparing and submitting applications for funding to the regional authorities. Most of the villagers were involved in one or more of the projects, took part in meetings with the authorities, in working groups overseeing the projects and in training seminars to improve their marketing and tour guiding skills. As a result, the number of visitors increased drastically and 18 new enterprises were created during the next 5 years.

The action plan of the cultural strategy of your imaginary village is waiting for you

and we are all waiting for your villages' action plans