MANAGING PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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In the article an attempt is made to show the importance of a new approach to managing public organisations which operate in rural areas. Investigations are based on an assumption, that effective public management is one of the factors of rural development.

Keywords: local public administration, new public management, instruments of public management.

Introduction

Effective management of public organisations very rarely is an object of investigations in a framework of management sciences. In recent years a widespread interest in changing running public affairs has emerged within public policy, public administration and management, particularly on the local level. The shift from bureaucratic administration to governance and new public management has been widely debated in the West, where the debate originated, and in the newest members of the European Union, where it is becoming a strong emergent theme. (Fartnham, 2005; Kozuch, 2004; Ingraham, 2003).

The aim of the work is to examine the instruments that the public organisations have adopted to reform their practices of management in response to the changing local socio-economic context. Using examples drawn from territorial units located in North-eastern Poland, in the paper the ways in which organisational behaviour and changes in public management are shaped.

The object of investigation – local public administration units.

The subject of investigation – use of instruments of public management as a mirror of the new approach to managing public organisations located in rural areas.

Investigation methods – This research consists of initial interviews with heads of public organisations to explore their new approach to management, i.e. entrepreneurial behaviour. The research sample consisted of 36 heads represented vary kind of public organisations, including mayors, heads of districts, headmasters, commanders of police district headquarters, and directors of hospitals. The respondents answered a set of questions concerning strategic planning and management, decentralisation, organisational roles of public managers, identifying main stakeholders, co-operating with other public organisations etc.

Investigations and their results

Public organisation usually is described in the opposite to private one. There are many concepts and theories of organisational publicness (Boyne, 2002; Kozuch, 2003) All them stress that members of political communities own public organisations collectively, these organisations are funded largely by taxation rather than fees paid directly by customers, and are controlled predominantly by political
forces. These three dimensions of publicness have effects on organisational behaviour.

The most of respondents know only fundamentals of management and they are not familiar with concepts and methods of public management. The interviews with heads of public organisations revealed that the majority of respondents are not the public managers, because they do not meet criteria outlined by The EGPA (European Group of Public Administration) Study Group (Farnham, 1996). This is because external (i.e. state of external environment) and internal factors (use of traditional methods of meeting public needs). The best understanding of public strategic management was observed amongst mayors and headmasters.

The investigations conducted showed rather poor understanding of strategic thinking and management in the units of local public administration. Thus, researched units are characterised by lower stages in the process of implementing public management. In the researched units the operating strategy is applied very rarely. In 21 organisations their strategies are not developed, in 2 units – sector strategies and operating strategies for handling their operating tasks were elaborated, and in other 2 units operating strategies for handling all strategically significant operating tasks were worked out. Matching structures to strategy requires is applied quite rarely. Respondents from 16 organisations claimed that they did not need any adjustments. In 6 units some adjustments were implemented and the selected goals and objectives were reflected in the particular tasks of certain organisational units or were partly fulfilled. Only in 2 of the researched units was the organisational structure matched to the strategy. An economic development strategy is a relatively popular instrument of public strategic management. However 11 units have not prepared this strategy, other 11 offices have formally established economic development strategy but at the same time they have not elaborated operating strategies and only fragmentary activities have been in the process. Only 3 units have developed operating strategies but they were partly implemented. All this is an unexpected picture because – according also to other investigations (Kozuch, 2004; Kot 2003) – the instrument analysed is one of the most popular ones. Systems of process management and project management belong to the newest management instruments and only few public managers are familiar with this way of running public affairs. This is confirmed by the research conducted. In order to describe stages of applying these instruments some issues were estimated, i.e. functionality of the whole system and also its organisation units, the level of process management development, collaboration in process improving, the level of computerisation, skills in project development, and system of managing projects in organisation, etc.

Most of the researched organisations preferred a traditional division of tasks and objectives (18 units); in 4 offices occurring management problems are systematically analysed and corrections in the division of tasks and objectives are made. In 3 other units problems of management are explored and systematically analysed and systemic corrections are made in the whole organisation and also in its selected units.
Conclusions

From the experiences of interviewed heads of public organisations can be learned, that:
1. Managing public organisations located in rural areas in Poland is in need of development.
2. The use of modern instruments of management in the public sector is less frequent than in private sector.
3. Stakeholders of public organisations are not able to make pressure on using new concepts, methods, and instruments in public management process.

References


VIEŠŲJŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ VADYBA IR KAIMO PLĖTRA

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Lenkijos teritorijoje esančiose viešosiose organizacijose atlktų tyrimų rezultatai rodo, kad tik keletas tirtų organizacijų taiko viešojo valdymo poziūrį ir tvarkydamos viešuosius reikalus naudoja pažangias priemones. Naują valdymo poziūrį rodo viešųjų organizacijų vadų elgsena. Viešųjų organizacijų vyresniojo amžiaus vadybininkų apklausos rezultatai rodo, kad Lenkijoje taikoma verslininkystės teorija, viešojo valdymo koncepcijos ir mokslas bei švietimas turi būti tobulinami. Dauguma vyresnio amžiaus vadybininkų, taip pat didelė gyventojų dalis, turėtų nepakankamas viešųjų reikalų vadybos žinias.

Raktiniai žodžiai: vietos viešasis administravimas, naujas viešasis valdymas, viešojo valdymo instrumentai.