

POTENTIALS OF LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ASPECT OF TOURISM

A HELYI GAZDASÁGFEJLESZTÉS LEHETŐSÉGEI A TURIZMUS TÜKRÉBEN

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to introduce the potentials of local economic development in one of the least favoured micro regions, Tamási. The paper examines operating and planned activities at settlements of the micro region. The authors introduce local economic development activities that support tourism. The economic development planning in Tamási micro region has typically two directions. One of them is the utilisation of thermal water and the use of further potentials of the thermal bath (Ability), such as to achieve tourism destination function in Hungary. Secondly, the local government aims to sell its fruits and vegetables produced in the frame of public employment programme for local market and institutions. The supply of local population has got in focus because of current external opportunities (or force?) in the settlements being traditionally agricultural area. The objective is to join the local tourism attractions and destinations with other existing local developments, which is hold back by the owners of developments. The authors – by keeping in mind local conditions and endogenous resources – define recommendations for settlements to be able to create a well-organised framework of local economic development.

Keywords: local economic development, disadvantages micro region, micro region

Kivonat

A tanulmány célja a helyi gazdaságfejlesztés lehetőségeinek bemutatása a Tamási járásban, mely az ország egyik leghátrányosabb helyzetű kistérsége, vizsgálva egyrészt a már működő és a tervezett tevékenységeket települési szinten. A tanulmány a helyi gazdaságfejlesztés keretein belül megvalósuló, turizmust támogató tevékenységek bemutatására vállalkozik. A Tamási járás gazdaságfejlesztési elképzelései között többnyire két irány szerepel. Egyik a termálvíz hasznosítása, az erre épített termálfürdőben (Ability fürdő) rejlő további potenciál kiaknázása, turisztikai desztinációként való elhelyezése az ország térképén; valamint az önkormányzati tulajdonban lévő, közfoglalkoztatás keretében megművelt földterületen termelt gyümölcsök és zöldségek helyi piacon, helyi intézményekben való felhasználása. A tradicionálisan mezőgazdasági jellegű járás települései külső lehetőség (vagy kényszer?) hatására kezdtek ismételtelen a helyi lakosság ellátására berendezkedni. A helyben fellelhető, turistacsalogató desztinációk összekötése a cél a helyi gazdaságfejlesztés egyéb, meglévő fejlesztéseivel, melyet akadályoz az eltérő tulajdonosi kör. A szerzők – figyelembe véve a helyi adottságokat és az endogén forrásokat – javaslatokat fogalmaznak meg a gazdaságfejlesztés szervezett kereteinek megteremtése céljából.

Kulcsszavak: helyi gazdaságfejlesztés, hátrányos helyzetű kistérség, kistérség

INTRODUCTION – REGIONAL PROGRAMS WITH PARTICIPATION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

The authors like the former lecturers of Kaposvár University joined the programme of partnership of higher education and micro regions in Hungary being called by the former National Development Agency (NDA) and the Hungarian Tourism and Area Development Public Benefit Organisation (MITE). (Herczeg–Németh, 2010)

The research addressed the identification of internal resources of the most disadvantages micro regions, analysed the utilization of these resources and defined development needs. The potential breaking points of Tamási micro region's local development were analysed, and the necessities were defined. Further on, the local economic development activities and needs were researched in order to reveal the driver factors of implementation. In the course of the project, three different research camps were organised to carry out the researches in Tamási micro region (22-24. September 2011; 14-15. November 2011; 27-29. March 2012). During the research project, the planned and ongoing local economic development initiatives were collected; among them we defined those that have potential at settlement level or at micro regional level. The literature of local economic development defines five classic areas (local product, local money, development of SMEs, utilization of green energy, social economy) (Czene–Ricz, 2010), out of them all were found with the exception of local money. The current study focuses the effect of local development activities on tourism. In 2013, the researches revealed the implemented ideas as well as defined those that were modified or not been implemented in the economic development programme. The projects were followed in 2014-2015.

The main objective of the program was to transfer the knowledge generated at Kaposvár University to the actors of local development; as well as the academic staff gained knowledge and experience in the management of the life and economy of a region. In addition, the project also gave place to analyse the position of higher education institutions in knowledge generation and rural development.

Research area

The South-Transdanubian region surrounded by Lake Balaton and the rivers Danube and Drava, where Tamási micro region is situated has highly varying landscape. The region has a share of 15% of the total area of Hungary, with 14 169 km². It is the third most wooded area of the country. Out of 22 historic wine regions of Hungary 5 ones can be found here.

(Czuppon 2005) 7 out of the 33 most disadvantaged micro regions can be found in this region. These are the micro regions of Csurgó, Barcs, Szigetvár, Sásd, Tamási, Kadarkút, Lengyeltóti.

Definitions of local economic development

Now we are going to present you with the most important and determining points and ideas from a national aspect in the local economic development topic. We did not think it necessary to give an international overview, since we present you with an economic development, which was realized through a unique national example, and which cannot be compared with any international specialized literature known to the authors. Nonetheless we would like to note that having a thorough knowledge of international specialized literature is indispensable to every expert dealing with local economy, no matter which country they live.

The concept of local economic development (LED) indicates a very complex process. During the process the committed local assigns, adjusting to the endowment of the settlement choose from the possible development tools in order to make maximum use of opportunities in the region. It is not easy to define it because as many settlements, as many people, there are as many ways of developing, running, and operating local economies. According to Mezei local economy development is a conscious interference into the life of local economy, which makes use of inner / outer resources, and whose key initiators are local assigns, who appear either as initiators or as acceptors, supporters, and creators of outer development ideas. (Mezei, 2006.) Beyond all these Mrs. Szilágyi's definition mentions the occurrence of quality changes in the lives of residents, such as the extension of employment, solution to social problems among the aims to be achieved. (Szilágyiné, 2013.)

According to Mészáros's accurate and comprehensive definition local economy development is a process controlled by the community, which is initiated by local communities ready to reform, and which is based on local resources and provisions beyond them, and which keeps their outflow in proportion. It attracts outer resources to strengthen the inner ones, and it is based on the equal participation of different social groups, and it promotes the wellbeing of the community. The process does not bring spectacular results, but with the multiplication of activities it results in the decrease in unemployment and migration, in the increase of incomes, as well as in the strengthening of communal values, solidarity and identity. (Mészáros, 2013) Czene and his co-authors' definition – which was published in the Regional Development booklets, and which is the basis of local economy development – is a conscious local communal intervention into economic processes in order to maintain sustainable local development. Any intervention can be considered local economy

development, which – by the modification of any component of local economy or the whole of local economy, or/and by the inclusion of a formerly missing component, or/and by the revival of unexploited components – improves one or more characteristics of local economy (efficiency, profitability, quality of products/services, employment, sustainability of the system). The authors highlight that the development of local economy is not just local, but refers to any development, which takes local interests into consideration and intends to improve local markets, local enterprises, and local demands. (Czene and his co-authors, 2010)

As we interpret it the aim of local economy development is to develop and give swing to economies, which can be found locally, to create the frames of sustainable local development, to operate them preferably without outer/governmental support, to include wider social groups, who would be active participants. Among the aims local inner values, such as the protection of natural, cultural and economic values have to be included. The efficiency of local economy development does not depend only on the expansion of production and competitiveness but far more on the commitment of locals, their willingness to do something, and their ability to protect their values.

The range of participants in local economy development is very wide, including the local governmental sector, the business sphere, knowledge transfer institutions, development agencies. Lengyel's listing points out that local economy development is not only local people's duty, but more extensive and integrated ideas are necessary to achieve successful development. However, locals are left out from this listing, though these tasks are theirs. Furthermore, there are no knowledge transfer institutions in these places. Since the listing originates from a study, written in 2010, it includes development agencies and not county governments.

The five classic tools of local economy development are local products, local currency (Local Exchange Trading System), local alternative energy, autonomous small local communal energy supply, local development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and social economy. (Czene and his co-authors, 2010). The strategic aim of local economy development is to embrace local products, to ensure the conditions of local processing and sales, to urge renewable energy production, to widen rural tourism, to keep artisan traditions, and to build social economy.

According to Czene and his co-authors the stimulation to produce local products serves the provision of the region's population, but the interferences can also aim at the development of marketable products and the increase of their quantity. In order to do so it is necessary to take

local facilities and traditions into consideration, as well as to explore local values, and also to make value cadastres and inventories. (Czene and co-authors, 2010)

Based on these ideas, a micro regional partnership program was launched, which included the exploration of regional values and also made an inventory of them.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS:

LHH-Micro region partnership

In order to develop the 33 most disadvantaged regions the government of the time created a program, which was named “complex development program of the most disadvantaged micro regions”. During the planning and implementation process of the development program it became clear that the micro regions concerned can be supported significantly not only with a more flexible way of getting development funds but also with supporting the building of interconnections in connection with settlement- and regional-development. Within the LHH Program the large-scale migration of qualified experts cannot be stopped, it can only be decreased. According to the hypothesis of MITE Association and the LHH Development Program Office of NDA a program, whose aim is to build partnership between higher education institutions and disadvantaged regions might result in the strengthening of professional relations in connection with settlement- and regional development.

Between 2009 and 2011 the MITE Workshop contacted several Universities with the intention to integrate them in a partnership programme, which had been unprecedented in Hungary. The call was – on the one hand – for micro regions and institutions, enterprises running micro regions, and on the other hand for higher education institutions, faculties, and departments, who were ready to form a long-distance co-operation with any of the most disadvantaged regions.

Only a few Universities joined this programme, since they did not get any financial support, we could pay only for the expenses of the camp, such as accommodation and catering. The following partnerships developed:

1. Encs micro region – Corvinus University of Budapest;
2. Berettyóújfalu micro region – University of Debrecen;
3. Abaúj-Hegyköz micro region – Eszterházy Károly University of Applied Sciences;
4. Lengyeltóti micro region – ELTE Faculty of Science;
5. Csenger micro region – ELTE Faculty of Social Sciences;

6. Tamási micro region – Kaposvár University faculty of Pedagogy and Economic Science;
7. Szikszó micro region – University of Miskolc. (<http://mitemuhely.hu/lhh/a-program,34.html>)

In the course of the project supported by the former National Development Agency, the settlements of Tamási micro region were researched by students and lecturers from Kaposvár University. The research started with twenty-five students and 4-5 teachers partook in the three research camps. The students could get to know the settlements involved before the field exercise, since every participant had to prepare a presentation on a settlement based on a specified economic, social and environmental criteria. They made their presentations in front of the others, therefore each student was informed about each settlement. The sampling was based on the snowball method, since with the help of this method it was possible to search values, people and events, which had been unheard of. The inhabitants of the 29 settlements (out of 32) of the region were surveyed in 4 days by teams of 4-5 students with accompanying teacher each year; we carried out interviews with those, who have done something useful to their communities. The communities keep record of good farmers, good craftsmen, good tradesmen, and individuals, who are able to build strong communities. 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 tourism, too. The researchers tried to reveal the potentials of LED programs, activities in local tourism.

We paid special attention to the professional materials and preliminary surveys carried out by the NDA in the topic of tourism in the most disadvantaged regions. The NDA introduces the tourism offers of the Program Office as follows: The content of the concept “fair-seeming tourism” is not widely known in the country, it can be defined as a consciously chosen type of travelling, during which visitors contribute to the economic growth of a disadvantaged region by paying for their accommodation, buying their meals and paying for their entrance fees there. *In the most disadvantaged regions of Hungary there is plenty to see, there are national parks, medieval castles, various natural phenomena, Árpád-era temples, historic wine regions and so on.*“ (http://palyazat.gov.hu/lhh_turizmus)

The idea was good but a few things were not given to realize it. First of all, initiatives coming from below lacked proper financial support, calling-off funds was not fluent, payments did not take place on time, project ideas were not realized, holding capacity of

locals was insufficient, there were no accommodation possibilities or restaurants – the program could not be continued because the LHH Program (The most disadvantaged region Program) turned to a political battlefield and had to be ceased.

It has been proved that rural tourism is a complementary activity of other jobs in most cases; it can be breaking point only in a small number of settlements. In the region, there are various forms of tourism catchable from spa to rural accommodation. Majority of the settlements is rich in natural values, such as beautiful and peaceful landscape, forests with wildlife, built historical relics from various ages. Among local or settlement level economic development plans, the development of tourism has always been rated high. Nevertheless, food and non-food produce of local economic development activities may ground effectively the development of tourism destination in a certain region.

PUBLIC JOBS – OPPORTUNITY OR FORCE?

One of the most important goals of research camps was to search and make an inventory of local products. These products function mostly through programs, which were realized due to governmental support. The results are presented below.

Vegetable and fruit has been produced in the settlements of Tamási micro region in the frame of the former “Sorsfordító-Sorsformáló” programme and Start Job Program started in October 2011; which is acknowledged by both the inhabitants and the leaders of the settlements. Public job program START included seven work programmes in 2012, such as agricultural work, inland excess water management, dirt road management, development of public roads, elimination of illegal waste deposits. Also the alternative heating program went on, generally it supported the setup of new alternative heating, while the necessary material to burn was provided by the settlement itself during the agricultural program. In 2013, the work program has an eighth, local specific program, which was assigned to define and plan the settlement’s fundamental development projects – these could be providing rural accommodations, building renovation, or other. The project must be cost effective and is supported if the economic aims are met. This program based on local needs is a brand-new element in the public job program, which has not been included earlier.

The local economic development of Tamási micro region is thus carried out within the frame of this program. The authors earlier studies (Csajka–Czuppon, 2013) revealed that the region is rich in local food and non-food produce as well as a number of services and non-material attraction is available here; although the classic local economic development model

has many lacks, because the local leaders and actors did not define such an activity, neither they think of their products or activities in this context. Nevertheless, the germs of LED can be obviously seen in the region, which were grounded by the former “Sorsfordító-Sorsformáló” programme, further on the START Job, and then the Public Job Program carried it, especially the agricultural work sub module. These programs provide excellent base to start LED, if the local actors recognise that their activity belong to LED and are able to do it in cooperation with each other, along harmonised principles, as well as they learn that on the long term, the partaking of the government is not sustainable. (Kovács 2007)

A so called Green Apple House (GAH) was planned to establish in Tamási, which serves as retail centre of not only the local production but the coming from other settlements in the micro region. The store opened on 18th December 2014 named Tamási Region Produce and was financed by EU programmes (39.9 million HUF). (The authors have been researched the implementation of development programmes in the region: Kovács–Czuppon, 2008). A retail chain based on GAH could support the demand and supply which is at this time only based on local production of inhabitants or the municipality (Tab. 1).

Table 1 Products delivered to GAH by settlements

Settlement	Product delivered
<u>Bonyhád</u>	wafers, sweets
Dúzs	vine
<u>Fadd</u>	cooking oil, food seasoning, paleo products
Gyönk	vine
Hőgyész	vine, dry pastry
<u>Kaposvár</u>	vegetable, fruits
<u>Lengyel</u>	juice
Nagyszokoly Municipality	pickled vegetables, jam
Tamási	vegetable, ground red pepper, smoked meat products, cheese, cheese products, honey, jam, vine
Udvari Municipality	pickled vegetable, jam, canned fruit, vegetable
Varsád Municipality	lavender

Source: Own construction based on information from Tamási Regional Product store, 2015. (settlements not belonging to the micro region are underlined)

This store and the well managed retailing of local products enable to select in those local products which are most sellable, most demanded and offer higher profit – and these products can be considered as local branded product in the market. Branded products have better

market positions and can be sold at better price. Besides raw materials of food further products need to be considered within few years of the start of the store. Such products can be non-food produce of local people, which were researched in the course of field studies of research camps. Joining local food and non-food products with festivals other events could increase both the number of tourists and the days they spent.

As the above table shows, products are delivered by not only the actors of micro region. Small number of local producers can supply continuously their products at an even quality. In the course of the interview with the store manager it was found that more products would be available in the region if their producers were invoiceable. Ten percent of the suppliers offered their produce as early as they learned about the opening of the store but the majority was asked for by the store manager.

In the course of the interview with one of the biggest suppliers we learned that the store is a very good option for primary producers, and takes over the task of marketing. It is although a problem that the store and the primary producer are differently subject to VAT, therefore the local products will be more expensive in the store, and uncompetitive with supermarkets. According to him, the local store has no future and probably will also close as the store in Szekszárd. The reason besides uncompetitive prices is the consumers' behaviour, customs. The number of conscious consumers has not changed – despite the growing number of tourists. The tourists haven't even got information on the local produce available as they are not presented at either the shelves or the breakfast tables at the places of accommodation. According to the respondent a network of producers may contribute to the development of selling and marketing in the region as well as it could be a tourist attraction if connected with other local events. He also advised to introduce county days on the markets around the whole country. This can also promote local products and traditions.

Besides the products of public work we have found other products as well during the research camps, which are relevant for tourism. Several settlements of the region highlights tourism as a key area to be developed. Among the ideas we can find tourist attractions based on local products as well as attractions, which would be built around already existing natural, cultural, and economic values. Local products to be developed to attract tourists, and around which festivals and village days could be organised:

- striped sunflower seed (Iregszemcse);
- cifrakalács / brioche (Nagyszékely);
- pretzel-cake (Regöly);
- blue dying, wood carving (Gyönk);

- jams (pumpkin, red pepper), basket-making, rope-laying (Udvari);
- basket, goat cheese, wine, firewater (pálinka), walnut (Ozora);
- waeving (Pincehely);
- fruit, paprika (Belecska);
- manufacturing cartoon characters (Pári);
- oil extrusion, tobacco production (Dúzs);
- potcake, strudel (Mucsi),
- redcurrant (Nagyszokoly);
- home-made meat products (Simontornya).

Part of these settlements rely on travellers heading for Lake Balaton, however, most of them are avoided by the main roads, therefore they cannot expect any excess demand resulting from transit traffic.

The researchers and students created an inventory for each settlements covered by the research camps. The majority of the local values were not known even by the leaders of the settlements or organisers of local events. In the local value inventories the following were interesting for tourism; among them we highlighted the regional or national level relevant attractions.

Regional attractions:

- hunting on rich wildlife fields (Belecska, Diósberény, Kalaznó, Miszla Nagyszékely, Szakály, Tamási, Szárazd);
- Gyöng - Hógyész Rally;
- tourist routes (Kalaznó, Kisszékely)
- hunting cottage (Keszőhidegkút, Kisszékely);
- Bio - apartments (Kisszékely);
- Baron Inkei Nándor Castle (Miszla - Art), Baron Inkei Nándor mansion (rural tourism accommodation) (Miszla);
- Tolna wine route (Nagyszékely, Nagyszokoly);
- castle museum, castle, programs (Ozora, Simontornya) – *national level*;
- Festival (Ozora) – *national/international level*;
- Golf Course (Pári);
- new-Scythian movement (Regöly);
- 4 * Hotel (Simontornya);
- rural tourism (Szakadát);
- brass band , internationally renowned (Tamasi) – *national/international level*;

- Ability spa, wellness services (Tamasi) – *national/international level*;
- Pacsmag fish ponds, rare birds (Regöly – Tamasi)

The attractive tourist products are displayed mostly on their own. At many settlements, one can find local products, which however are not available at regional level neither besides a touristic attraction (Molnár-Csajka, 2013).

DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Following the three research camps, we found it necessary to introduce the gathered results of the survey to local actors, too. The closing event of the project was held on 26th April 2012 in Tamási, where the teachers and the students introduced the results to invited mayors, notaries, and active stakeholders of the micro regions, who were all involved in the surveys. An important session of the event was the structured round table discussion, when the guests discussed their development ideas in the region with the help of a moderator. In the course of the round table discussion also challenges been identified were addressed by mayors, students and teachers. 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 region. It summarised that products, events and attractions are individually, isolated displayed. At the same time relevant human resource is needed in the work of connecting events and programs.

For all settlements, non-material values shall be kept in mind to use them as tourist attraction. Primarily we think of numerous non-tangible elements, such as traditions, public events, specific knowledge (weaving, plaiting or the series of training implemented in Tamási “Little folklore to everyone” sessions: Creating Traditional Costumes, egg painting, Woolwork, Making grillage, in Regöly, the leader of the new-Scythian movement, an amateur archaeologist Viktor Cziráki - who was granted the honour to be knight of the culture in 2015 -, handcraft market twice a year, tourist groups reception, maintenance of traditions, archery, yurt camp, zero-comfort lifestyle camp). The people interviewed did not consider non-material values as valuable products. Our inventory list brought also new ideas and generated further plans.

CONCLUSION

Thanks to a project contract between Kaposvár University and the National development Agency signed in 2011, we got an insight into the life of a disadvantaged region. 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 aims of the research carried out, the results expected by the NDA and the MITE Workshop were to survey the inner resources of the micro region, to examine their expedience and the direction of development needs. We defined the potential breakthrough points of the micro region including tourism after significant changes and investments. Furthermore we defined that there is lack of human resources in the region and we made suggestions to offer trainings to the inhabitants of the region. We collected the local economy development ideas and possibilities. There were no suggestions only to one development tool out of the five. That is local currency. On the other four areas there are suggestions and initiatives, although they are in an early stage.

Further aims of the research are to make an inventory of the local products of the micro region, the relevant values for tourism, and all those possibilities which might contribute to the economic development of the region. The results revealed by us were sent to the regional assigns, who have already made use of our findings. The next step of utilization will be when possibilities, which are already in progress, appear in LEADER target areas. By utilizing these opportunities it will be possible to develop small settlements from a tourism aspect, to create and extend rural tourism, and to offer local products in catering and tourist receiving units.

Opportunities have been revealed which may contribute to the initiation of projects by local stakeholders. However, there are a number of various tourism attractions; the region does not have a flagship attraction. In order to create effective rural tourism, there is much to do in the field of cooperation and recognition of each other and specific human resources are needed.

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