

VIKTÓRIA CSIZMADIÁNE CZUPPON

RESEARCH CORNER: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PANNONIA

Supporting of education is the best way to drive out economics from the recession and make future inclusive. According to the classic literature, the Universities' first role is to educate, second one is to research, third one is to transfer the knowledge, and the fourth is to transfer the appropriate knowledge. At the local level, we have to try to make a sustainable and continuous cooperation between in local stakeholders to reach successful, local value-based economic growth. At the University of Pannonia, there is a live and active program to involve students to local economic development. Via field trips ('research camp'), we go to settlements which are willing to cooperate with us, and survey them according to the discussed topics and needs. We combine our theoretical knowledge with local stakeholders' knowledge and share practical knowledge at the University and in settlements, as well. This summary introduces what kind of teaching methods could be successful to develop students' ability to generate ideas, and how can we motivate them to be creative. The paper focuses on the process and shows the possible results of this kind of empirical research realized in the framework of higher education. The University of Pannonia has many type of cooperation among local stakeholders, like ngo sector, local governments, and different type of associations. Via these relationships, the University takes part in local and international projects.

The research activities linked to local economic development address the identification of internal resources of the settlements near to the Lake Balaton, and in the wider catchment area of the University of Pannonia. This means analysing the utilization of the available resources and mapping the development needs. The potential breaking points of the involved settlements' local development are analysed, and the necessities are defined. Further on, the local economic development activities and needs are researched in order to reveal the drivers of implementation.

The main objective of the program is to transfer the knowledge generated at the University of Pannonia to the actors of local development; and the academic staff can gain knowledge and practical experience in the management of local economy of a certain region. In addition, the project also provides valuable inputs for mapping the position of higher education institutions in knowledge generation and rural development.

During the period 2015–2017, three research camps were organized in the Lake Balaton region (18–21 June 2015 – Nemesvámos, Jásd, Tés; 22–23 April 2016

– Szigliget, Hegymagas, Badacsonytördemic; 04–06 July 2017 – Keszthely). During the research projects, the planned and ongoing local economic development initiatives were collected; among them we defined those that have future potential at settlement level or at micro regional level.

In the course of the project supported by the University, the settlements of the Balaton region were researched by students and lecturers from the University. The work started with twenty-five students and 4–5 teachers who took part in the three research camps. The sampling of inhabitants (for personal interviews) was based on the snowball method. This methodology enables to identify several unexpected outcomes e.g. inhabitants' attitude, the general relationship among citizens and the local government. The inhabitants of the 5 settlements were surveyed in altogether 8 days by teams of 4–5 students with accompanying teacher.

In each case, firstly the leaders of the settlement were interviewed (mayors and notaries), and they advised the first people to visit in the settlement. There were 12–15 interviews carried out with local people a day. The research covered enterprises and individuals involved in local economic, too. The researchers tried to reveal the potentials of LED (Local Economic Development) programs, activities in local economy.

Another important method of the field trips was the structured round table discussion, when the guests discussed their development ideas in the region with the help of a moderator after the research camp. In the course of the round table discussion, also challenges have been identified by mayors, entrepreneurs, students and lecturers. According to the answers given, one of the main results of the research camps was that the local people received a sort of X-ray picture on their settlements and the main problems of them. It summarized that products, events and attractions are often individually, isolated displayed. At the same time, relevant human resource is needed in the work of connecting events and programs.

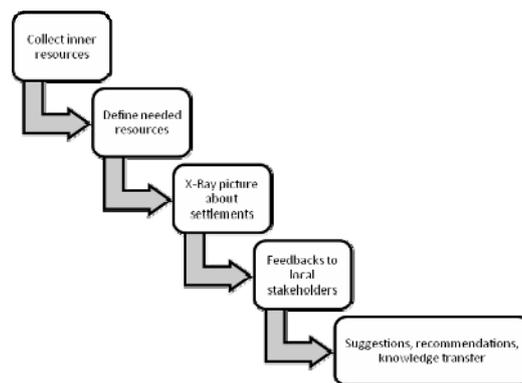


Figure 1: Research camp – methodology (own editing)

Following the research camps, we found it necessary to introduce the gathered results of the survey to local actors, too. At the end of each camp, we summarized our conclusions about the settlements e.g. the lack of relationships, the needs, the possible solutions. For all settlements, non-material values shall be kept in mind to use them as local economic sources. Primarily we think of numerous non-tactile elements, such as traditions, public events, specific knowledge, strong community of the cities. The people interviewed often did not consider non-material values as valuable products. Our inventory list brought also new ideas and generated further plans, for example new projects like Strategy of Local Foods, or a storage at Nemesvámos.

Discussion

The research camps implemented resulted in inventories of hard and soft values, which were delivered to the leaders of the settlements involved in the surveys. The research teams also took part in local project development. The best example is Nemesvámos. We took part in 4 projects after the research camp. We could involve more than 70 students into the settlements' life. They became more sensitive to local problems and the rural development.

In order to create effective local economic development, there is much to do in the field of cooperation and recognition of each other. We continue our research near to the Lake Balaton to define more local values and opportunities to create successful cooperation and economics.

The role of Universities could be more successful than it seems earlier. Two way knowledge transfer is good for the Universities and for local stakeholders, as well.

For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/helybenahelyiert/>

References

- Cs. Czuppon, V. – Dániel, Z. A. – Harta, A. (2017): Field Trip and More – Initiation of Local Economic Development and Knowledge Transfer, *In: Jonathan Batten, Ugur Can (szerk.): 22nd EBES Conference – Rome Program and Abstract Book, Rome, Italy, 2017.05.24–2017.05.26.*, University of Rome, Rome, 2017, 104–105.
- Cs. Czuppon, V. – Dániel, Z. A. – Molnár, G. (2016): Corporation of local governments and high education institutions: Knowledge transfer – a possible generator of Local Economic Development, *In: Andrea Csata – Báborka Eszter Bíró – Gergely Fejér-Király – Ottilia György – János Kassay – Benedek Nagy – Levente-József Tánczos (szerk.): Challenges in the Carpathian Basin, Integration and Modernization Opportunities on the Edges of Europe: 13th Annual International Conference on Economics and Business, Csíkszereda, Románia, 2016.10.20–2016.10.22.*, Editura Risoprint, Kolozsvár, 270–287.

- Cs. Czuppon, V. – S. Csajka, E. – Molnár, T. (2015): Potentials of Local Economic Development in Aspect of Tourism, *Deturope: Central European Journal of Tourism and Regional Development*. 7:(2), 175–187.
-



Viktória Csizmadiáné Czuppon is associate professor at the Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia, since 2014. She graduated as Geographer, in the field of Urbanism – diploma issued by the University of Pécs. Her PhD research focused on the Socio-economic indicators' usage in micro regions' analysis. She has an experience in regional development, she worked for Multi purposes micro region association at Tamási micro region. She teaches Regional development, Local Economic Development, Cross border cooperation. She has experience as visiting lecturer at several universities e.g. Norway, Turkey, Great Britain. She is a founder member of the Hungarian Regional Science Association, and the member of Hungarian Association of Geography.

Contact: czuppon@gtk.uni-pannon.hu