

1. Participatory Budgeting in the Municipality of Elbasan.

Having present different studies done in the late past on the performance of the Municipality of Elbasan, we see a large discordance between what the Municipality pretends and the Community thinks on this level of performance. 35-50% of the Community thinks that the fulfillment of the targets on services and investments from the Municipality is not good and promising. They feel excluded from the prioritization and decision-making process, which seems to be strongly politically based. Also regarding the level of communication the citizens pretend there is no direct communication between them.

Asked on the spaces the Municipality has created to the business, the citizens and in particular the business people are really confused.

Considering this situation, In the city of Elbasan on the performance of the Municipality on the services offered to the citizens, by proposal of Co-Plan Tirana, with the support of the World Bank and the approval and initiative of the Mayor of the Municipality of Elbasan, in order to transparency with the Community, took place this project – Participatory Budget Pilot in the Municipality of Elbasan. The results of the Project, a tool kit and all the material, will serve as a pilot to the other Municipalities going to implement the Process of Participatory Budgeting. An expected result is to institutionalize the civil society's participation in the PA decision-making, introducing this way the principle of direct democracy in the Albanian Law.

The main goal of the Project is fostering Citizen Participation in the decision-making of the PA; starting from the Participatory Budgeting – Budgeting through Citizen Participation in the Municipality of Elbasan.

Our specific goals on this Project were:

1. To ensure a large participation of the citizens in the Process of the Participatory Budgeting, through sector and territorial bases.
2. To increase consciousness of the citizens on their role in the economic and social development of the city.
3. To help building bridges of cooperation between Municipality staff and Community representatives.
4. To train citizens representatives with some specific skills on accounting and budgeting, as well as techniques on the assessment of the criteria on the evaluation of the priorities.
5. To train Municipality staff and students from other faculties participating in the Project

Our activities taking place during the Project were to organize an information campaign, facilitate first and second round citizen's meetings, training for the citizen's representatives in the Citizen Committee of Participatory Budgeting, introducing budget and investment financing issues to the citizens, organizing round tables and workshops, improving ethics of the local PA etc.

The number of the students working was 30, with 10000 hours.

The project fulfills the criteria No. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6.

2. The promotion of the tourist area of Gjinar, in the region/district of Elbasan.

This is a mountain area with natural and historical, as well as cultural tourist resources, lacking infrastructure (roads for transport), organization, publication as well as service and hospitality skills. Its relation with the mountain tourism, as well as historic and cultural tourism begins early in the past. It is mostly visited by visitors from the city of Elbasan and somehow from other areas of the Region. The zone offers a very beautiful panorama with too much pine greenness, a very rich flora and fauna. Tourist excursions could be organized in the area to explore it. The area is very inviting during all the year, in spring time with a lot of greenness and flowers flourishing, in summer time with a lot of fresh air lacking in the dusty and hot city of Elbasan, during the autumn with too many colors and a very nice winter time, with snow and skiing as well as very nice baked meat from the area and other traditional foods. The old church in the village, as well as the church of Shelcan in this area, with their old wall paintings done by our great painter from the period of renaissance, are also a very good alternative for spending the time during the stay in the area.

Getting incentives from what we mentioned above, we undertook a survey on the reasons that have reduced the number of visitors recently and developed this Project, whose main goal is:

Promoting the resources of the area in tourism, supporting the new tourist initiative from the place and increasing consciousness of the inhabitants on the area on the necessity to develop tourism in an integrated effort.

- Interviews with the service business owners in the area and a meeting with the Mayor, presenting a new way of thinking on their businesses and introducing a new strategy for the future, Criterion number one.
- Learning by doing, applied with one chosen pilot business, already dealing somehow with tourism
- Teaching to the business staff, how to do a business plan, improving their managerial skills, criterion No. 3
- Introducing in the chosen Pilot new formulas of tourist product – bed & breakfast, half and full pension using local menu.
- Design and edition of a leaf let and short DVD on its structure and services to distribute it to the tourist operators, criterion No. 1
- Promotional meetings with two other restaurants to present the Pilot experience
- We also introduced and teach them simple techniques and the ways to hold their accounts, in order to be flexible and using less money to do their business, criterion No. 4
- A last meeting with the Mayor and the inhabitants of the village to present the results of the Project

The project involved more than 35 students working, with a total of more than 2000 hours.

The Project fulfills the criteria No. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6.

3. The promotion of the local holiday/fest of the Summer Day (Dita e Veres) in the city of Elbasan.

The project has started on February 2006, and consists in introducing marketing tools to promote this local traditional holiday to all regions in Albania, getting use of the fact that it is the second year that the Albanian Parliament sanctioned this day as a national holiday. This means more possibility to have a larger number of tourists. It aims also to prolong the fest with two more days, finalizing with the last day, 14 of March, the Summer Day. This will give more possibility to the people to have fun and in the same time to the small service and food businesses of the city to have more days, to sell their products to the visitors. We had the record figure this year, with more than 300 000 visitors in two days.

The main distinctive product that characterizes this holiday is a special desert, named "Ballakume", which is produced traditionally only in the city of Elbasan for this special day.

We got our incentive in the local expression, very closing, "don't give it to taste to whom doesn't know what it is, because you just spoil it".

So, our main goal is:

To introduce a new concept on this holiday, also referring to the tradition of hospitality of the citizens of Elbasan, marketing our holiday and inviting more, or all the people to come in Elbasan for this special day, and, of course, to taste this special desert, "Ballakume"

Some specific objectives consist in:

1. Improving the domestic performance during the holiday, both citizens and businesses.
2. Enlarging the technique of cooking "Ballakume" to other non native citizens in the city and to the visitors too.
3. Integrate the efforts of the local actors to improve the performance during the holiday, introducing marketing based orientation.

The project involves some activities:

1. Interviewing Elbasan ladies on the possibility to participate with their deserts in a local fair on traditional food products for this holiday.
2. Interviewing the citizens on the necessity to enlarge and prolong the fest.
3. Training of the service business staff on the direct marketing techniques and communication skills. This will improve their ethics of the business.
4. Teaching them how to make the exhibition of their products.
5. Preparing of a DVD on the holiday to distribute and promote the wonderful experience on the fest of this year in all the country.
6. Organizing a small fair with students, repeating the tradition, inviting old ladies cooking and presenting their "Ballakume" participating with their deserts, as well as other businesses demonstrating their products.

The most expected result expressed artistically is:

"If You eat "Ballakume" once, you will say good, but if You eat it again, You will be anxious to come in Elbasan each year on 14 of March"

The No. of the students working was 20, with a total of 1500 h. The project fulfills criteria No. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6. The Project still goes on.

4. The introduce of a new insurance police launched from Atlantik Insurance Institute, Tirana, Albania

We started from the question "How much secure the people and their assets/houses are here?"

What we see in Albania and more in Elbasan is as follow:

- Most of the things in our lives are not formal.
- We are not insurant from accidents, diseases, unemployment, life etc.
- All we know is car insurance.
- And not talking at all of personal assets insurance, especially home insurance.

Just from here comes our main goal in this Project:

Increase consciousness and push citizens to think their house is their life, and they can be sure it will be safe in any case, if they get an insurance police for it.

Some specific goals and targets to be reached during the Project are:

- Convincing people ATLANTIK is their ally to put their home safe from the fire.
- To sell more than 300 insurance polices within the first three months of the Project.
- To increase ATLANTIK's image in the customers eyes.
- To increase SIFE image in the regional market and more

Most of the activities planed for the Project are:

- Designing a promotion campaign for the new program of ATLANTIK.
- Explaining people on the reasons why to get insurance for their home, and how it is linked with the other factors surrounding on the security of the assets.
- Distributing in the same time educational rights and scholarships for the talented kids as a mean to speak more strongly on future's insurance.
- Training other students from the other faculties participating in the project with communication and negotiation skills, as well as selling techniques.
- Discussions with focus groups of the citizens and from the businesses to explain the financial advantages they get by getting insurance for their home ore assets with ATLANTIK.
- Selling police insurances in the market of Elbasan for ATLANTIK
- Workshop on the Results of the Project on JULY 2006.

The number of the students working was 30, with a total of working hours of 10000 h. We have worked till now more than 3000 h. The project fulfills the criteria No. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6.