

**THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY  
IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE CITY  
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF SUMY)**

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*The work examined decentralization and the consequences of its influence on the development of the city. The advantages of creating strategic sessions and the interaction of residents and city authorities on the example of the city of Sumy.*

After the introduction of decentralization reform, United Territorial Communities (OTG) have been created in each region. They receive monetary funds from central authority and have the right to decide by themselves where this money will go to, namely they can differentiate by themselves the development directions. Strategic sessions are being established for that reason because the influence must be carried out not only by the government but also by the citizens who realize much better what should be changed. The research is *aimed at* investigating the role of the community in the strategic planning of the city on the example of Sumy.

The role of the community in strategic planning for city development is often formal. That's why involving the community as an authorized partner in the process of creating a city strategy is undeniably *relevant and actual*.

The problem of strategic development is investigated by the Swiss-Ukrainian project «DESPRO» that supports decentralization in Ukraine [1]. Moreover, we can speak about the creation of UN development Program in Ukraine [2].

Decentralization made it possible to develop a strategy for the development of the city. Local budget financing increased. Citizens got the right to address the problems of their city and the ways to solve them. Because of that citizens have their voice, which is significant in the development of the city, the entrepreneurship is actively developing, decisions are transparent and taken in a simplified manner, responsibility of local government is increasing.

The disadvantages of decentralization are the unwillingness of local governments to take full responsibility for the development and implement rapid management, since under centralized power

most of various industries were abandoned. Most of the staff are not qualified enough and have no experience. The centralized power will try to resist its liquidation and avoid redistribution of budgetary funds.

The budget itself is formed in several steps:

1. Funds transferred by the state (subventions);
2. Own funds (60 % of personal income tax);
3. Budget UTK (excise taxes, rent, fines, tourist tax) [3].

For implementation of territory management it is necessary to take community and government point of view into account and know all available resources and future opportunities. On the example of Sumy, it is possible to observe the purposeful vision of city and area development which is carried out by Management of city strategic development of Sumy Council.

This division is engaged in future-oriented development, it holds sectoral strategic sessions to foresee the possible development of the city and highlights everyday problems faced by residents and employees of the departments of the city Council. We can say that the Office concludes the work of all departments and creates a new course for the development of the city of the future. The Department cooperates directly with the mayor, community representatives, employees of the departments of the city Council, and representatives of Lublin, who have successfully developed and implemented the strategy of their own city.

Cooperation between the society and the authorities results in the creation of a strategic development plan.

Sumy city Council decided to work out a strategic development of the city of Sumy until 2027. The planning of the development strategy will be implemented through sectoral strategic sessions [4] while the Department of strategic development is responsible for the development and promotion. Functions of sectoral sessions include identifying the problems of the city and finding solutions, working out strategies and the mission, and presenting the vision of the city by its leaders in cooperation with community.

Studies have confirmed the need to involve the population in the development of the strategy at all levels of participation. For that reason there is a need to have a working group which consists of people elected according to the criteria:

- involvement in the active life of the area;
- knowledge about the current state of the city and the ability to assist in financial, creative, intellectual spheres, as well as the desire to develop a strategy;
- ability and desire to influence the situation in the city.

Each session was attended by representatives of the relevant topics of the industry who were presenting the problems of development and everyone had the right to ask questions. Participants

were divided into teams of up to eight people. The task of the teams was to identify the problems of industry and describe them. After that each table presented its list from which five main problems were chosen, and then the teams were trying to find the solution. Each participant was given five points to rate the problem with the purpose of preventing from any influence. Thus, five main problems of each industry and the ways of their solution were identified.

So, in the process of developing the city strategy residents and authorities create their future. The city of Sumy has defined its way of creating a Strategy through strategic sessions for each industry. The strategy must go through several stages and creation procedures for executing the action plan.

Ukraine has gone a long way to decentralized power, and now, when almost all the territories are distributed, we have time and space to create a strategy for the city development, taking into account the views of the community and the city authorities.

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