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Resilient nations.*

Joint Integrated Local Development Programme

GUIDE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCORPORATING GE AND HRBA

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GLOSSARY OF MAIN CONCEPTS

- Development
- Local
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- Empowerment
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INTRODUCTION

Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP)

JILDP is a joint programme of UNDP and UN Women with the Government of Moldova funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

JILDP objective is to assist the Republic of Moldova to ensure that vulnerable groups in poor rural and urban areas take advantage of sustainable socio-economic development opportunities through adequate regional and local policies implemented by LPA and partners in a human rights based, gender sensitive manner.

To achieve this objective the programme has two key components:

- To develop capacity of local authorities for rights based and gender responsive planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives
- To empower rural communities and CSOs in target regions to actively participate in local development planning, implementation and monitoring and have better access to improved service delivery and community infrastructure

To implement these components and to ensure program interventions sustainability, two guides will be developed, to complement each other:

1. Guide on Strategic Planning for Socio-Economic Development incorporating GE and HRBA
2. Community Mobilization for empowerment of vulnerable groups

Why adopt a Human Rights-Based Approach and Gender Mainstreaming in Local Development?

Overall, mainstreaming gender and human rights into local development contributes to a process of people-centered human development based on the principles of non-discrimination, transparency, participation, and accountability. Both approaches support development at the local level based on equality and inclusion whereby people can participate meaningfully in defining the development process as rights-holders. Both approaches strengthen essential dimensions of good local governance such as accountability, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability of the duty-bearers. Both approaches are inherently committed to empowering people to make their own development choices.¹

The successful development of a local community plan based on the participation of all sectors of the community offers benefits including:

- **Bringing the community together:** During this process, by working together people connect to each other as human beings with real concerns and issues, improving relationships. The social capital level is increasing and the community becomes stronger.
- **Avoiding conflicts escalating among different groups:** The experience of social exclusion, especially if experienced from early childhood, has bad consequences such as low self-esteem, aggressive behavior, depression or feelings of insecurity. Researches have found that even short-term rejection from strangers can have powerful effects on an individual. In several social psychology experiments, people chosen at random to receive messages of social exclusion became *more aggressive, more willing to cheat, less willing to help others, and more likely to pursue short-term over long-term goals*. Rejection appeared to lead very rapidly to self-defeating and antisocial behavior. Through this approach you will break the cycle of social exclusion, discrimination and prejudices, and by addressing the frustration of

¹Local Governance, Human Rights Based Approach and Gender Mainstreaming in the Context of Europe and the CIS Toolkit, UNDP Regional Centre.

those whose interests you usually ignored you may be able to avoid conflicting situations escalating in your community.

- **Using the skills and experience of everyone for the benefit of the community.** Everyone has know-how, creativity, skills and the different life experiences of women and men, older and younger people and those from different ethnic and other communities can be used for the benefit of the whole community. People are characterized by their strengths rather than by their weaknesses!
- **Identifying new opportunities and possibilities for the future.** Envisioning together a better future brings energy into the community. People open up and start to use their creativity to identify new and innovative solutions to old problems and new opportunities.
- **Strengthening local governance:** The agreed objectives and outcomes are more likely to be delivered because trust and commitment is created for the implementation of the planned actions.
- **Empowering communities:** Supporting the most vulnerable communities and women to play their part in developing and implementing plans for the future ensures that they feel part of the community. Discussions are focused on what people can do to create the future and not on what others can or need to do for them. Every meeting, due to the way people listen, speak and communicate with each other, becomes a model of the future they want to create.
- **Improving partnership working:** developing and delivering positive outcomes for the area will require all partners; local, regional and national government and other public agencies, NGOs and CSOs, private businesses, to work together.

The Guide on Strategic Planning for Socio-Economic Development incorporating GE and HRBA

Guide Purpose

The purpose of this Guide is to outline a step by step *approach to local development* through participatory strategic planning using a human rights and gender equality based approach, for mayors and councillors, to help them to develop plans for the social, economic and environmental development of their area.

To be successful in delivering real benefits these plans need to be developed and implemented in partnership and with the participation of local people, organisations and businesses to ensure that they meet the present and future needs of the different people living and working in the area.

All too often discussions about local development have only involved the most visible and active citizens and the needs and perspectives of the poor, disabled people, elderly and young people, women including victims of domestic violence and women led households, Roma and other ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups have not been heard or addressed.

We need to do local development in a different way, we need to look at who is missing from the usual people and organisations we include and think about innovative and effective ways of involving those who are least visible and most vulnerable in our areas. We need to make sure that local development benefits women as well as men, that it helps the poor to raise their living standards and the rights of all citizens to have a say in their own future is made real.

This isn't easy, vulnerable groups have particular constraints and needs which make it more difficult for them to participate in this process so particular efforts have to be made to overcome their exclusion, discrimination and marginalization.

The guide will look at the vital role that the mayor and councillors need to play in order to make this happen at all stages of the process and how this approach can be used in all aspects of the work of local authorities.

Guide structure

The Guide starts by presenting the principles on which the local development process should rely, which are also the very principles of the GE and HRBA in development.

The Participatory Strategic Planning stages and steps are further described in detail, including some examples, for more clarity and better understanding.

The Glossary explains in more detail the main concepts on which relies the Strategic Planning process for Socio-economic Development, incorporating GE and HRBA.

Factors for success

Experience from other countries and programmes, has shown that the following are the key factors that are critical to the local development processes success:

- Political commitment, enthusiasm and leadership from the Mayor and the local council
- Whether women and men from all groups in the area, including the most vulnerable, local partners and other stakeholders feel that they have been actively involved and listened to in developing the local vision and plans for the future of their area
- The thoroughness of planning and preparation for the process
- The quality of the information about the community used to inform the development of the vision and plans
- How clear, relevant and realistic the objectives of the Plan are to the current position and ambitions of the community
- How well the implementation of the plan is managed, monitored and evaluated

Using the integrated HRBA and GM approach will facilitate:

- Identification of inequalities, which will help to address those who are usually left out of development programming;
- More sustainable development interventions, through developing capacity and building social capital which will enhance ownership by people and foster partnerships;
- Enhanced accountability and transparency through increased participation.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

These are the basic principles which underpin the human rights and gender equality based approach to local development planning. It will be the role of the Mayor to ensure that these principles are understood and applied throughout the process.

Local Development is for the Longterm – through Sustainable and Integrated Development

To sustain means to keep in existence without diminishing, to nourish. It means operating in such a way that a community doesn't use up all its resources. It doesn't mean to keep the status quo – it does not mean that nothing ever changes. It doesn't mean that bad things never happen.

Sustainable development means living and developing within the carrying capacity of our resources. It does not mean sustained growth and it is not only an "environmental" issue. Sustainable Development is based on the idea that, as humans, we are part of the world's ecosystem, and we need to learn how to integrate our economic and social lives into the environment in ways that maintain and enhance the environment rather than degrade or destroy it.

For example cutting the trees irrationally from the forests that cover our hills or mountains may be a very profitable activity (for some people) in the short term but in the longer term the soil is eroded because there is nothing to act as a barrier to wind and water when it rains heavily and floods may cause heavy losses for entire communities.

The most well-known definition of Sustainable Development is *the Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs*²

Integrated development means that we do not develop one area without taking into account and at the expense of the other two areas. Integration is a principle that assures development sustainability by trying, for example, to avoid the economic development which is based only on increased consumerism and wasteful use of the natural resources as if they were unlimited, or the economic development that brings benefits only to some people, resulting in increased disparities in wealth and social status among the different groups in society. Integrated development focuses on the overlapping areas. Decisions made for one area, when identifying problems, the desired future or the solutions take into account the other two areas, impacting them positively or at least not harming their development.

Integration in development takes place in three main directions:

- **Integration of the three areas of development**, as described above, that means considering the targeted territory in all its complexity, identifying the desired future of the economic, social and environment areas, analysing the existing local resources, obstacles and opportunities, defining a mix of strategies, policies and actions that will help achieve environmentally sustainable economic and social progress.
- **Integration of different individuals and groups interests**, by assuring that all relevant people and organisations are involved in the Local Development process, along two main dimensions:
 - Horizontal (1) local people belonging to different sectors - public, private or civil society are present to express their interests and to go beyond them toward the larger community interests (2) local people from groups that have different social and economic status are present and those who are most powerful do not ignore or leave out those vulnerable groups or women that cannot defend their rights and interests effectively

² The definition given in 1983 by the UN World Commission on the Environment and Development, named the Brundtland Commission, after Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Commission's head, Norway former Prime Minister.

- Vertical: people and organisations belonging to different levels of authorities, from local to national or international are brought together
- **Integration of the local development plan** for the local area, into the regional and national development plans taking into account the national or regional interests (which sometimes are in conflict with the local ones).

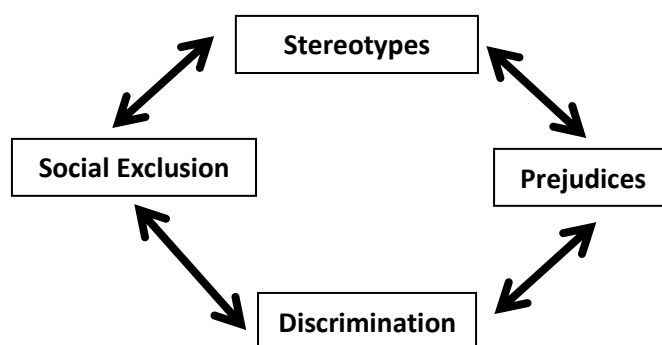
Sustainability and Integration principles should be present throughout the Local Development process, in all its stages, from the definition you give to your desired future and existing situation till the implementation of strategies, programs or actions.

Local Development is for Everyone – through Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunity

Social Inclusion

Societies are stronger when they use the skills, experience and energy of all their people. Currently Moldova is an unequal society where particular groups of people are not able to play a full part in society because of their social and economic status.

Social inclusion implies actions to change the circumstances and habits that lead to (or have led to) *social exclusion*, which can be seen as a vicious cycle reinforced by *stereotypes*, *prejudices* and *discrimination*. It is worth understanding better these concepts.



Stereotypes are assumptions that we make about different people and groups which come from the society that we live and grow up in. These assumptions can have a negative effect on the way we respond to and treat different people if we take them as “truth” about reality unless we are aware of them. Stereotypes have some main characteristics:

- They simplify the reality, meaning they can create false perceptions
- They are mostly acquired from “cultural mediators” such as our family, friends, the media, etc. and not from our own experience
- They are resistant to change especially when absorbed in childhood, determining our perceptions and behaviour, many times without being aware about

Prejudices are a consequence of our stereotypes and are defined as resistant negative opinions about other individuals or groups. We do not see people about whom we have prejudices as unique human beings having strengths and weaknesses, as all of us. Our behaviours are predetermined by our negative assumptions and lead to communication failures and ugly emotions, and ultimately to the bad actions of discrimination, social exclusion and even violence.

Discrimination is defined as the prejudicial treatment of an individual based on their membership in a certain group or category. It involves the actual behaviours towards groups such as excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities that are available to another group. The United Nations stance on discrimination includes a statement that: “*Discriminatory behaviours take many forms, but they all involve some form of exclusion or rejection.*” These many forms may include

discrimination based on ethnicity or religion, gender or sex, age, language discrimination, political views, disabilities, etc. Sometimes discrimination is direct and intentional for example where a shopkeeper refuses to serve a customer because they are a member of the Roma community, but it can also be indirect and unintentional. For example meetings are always held in a room upstairs that someone who uses a wheelchair cannot get to or that they are held at a time when children are in bed and both parents are not able to attend so most likely the women does not come.

Stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice affect the way people are treated by individuals, groups and by organisations both private and public. It means that certain people and groups are excluded from accessing their rights, opportunities and resources for example to housing, healthcare, employment, education and therefore from playing their full part in society and their local community. This is known as **social exclusion**. It is the role of the Mayor to make sure that these issues are recognised and addressed so that these people are included in the planning process and that the community benefits from their skills, creativity and experience, and they benefit also from the development.

The problem of social exclusion is usually tied to that of *equal opportunity*, as some people are more subject to such exclusion than others.

Equal Opportunity

A successful Local Development process should deal with discrimination and inequalities affecting women or men, young or elders, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, different religious beliefs, or their sexual orientation. No human being should be disadvantaged by the characteristics received through birth and over which one has no control.

Equal Opportunity is an approach that provides a certain social environment in which people are not excluded from the activities of society, such as education, employment, or health care, on the basis of these immutable traits.

International and national laws and regulations assure that human beings, regardless of age, religion, gender or ethnicity have equal opportunities for personal development, for access to public services - education, health care, water or sewage, for access to jobs or housing.

Local Development is enhanced when it is based on the equal opportunity principle. For example, looking at the performance of some countries and regions, there is a clear and strong positive correlation between economic growth and gender equality in the labor market. The direction of causality goes both ways:

- A better economic performance is usually followed by better education, democracy and greater gender equality
- Increased female participation in the labor market helps to increase gross domestic product, as more human resources are involved in the production system, and contributes to an increase in the quality of life

We are Stronger Together – through Participation and Partnership in the Local Development Process

Participation

Participation is the process by which individuals and groups having diverse expertise, representing diverse interests and/or acting for the good of those affected, are involved in the planning process or in the implementation of the solutions.

In general, the initiators of the cities/towns planning processes, the local authorities, are the ones responsible for identifying the individuals, interest groups or organizations to be involved and participate. That is why you, as local authorities' representatives, have a crucial role in identifying

and including in the planning process those groups that usually are marginalized and left out from the development.

We call them “stakeholders”: the persons, groups or organizations representatives, who have an interest in, or are affected by, the planning process results. Stakeholders can be different in the different stages of the planning process and they can have different types of power with which they can influence (in a positive or negative way) the planning process and its results.

Stakeholders can participate in different ways, having different roles and power of influence on the planning process stages.

- **Information**

The first basic level of participation is “being informed”. Local authorities inform citizens, groups of interest or organizations on the planning process and its outcomes. Informed people can take better decisions and are more open to commit their involvement.

- **Consultation**

Consultation is a two-way process: information is sent out and reactions, ideas or perceptions are collected. The authorities who start a consultation process should always explain what they will do with the collected data.

- **Decision Making**

When involved in the decision making process, stakeholders are informed, consulted and invited as equal partners to take decisions in the different stages of the planning process. Authorities try to balance different perceptions and interests by inviting a large diversity of stakeholders. This is a difficult process, especially when trying to involve those stakeholders belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups who may not have the skills or the experience to express and fight for their interest. Before involving these groups’ representatives into the decision making process, authorities and facilitators have to work separately with them, to help them identify and express their interest and preparing them to participate as equal partners in the planning process.

The deeper the involvement, the greater the control of the people, the commitment and the satisfaction!

There are many advantages of making the Local Development process participatory:

- The flow and quality of information improves
- Trust among community members and local authorities is developed
- Decisions are of better quality
- The commitment toward implementation of what has been decided is built, meaning an easier and quicker implementation

Partnership

During the planning process stages you need to form more structured relationships with different organizations or groups. We call them partnerships among two or more parties, having common and compatible goals, who agree to work together for a particular purpose and/or for some period of time.

Partnership can offer certain benefits, allowing organizations to:

- Provide more comprehensive, coordinated services
- Achieve administrative efficiencies and savings by avoiding overlap and duplication
- Learn from each other

At the same time, partnerships present very significant challenges. They often require a great deal of effort to build and sustain. They can create new legal or financial liabilities. Importantly, partnerships

that do not perform effectively can compromise your council's credibility with both its funders and its community.

There are few rules that we advise you to follow when forming and working in partnership:

- Be clear about your objectives and know why you are partnering
- Build on each partner's strengths
- Develop trust by being open, transparent and honest.
- Be clear about each partner's roles and responsibilities.
- Communicate openly and be prepared to resolve differences as they arise.

Trust and Respect are the Preconditions for Participation and Partnership in the Local Development Process

Trust and **respect** among community members and public authority institutions, among the different community individuals, groups and organizations, are the preconditions for all these actors to participate and form partnerships, to collaborate and cooperate in the local development process.

Integrity, accountability and transparency are the 3 main ingredients on which trust and respect are built. It is worth talking more about these ingredients.

Integrity is about *not abusing* your position as mayor or local councillor or as a member of a local organisation or group for personal interests including those of your family or friends; is about always "*walking your talk*", doing what you preached and promised, to be one with your word so for example if you have said that you represent your group you must consult them and ask them their views and feed these back even if their views are not what you would want personally; is about being honest, for example about something being impossible because of lack of resources even if that will make you unpopular; it is about not saying one thing to one group and something different to another. In this way you will build a reputation for honesty and integrity and people will trust your word.

Accountability is about being responsible to someone for actions you have taken; about being able to explain, clarify and justify your actions. It implies that someone has a right to know and hold you to account; and that you has a duty to explain and account for your actions.

Transparency is about being easily understood and open, frank and honest in all communications, transactions and operations. It is possible to be accountable by providing a lengthy and technical explanation of every detail, but if the audience does not easily understand this information, and if the sheer volume of information hides key facts, then the information is not presented in a transparent form. Accountability and transparency go hand-in-hand, and involve being aware of whom you are accountable to, what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated most effectively.

STRATEGIC PLANNING STAGES

Planning is *a decision making process* through which we analyse the Present (where we are), define the desired Future (where we want to be) and find the Ways to go there. The Planning process is defined by:

- The time frames it covers
- The degree of specificity, detail and clarity with which Present, Future and Solutions are described

Action planning includes short-term time frames and specific actions to solve immediate problems and achieve clear, detailed objectives or results. *Strategic planning* includes long-term or medium-term time frames and more general activities to solve complex problems and achieve less specific, less detailed visions or strategic objectives.



The main stages of a Strategic Planning Process are:

- **Preparing the planning process**
- **Understanding the present- where we are**
- **Defining the desired future- where we want to be**
- **Identifying the solutions- how to go there**
- **Implementation,**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**

You have to be aware that such a process, , starting from understanding the existing situation, defining the desired future, and ending with identifying and implementing solutions, is an organic and flexible process which may go back and forth among these main stages, which may have different steps inside each stage. Use your creativity, design the appropriate process for the local situation and be flexible to renounce, add or change the different planned steps.

Example: Strategic Planning Process Stages in Horezu, Romania

Horezu is a small Romanian community that embarked on a participatory strategic planning process to overcome the socio-economic distress it underwent during the transition from a centralized economy to a market economy. This transition was further complicated by the lack of municipal capacity to address these challenges. The town of Horezu did not have prior experience with a participatory process or community engagement, but the community managed to not only successfully develop a strategic integrated development plan, which was approved in 2004 by the municipal council, but since then has also managed to mobilize EU Funds, implement most of its plan and initiate “Depresiunea Horezu Association” with neighbouring towns. Among the key success factors to this achievement was the hands-on continuous professional facilitation provided by a

Romanian NGO³ that methodically promoted a learning-by-doing approach, and mobilized technical and financial support inputs from different sources.

The Strategic Participatory Planning Process in Horezu had the following stages:

Getting Started

- Obtaining commitment and building trust
- Forming a core planning team
- Identifying stakeholders and involving them early in the data collection process
- Establishing the stakeholders partnership group
- Preparing the Strategic Planning Conference

LED Planning Conference

- Building common understanding for the existing situation
- Developing a common vision for Horezu
- Identifying problems and opportunities to achieve the vision
- Breaking vision into strategic objectives and cluster problems/opportunities
- Strategy development

Implementing the LED Strategic Plan and Extending the Process to neighboring communities and at county level

- Approving the LED strategic plan in the Horezu local council
- Projects developed by the Horezu Local Government
- Building local actors' capacities through training
- Expanding the process to neighbouring communities
- Expanding the participatory planning process to county level
- Disseminating information

Coherent Communities have a sense of “we” and people can come together to identify common problems and solve them through a problem-solving process; or imagine a common future and strategies to achieve it through a participatory strategic planning process.

It is probable that disputes and conflicts appear during the planning process due to differences in interests, needs, priorities and values, or simply due to the complexity of group processes. We should not forget that conflict is a fact of life and should be aware that is a normal situation that whenever two or more persons/groups are working together differences and conflicts appear. In coherent communities people are able to solve issues in conflict in a constructive way, through improving the communication process, through negotiating or by being supported to work together more effectively by a skilled facilitator.

In coherent communities, the preparation stage includes organizing a core planning team including women so that their perspective is present, whose members prepare the process steps and figure-out who else should be involved in order to be able to better define the key problems and/or the desired future, to identify the most appropriate solutions, and also to be successful in the implementation stage. When building the stakeholder map in a coherent community, the planning team should also identify the possible opponents because they have to be involved as early as possible in the decision-making process, in order to change their behaviors or to diminish their resistance.

Segmented Communities have specific groups which members are often segregated, discriminated and usually left out from the development process. This is likely to include women who are often left out of the development process. This happens due to many causes, among which we can list: groups members are not aware about their rights and interests, or even if they are they lack the skills to

³Professional facilitation was provided by FPDL, a Romanian NGO established in 1994 to enhance the democratic processes of governance through capacity building of public administration and civil society representatives in Romania and the CEE/SEE region. For more details on the participatory planning processes or to download training manuals and handbooks, visit www.fpd.ro.

express and advocate for them. Many times they are not organized and lack cohesiveness inside their group, having a very low level of social capital, bonding, bridging or linking social capital.

In segmented communities, in which the different groups are polarized or segregated, sometimes in conflict with each other, the preparation process is longer and its goal is first to organize the vulnerable groups around their common interests, make them cohesive on their issues and build their capacity and self-confidence that they are able to create together a better future for themselves. Before entering the strategic planning process they need to be empowered to act on their urgent and specific problems, which often do not require extensive resources to be solved. Only after they are empowered by gaining experience and self-confidence it is time to bring them together with the other groups representatives in the strategic planning process that includes multiple stakeholders. From this point forward, the process may be similar to the process that takes place in coherent communities.

The key representatives of each group involved in the planning process are responsible for bringing the message about each stage results within their group and educating their peers about what they have learnt.

This Guide will describe the Participatory Strategic Planning Process in Segmented Communities – those communities where vulnerable groups are present, usually segregated, ignored and left out from the development process.

We will describe further each of its stages.

Stage 1: Preparing the Planning Process

Objectives

This is the stage of the process where the foundations are built for what is to come. It is essential that everyone involved understands the process and in particular, that the way it is going to be conducted is different from anything that has gone before. It is going to require seeking and responding to the views and needs of men and women including members of vulnerable groups whose voices have not always been heard before as well as the other organisations who are active in the local community.

What needs to be done?

Obtain commitment and build trust

It is crucial to have the Mayor and the local council endorsement for the local development planning process. The most effective way for the Mayor to show political commitment to the process is by getting the agreement of the council to start the process and by making a public statement about the importance for the community and his/her personal commitment to support it by being personally involved in its main stages. The Mayor should also explain that she/he will make sure that the process of developing and implementing the local plan for the area will:

- Ensure that all people in the community have the power, information and access needed to improve their own communities and influence their own lives
- Ensure that there is active and meaningful participation of all sectors relevant representatives – public, private and civil society, and that all groups interests will be represented, including those of minorities, women, children and other vulnerable groups;
- Ensure that information collected about the local area is as far as possible disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, language, age, religion and any other relevant category and that this information is made available;
- Ensure that any plans, proposals and projects are assessed also on the basis of their impact on women and other vulnerable groups;
- Ensure that the outcomes of plans, policies and projects are measurable and that regular public reports are made on their progress

Establish process steps

- The Mayor in collaboration with the facilitators' team (JILDIP NGOs partners) and the local council representatives need to establish a plan for the process of developing the local plan, including the agreement to form a core local planning team lead by the mayor to initiate and coordinate the process. Members of the core planning team can be councillors, city hall heads of departments and significant outsiders that can support the process, such as school director, religious, civil society organizations or business leaders, or mass media representatives.
- Ensuring that women are represented on the core local planning team
- Building capacity of the local planning team to work more effectively together, by improving basic knowledge and skills in areas such as:
 - Participatory strategic planning for local socio-economic development process
 - Principles of Human Rights and Gender Equality approach to local development
 - The cycle of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination and their negative consequences on the vulnerable groups and the whole community
 - Effective communication and teamwork
- Planning the process main stages, deciding on the time frames, necessary resources, who are responsible, with whom they will work

Identify key stakeholders

The list of people, communities and organisations which will need to be involved in the process different stages might include:

Public Sector:

- Local and neighbouring councils
- Higher levels of government
- Health and education bodies (schools, colleges, universities)
- Public service and other state owned enterprises

Civil society sector organisations:

- Neighbourhood groups
- Religious groups including religious minorities
- Ethnic groups, including Roma
- Children and youth groups
- Educational groups
- Cultural, art and historical societies
- Environmental groups
- Groups supporting the elderly, disabled people, victims of domestic violence and trafficking

Private sector:

- Private businesses
- Chambers of Commerce or other business groups
- Small businesses and trade associations
- Utilities and banks
- News media

Ensure Human rights and gender equality principles are embedded.

The groups above are likely to represent the most active and visible citizens and organisations in your area; however you may have in your community vulnerable groups who are not organized and so, whose interests and concerns remain unheard. It is crucial that these groups are able to participate and be involved in communicating their concerns and interests so at this stage you have to identify who they are and decide how to help and support them to get involved.

Local councillors and the other members of the core planning team will know who lives in their communities and which groups suffer most from social exclusion or poverty, and are not currently represented by any organisations.

You can use the following list of vulnerable groups to identify which are the relevant groups for your community and to help the community mobilizers to work with them to support their participation and involvement in the local development process.

- Poor households
- The ill, poor or lonely older people
- The children left behind by parents who emigrated to work in other countries
- The people with disabilities
- Ethnic or religious minorities
- Roma
- The young unemployed
- Survivors of gender based violence
- Survivors of human trafficking
- People living with HIV
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

Within these vulnerable groups and in all the stakeholder organisations it is important to ensure that the views of women are heard as well as men as their issues and concerns may be different. So for

example women entrepreneurs may have more difficulties in borrowing capital as women are less likely to own property and older women are more likely to be living in poverty than men. It is necessary for the success of the local development process that women's voices are heard. (We will look at tools to do this in the next stage)

Raise community awareness

The core planning team can decide to disseminate the message about the planning process, by organizing different events such as public meetings, children's drawings competitions about their community future, competitions for young people on the best and most innovative business idea. They may use the media, local TV or radio stations or the traditional fairs that bring community members together, in order to present and explain how valuable everybody's participation in the planning process is.

Stage 2: Understanding the Present- Where We Are

Objective

The objective of this stage is to understand and diagnose the existing situation of the community so that everyone involved in the planning process has a common understanding of the starting point and how far is the desired future.

What needs to be done?

Deciding on the structure of the data to be collected

In order to decide where you want to go the first step is to understand where you are and this means building a common understanding of different aspects of your community. As the local council you will already have some views and understanding about what you think are the main issues for your community but the local development plan needs to be based on evidence about the existing situation of your community including who lives there, what is their situation in terms of health, education, income and so on, what is the economic situation, what businesses are there and what employment opportunities exist and what is the state of the local environment including levels of pollution, access to clean water, natural landscape etc.

The list below represents, in alphabetic order, some of the areas that people are concerned about in their communities, when planning its development:

- Economy
- Education
- Employment
- Environment
- Health
- Housing and Social Housing
- Government and Public Services
- Infrastructure
- Population
- Public Safety
- Social/Cultural and traditional activities
- Resources Use
- Recreation
- Tourism
- Transportation

It is important to remember that the way the collected data are structured will determine your Strategic Plan structure. There are many possible structures; the most simple is to structure data in 3 main chapters to describe the 3 main areas of development – social, economy and environment, with sub-chapters. Do not forget that the local territory is embedded in larger ones, so for some data, the regional, national or international context is important.

You have to decide to collect the data that are relevant and realistic to be collected in the time frame and resources you have. Collect only the data you will use further in the process, otherwise you will be overwhelmed by the quantity of data and you will not see the forest because of the trees!

Collecting the data

Collecting data is a very challenging process due to the fact that very few local governments have the necessary statistical data for their local area. In particular data are not likely to be available about the vulnerable groups whose needs and wishes are usually ignored or about the different needs and wishes of women in the community. It will be necessary to identify who are the vulnerable groups, the causes of their vulnerability, as well as to investigate the situation of vulnerable groups and women with regard to access to local services and decision making in order to set priorities and identify the necessary concrete actions to redress their exclusion.

For example there will be people in the local area who are not on an official register. Local councillors need to draw on their knowledge of who lives in the local area to ensure that no groups are ignored. Special focus should be given to assess the vulnerable groups' perceptions, issues and wishes.

We provide in the following chapter three tools that can be used, adapted to your specific situation, in order to assess and identify vulnerable groups' situation: the Equality Impact Assessment Tool, the Gender Equality Assessment Tool and the Vulnerable Groups Problems Identification Tool.

Collecting data can be done by

- Accessing different statistical data included in previous studies or from other sources. The data have to be disaggregated at the extent possible, by gender, ethnicity, religion, age, social status, education level, revenues level, etc. so that the specific issues of the vulnerable groups you want to be included can be identified.
- Collecting them through the direct participation, through interviews, surveys, public meetings, workshops or focus groups of the different members of the community. That is why you should be aware that collecting data is the intervention first step and those who do it should gain peoples' trust and confidence, by being able to explain why they need the data, what they will do with these data and how these data will be used further in the planning process. We provide in the Tools chapter more details about how to conduct an interview, how to use a survey, and how to use NGT in the public meetings or workshops as a structured way to generate ideas.

Example: Understanding the existing situation in Kosovo

UN HABITAT has been running programs to support the development of urban planning in Kosovo since 2005. The motto of the current project is "Making Cities Better Together"

The project has supported the process of developing urban development plans using a participatory approach including wide participation from civil society organizations in visioning workshops at the start of the process to achieve a wide consensus.

The project has also run a series of gender workshops for all the participating municipalities, urban planners, NGOs and the media. In these workshops participants were asked to share their views on how the different needs and aspirations of women and men, girls and boys can be taken into account in local development planning. The training also covered the importance of ensuring equal participation of women and men in all aspects.

During the training different needs and concerns were expressed e.g. women identified the need for shelters for single-parent women, new work places and income generating opportunities, farm production, arts and crafts, and a safe environment for women and children. Men put more emphasis on infrastructure projects such as roads and the improvement of Landfill sites and the environment.

Both women and men agreed on the importance of health and education. The urban development plans have been developed to include the different issues identified by women and men.

Consider running separate consultations with different groups to identify issues. For example women suffering from violence in their homes will not readily identify this issue in a public meeting but may feel able to discuss it with other women in a safe environment.

Example: Understanding domestic violence in Kosovo

UNDP supported a Women's Safety and Security Initiative in Kosovo. This was to ensure that women's concerns about safety, including about domestic violence and human trafficking were addressed at local level. Separate consultation was done with women using health facilities and in schools where they did not have to identify themselves to their neighbours or family members. This initiative identified that over 1 in 4 women had experienced violence in their homes. The local councils worked with schools, health organizations and the CSOs to identify and support women and to provide shelters and to train local officials including the police to identify and deal effectively with perpetrators.

The data collection step in/about the vulnerable groups you decided to involve in the planning process can also be used to identify the potential opinion leaders who may be able and may have the legitimacy and skills to represent their groups in the planning process.

Care should be taken not to assume that individuals necessarily represent the whole community. For example women and young people from the Roma community may have different views and priorities from the male head of the family and may not feel confident to express their views freely in front of the men.

We emphasize the idea that collecting data is a continuous process, even if described in this stage; it starts in the first stage of preparing the planning process, and is done, from time to time in each of the stages including the last one focused on monitoring and evaluation.

Interpreting the data, elaborating the Community Profile

Why do we collect all these data? The simplest answer is that we will interpret these data in order to identify the main problems we need to solve and the main opportunities we need to use, in order to achieve our desired situation. So, it is important to agree on the definitions of these two concepts.



Problems and Opportunities

Problems are situations we want to change, are unfavorable circumstances/obstacles which prevent us from getting from where we are to where we want to be, prevent us from achieving our desired future. Instead of the word "problem" people often use other words. Some of them have negative connotations, such as *difficulties* or *obstacles*; others are more neutral such as *issues* or *situations*, and others even have positive connotations, such as *challenges*.

Identifying and defining the *real problem* is one of the most important (and difficult) steps in the planning process. For this purpose we must:

- Avoid the risk of focusing on the symptoms because the real problems will persist
- Avoid the risk of focusing on the solutions because other useful solutions will be ignored or neglected

Defining the Problem

Two hikers are being chased by a grizzly bear. While on the run, one of the hikers reaches into his backpack and pulls out a pair of jogging shoes. The other hiker glances over and says: "Why bother? This bear can outrun you even with those on". His partner responds with "I don't need to outrun the bear, I just need to outrun you"

In Search of Solutions, David Quinlivan- Hall and Peter Renner

Opportunities are favorable or advantageous combinations of circumstances that could help us getting from where we are to where we want to be in our desired future.

Many problems can also be perceived as opportunities. An already used bottle of wine can be seen as half empty or half full! So try to focus more on them and start with them. In many communities it is not uncommon that the beginning point for understanding the present is to focus on the various problems and in the end, what is produced is a laundrylist of all the problems being experienced by residents of these communities.

Our advice is not to start documenting all the "problems". That's not to suggest that you should try to sweep your problems under the rug. Our proposal is that a better way to start effectively address the challenges you face is to have a good knowledge of your local resources— for example the skills and talents of the local residents – to whatever groups they may belong. You may need to work with some groups, particularly the most vulnerable and women to increase their confidence to identify and bring to the table the skills, experience and ideas that they have. It is important also to identify the capabilities of local organizations and institutions, the natural and cultural resources, the economic ones. All these local resources form the *initial capital* your community needs in order to start the development process.

We can conclude that key for your Local Development process is that you identify your *Local Resources* that can be seen as the main opportunities for your local development. Often you do not know enough about your own local resources, or worse, they are ignored, undervalued, misused or under used. In order to know better and discover your own Local Resources we suggest that you should:

- Be aware that the identification and understanding of Local Resources is a continuous learning process for all those involved
- Involve as many different institutions and people, as possible: the wider in terms of number and deeper in terms of knowledge, the more effective and creative will be the identification and understanding of Local Resources Do not collect useless data: know beforehand what data you need and why - how are you going to structure and analyze these data.
- Be aware that it is better to have incomplete data than stop or postpone the planning process, you can always come back in a later stage.
- Give a special attention to your *Social Capital*

If the core planning team of the LPA does not have the necessary experts it should consider how it might get the expertise of different professions such as economists, sociologists, urban planners and community mobilizers/facilitators, to help to design and conduct the data collection process and to elaborate the *Community Profile* that will describe the community economic and social development potential, based on interpreting that data. It is also worth considering how it can learn from the pilot activities being undertaken by the JILDP and the experience of other local authorities. However the local authority with the leadership of the mayor can follow the steps outlined in the guide and use the suggested tools even without the support of external experts.

Tools for data collection/interpretation

Here are some data collection tools, which will assist with understanding your current situation. Some tools are focusing on collecting data about the vulnerable groups' situation and the way their needs are addressed by LPAs: Equality Impact Assessment of LPA Policies, Services or Functions, Gender Equality Assessment Checklist, Vulnerable Groups' Problems Identification. The other tools can be used for collecting data about any groups' situation in the community: Interview, Survey, NGT – Nominal Group Technique.

Tool: Equality Impact Assessment of LPA Policies, Services or Functions⁴

This tool will help you analyse your LPA current policies, services or functions in order to identify any adverse impact on any part of your community in order to:

- Eliminate discrimination and tackle inequality
- Deliver efficient and effective services
- Be transparent and accountable
- Comply with legislation

You can use it not only for the purpose of diagnosing the existing situation, but with slight changes, whenever you plan, change or remove a service, policy or function as in the other stages of the local planning process

First you should clarify different aspects of the LPA policy, service or function, by answering the following questions:

- What did you tried to achieve with this policy, service or function?
- Who are the users/target beneficiaries?
- Who else could or should have been?
- Why was this service, policy or function a priority?
- How the decision about this policy, service or function was reached? Who took the decision? Who else was involved?

In the next step you should assess the impact of the policy, service or function and identify if it was discriminatory or created unfair inequalities, by answering the following questions:

- How did users benefit?
- What prevented them getting the most out of the policy, service or function?
- Were some people/groups (for example men and women) benefitting more than others?
- If this benefited a particular group is it clear why that needed to be the case? For example special services provided for disabled people
- Is it discriminatory?
- Who else was affected?
- Have it impacted the relationships between different groups in the community?
- If yes, how have you addressed this?

⁴ Adapted from *A guide to carrying out an equality impact assessment*; Local Government Improvement and Development, London, August 2011 www.local.gov.uk/equalityframeworks

Tool: Gender Equality Assessment Checklist⁵

The gender equality assessment of the existing situation ensures that women's as well as men's rights and issues are understood so that they can be addressed. It is therefore necessary to map gender roles since gender is a determining factor in the responsibilities and activities individuals have within their communities. Without this information there is a risk that important stakeholders will fail to be involved.

The gender assessment tool⁶ we propose in this Guide complements the assessment of vulnerable groups by gathering information about gender issues with the following objectives:

- To help LPAs identify gender issues and problems, what causes them and how these might be addressed
- To help LPAs think about how their services can be sensitive to the needs of women and men by understanding how they access and use services differently
- To provide LPAs with the information to ensure that women and men participate effectively in local decision making and the consultation and planning process for the local development plan

The questions to be asked are for your inspiration, you may use the ones that are relevant for your situation, depending on the time and resources you have for data collection.

SOCIAL

Local Culture and Gender

- What are traditional roles of women and men in your community?
 - What are men expected to do by their families, communities and society?
 - What are women expected to do by their families, communities and society?
 - Do men and women always comply with their traditional roles? If not, is this a problem? Does it lead to tensions in families and communities?
 - Does religion or custom impose specific practices or beliefs that limit women's opportunities in any sphere of life? What are they?
- Can women choose their own partners?
 - Can they end their relationships with their partners?
 - Is there an established minimum age for marriage?
 - Is registration of marriage compulsory? What are authorities doing to ensure that registration is carried out? Does failure to register a marriage cause hardships for women and how is it ensured that this does not occur?
 - Can they enter the economic activity of their choice?
 - How do cultural and traditional practices affect men's life? (e.g. breadwinner pressures in the context of unemployment)
 - What measures have been taken to change gender stereotypes in your municipality?

Access to local services

Health

- What is the life expectancy of men and women in the area?
- What are the main health problems/needs of women in the area? By age group?
- Are there services related to maternal health care, family planning and domestic violence available at the municipality? Are they accessible to all women?
- What are the main health problems/needs of men in the area? By age group?
- Are some of the health problems of men and women caused by social factors (e.g. alcoholism, stress, domestic violence, etc.)? Which ones?
- What are the main obstacles for women to receive health care?
 - Practical linked to workload

⁵Adapted after Ruiz-Abril, María Elena "An Assessment Tool for Mainstreaming Gender in Human Rights and Local Governance Programmes", unpublished

⁶ <http://hrba.undp.sk/index.php/introduction/local-governance-human-rights-based-approach-and-gender-mainstreaming-in-the-context-of-europe-and-the-cis>

- Legal/economic linked to fees
- Cultural linked to discrimination from health personnel
- What are the main obstacles for men to receive health care?
 - Practical linked to productive role
 - Legal/economic linked to fees
 - Cultural linked to risk behaviour
- Overall, are there important gender disparities in access to local health services? Which are they? Do these differences reflect the different health needs of men and women in the area or are they a result of discrimination against women/men in access to health care?
- Overall, what is the Municipality doing to redress gender inequalities in access to local health care?
- Is there a strategy to address gender issues in health care at the local level?
- Do health programs include in their design specific strategies to address specific needs of men and women?

Education

- What is the literacy rate for men and women in the community?
- Are women overrepresented among the illiterate in your municipality? If so, why?
- Are there differences in enrolment rates between boys and girls at different levels of education (by ethnicity, geographical area, etc.)? If so, what are the causes?
 - Cultural – perceived low value of education in general, perceived low value of girls' education, etc.
 - Economic – inability to meet fees and school costs, need of economic contribution of child,
 - Threat to safety during transport and in school
 - Other factors
- What are the drop-out rates of boys and girls in primary and secondary school?
- What are the major causes of girls/boys dropping out? (low value of education, need for child labour, problems of safety?)
 - Cultural – perceived low value of education in general, perceived low value of girls' education, etc.
 - Economic – need of economic contribution of child,
 - Threat to safety during transport and in school
 - Other factors
- Is the curriculum gender sensitive and the same for both sexes?
- If not, have active measures been taken to eliminate any stereotypes at all levels and in all forms of education (e.g. by co-education, revision of textbooks and curricula etc)?
- Do girls and boys have equal access to available and offered courses?
- What is the percentage of women graduating in male dominated fields (medicine, engineering, science, agriculture, etc.)? Are women encouraged to study typically 'male' dominated subjects?
- Overall, what are the main gender inequalities in education in your area?
- Overall, what is the municipality doing to redress such inequalities?
- Is there a strategy to address gender issues in education at the local level?

Social Services

- In your municipality/area, what are the main risks and social problems that affect
 - Male and female children (e.g. malnutrition, abuse, etc.)
 - Young boys (social violence, delinquency, drug abuse, forced labour, etc.)
 - Young women (teenage pregnancy, trafficking, sexual abuse, etc.)
 - Adult male (unemployment, alcoholism, suicide, social violence, HIV/AIDS, etc.)
 - Adult women (maternal mortality, illiteracy, depression, poverty, HIV/AIDS etc.)
 - Elder men (poverty, abandonment, homelessness)
 - Elder women (poverty, abandonment, etc.)
- Are there programmes at the municipal level to prevent those risks and address the problems?
- Are the programmes designed and planned according to the needs of the different risk groups?
- Are there particular groups of men and women left out unprotected?
- Do men and women enjoy the same access to those social welfare programmes?

Men and Women's Participation in Decision Making at the Local Level

In local government structures

- What is the proportion of men and women local councillors in your Municipality?

- Are women underrepresented in elected positions at the local level?
- If so, what are the causes of women's under-representation in elected positions?
- Is there a quota system in the Municipality?
- Do men and women participate in similar proportions in other official and semi-official local governance structures such as village councils, water committees, justice of the peace, farmers associations, etc.? If not, what are the obstacles?
 - Legal and administrative – discrimination in rules that regulate the organization
 - Cultural – prejudices against women's participation, committee in men/women only sector of activity, etc.
 - Practical – work burden, lack of capacity of women, lack of knowledge, lack of women leaders

Civil Society

- What are the main civil society organizations (CSOs) in your municipality?
- In which CSOs do women participate? What type of CSOs are they? What is their purpose?
- In which CSOs do men participate? What type of CSOs are they? What is their purpose?
- What is the capacity of CSOs in which women participate to influence the local development process?
 - Budget
 - Staff
 - Political influence
 - Other factors
- What is the capacity of CSOs in which men participate to influence the local development process?
 - Budget
 - Staff
 - Political influence
 - Other factors

Participation in local development planning

- Do men and women participate in the formulation and implementation of government policy, development plans, budget, etc.?
- Do women participate in those processes in equal proportions than men?
- If not, why not? What are the obstacles?
 - Practical obstacles related to time and work burden
 - Cultural obstacles related to discrimination against women in the community (opposition on the part of husbands and communities to women's participation in meetings)
 - Obstacles related to lack of interest and/or information about local consultation processes
 - Other
- Can women attend or organize public meetings on matters that they identify as being of concern? Do they attend meetings? Do they actively participate in meetings and community consultations?
- Does the local consultation and planning processes have in place mechanisms to ensure that planning decisions reflect the views of different groups of the community and of men and women? Which ones?

Institutional Capacity to Address Gender Issues at Local Level

- Are there local government institutions with a mandate in gender (gender municipal office, gender focal point in different municipal departments,...etc.)? Which ones?
- What is their capacity to influence local development processes?
 - Budget (in absolute terms, as a proportion of total municipal budget)
 - Number of staff and qualifications/capacity/training
 - Influence in local government decision making process
- Have national, sectoral, and local development plans adopted the principle of non-discrimination and gender mainstreaming?
- Are management and information systems at the local level adapted to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data?
- Does the municipality have in place mechanisms to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in their programs and service delivery? Which ones?
- In addition to local governments, what are other resources to support gender mainstreaming in programs at the local level?
 - Donors – UNDP, EU, others
 - Women's organization

- Other

ECONOMY

Local infrastructure

- Do men and women have equal access to adequate living conditions (particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, waste management, transport and communications)?
- Do local housing policies prioritize mono-parental families?
- Are men and women consulted in the process of designing and planning housing, sanitation, waste, electricity, water and transportation services?

Financial resources

- Do women have equal rights and access as men regarding bank loans/ mortgages/ other financial credit?
- Are there cultural barriers to women's accessing credit under their name?
- Do men and women have equal access/information/opportunity to small income generation schemes?

Employment

- Do men and women have equal employment opportunities?
- In which economic activities do local women predominate?
- In which economic activities do local men predominate?
- What is the proportion of men and women among the local informal labour force?
- What is the proportion of men and women among the unemployed in the municipality?
- What are alternative sources of livelihood for men and women?
 - Internal migration
 - International migration
 - Others
- What has been the impact of privatization on men and women in the municipality?
- Overall, what is the Municipality doing to promote gender equality in access to employment? Are there programmes to encourage and build the capacity of women's entrepreneurs?

ENVIRONMENT

Land

- What are the productive and domestic uses of land in your area?
 - For men
 - For women
- Do men and women have equal access to land?
- What are the consequences of unequal access to land?
 - For men
 - For women
- Do men and women have equal rights to land ownership?
- What are the consequences of unequal access to land?
 - For men
 - For women
- What are the obstacles for women's access to land ownership?
 - Legal and administrative – discrimination in legislation, discrimination in the process of regularization/land titling, etc.
 - Cultural – customary regimes that regulate land discriminate against women, community pressure to transfer land to the head of the household or male family member, etc.
 - Economic – cost of process or regularization,
 - Other

Water, communal lands, forests, etc.

- What are the productive and domestic uses of this resource in your area?
 - For men
 - For women
- Do men and women have equal access to the resource?

- What are the consequences of unequal access to the resource?
 - For men
 - For women
- What are the obstacles for women's access to the resource?
 - Legal and administrative – discrimination in legislation, discrimination in process of land titling, etc.
 - Cultural – customary regimes that regulate the resource discriminate against women, pressure to transfer land to the head of the household or male family member, etc.
 - Economic – cost of process or regularization,
 - Other
- Do men and women participate in the body that regulates and manages the resource (water committee, other community committees, etc.)? If not, why not?
- Overall, what is the Municipality doing to address gender inequalities in access and control over natural resources in the area?

Tool: Vulnerable Groups' Problems Identification – useful questions to ask⁷

Vulnerable groups	Useful questions to ask
Poor Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any indication that children from poor families do not attend primary school or pre-school? • Is there any difference between boys' and girls' attendance? • Are primary health care, post natal care and immunisation as easily available to children and other members of low income households as they are to wealthier households? • Do members of low income households have access to information on social aid and services?
The Elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the elderly make use of their rights to pensions and other social welfare benefits? • What obstacles are there for elderly people in gaining access to healthcare? • Do older women receive adequate health care? • What is the image of the elderly in the community? • Are they seen as a potential resource or a burden? • Do old people have access to relevant information concerning community decision making?
Disabled People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are disabled people represented in community decision making? • Are disabled people able to access all public facilities through the local transport system? • Are disabled people active in the local labour market? • Is the situation of disabled men and women different at the community level? • Do disabled children attend local schools and pre-schools?
Ethnic Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of representation of ethnic minorities in local decision making bodies as compared to their proportion of the community's population? • What proportion of children from ethnic minorities can access education in their ethnic language? • Can ethnic minorities maintain and develop their culture and preserve the essential elements of their identity, religion, traditions and cultural heritage?
The Roma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any data available about Roma at the community level? • Do Roma children (boys and girls) face difficulties in attending community schools due to lack of resources for clothing, supplies, books, tuition, or because of discriminatory attitudes among school staff, or a lack of transportation or of registration documents? • What social services or benefits do Roma receive compared to other groups in the community?

⁷ Who is missing from Local Development? JILDP, 2011 Moldova.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do Roma women receive health services especially when they are pregnant?
Religious Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can religious minorities fully enact their religious beliefs in the community? Do religious minorities have a place of worship in the community? Do authorities, educational institutions and local leaders promote awareness of religious tolerance among the majority?
The Young Unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the estimated number of young unemployed people? What is the range of labour market programmes and the amount of information reaching young unemployed people, especially among those who lack upper education or qualifications? Are there youth-specific programmes reaching young people in the community and what is their impact?
Survivors of gender based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do community members talk openly about domestic violence or is it considered a private matter for the family? Do women report cases of domestic violence or abuse? Have local authorities put in place a community based framework to protect the victims and their family members? How are the police dealing with this issue at the local level?
Human Trafficking survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any data at local level about cases of trafficking? Are these cases reported to local authorities? What is the level of knowledge on this issue within the community? Do local public officials have enough knowledge about human trafficking? Are there any active initiatives or projects regarding human trafficking in the community? Are they supported/encouraged in any way by local authorities?
People living with HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any programmes or efforts to educate the community about HIV/AIDS? What kind of services and counselling for the potentially HIV infected are available to community members? What is the level of acceptance or stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS in the community? Are there any programmes or information available on reproductive health for young boys and girls?
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the concept of LGBT properly understood in the community? Do gay men and lesbians enjoy the same rights and opportunities as heterosexual people enjoy in being open about their sexual identity? Are local police making enough effort to protect the local LGBT community? Do LGBT people get the same access to healthcare as other members of the community, including access to reproductive health services?

Tool: Interview

The personal interview is a face-to-face meeting between the person collecting information and a community member, representative of different groups interests, during which he/she answers questions designed to obtain information in the planning process different stages. For example if the stage is preparing the Community Profile, than the questions will be focused on what the person perceives as being the main problems or opportunities for development, the main assets their group can contribute or the main assets the entire community has.

The approach includes the use of a fixed set of questions and considerable latitude given to the person being interviewed to express his/her point of view openly.

There are three main phases in the conduct of a personal interview:

- Preparation: motivating the person to cooperate
- Questioning: asking questions and recording the answers
- Probing: seeking clarification or additional information

Preparation

The person will cooperate in answering interview questions if he/she

- Feels comfortable with the interviewer – remember that women may not feel comfortable about identifying that they suffer from domestic violence to a male interviewer or many people would not feel comfortable declaring that they have a mental illness unless they are assured that they will not be personally identified
- Accepts the purpose of the interview as valid and important, and
- Has no reluctance to say what he/she believes

Here are some useful advises on how you should introduce yourself, if you conduct an interview:

- Tell who you are and whom you represent and how he or she was chosen
- Tell what you are doing in a way that will stimulate respondent interest
- Give brief but complete description of the local development planning process
- Explain why the information collected through the interviews are important and how they will be used
- Build trustful relationships between you and the respondent, by explaining that the identity of the persons being interviewed will be kept confidential; Encourage open expression of ideas

Questioning

When the introduction is over the interview is ready to begin. There are some specific techniques you can use to get the greatest benefit possible from the interview.

- The interview should be conducted in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. You should avoid creating the impression that what is taking place is a cross-examination or a quiz
- The questions should be asked in the same order as that appear and exactly as worded in the questionnaire
- Questions that possibly could be misunderstood should be repeated and clarified

Probing

Probing means asking clarifying questions or seeking additional facts, for two possible purposes:

- To motivate the person to explain more fully the answers
- To re-focus the interview when the person is not answering the questions

Accurate information and honest perceptions can improve the understanding of the existing situation in the respective community. The answers received can provide the language to use in the design of follow-up surveys. The interviews value is lessened if the persons being interviewed feel intimidated by the subject or by the interviewer, and so do not express openly their opinions.

Tool: Survey

The survey questionnaire is a written instrument using questions about a specific issue and a rating scale, to collect information anonymously from a relatively large group of respondents.

The steps in using a survey are:

- Selecting questions to ask
- Constructing the questionnaire
- Administering the survey

Selecting questions to ask

The question is the heart of the questionnaire. Questions to be asked must be relevant to the issue under study and be of sufficient importance or interest to motivate a response. The information required (factual information or personal ideas/opinions) should be relatively easy to be provided.

Survey questions can be either closed-ended or open-ended. Close-ended questions give to the persons a set of answers to choose from. An open-ended question, on the other hand, does not force the person to select a given response but offer the opportunity to answer with own words. Close-ended questions are easy to answer and quick to process and analyse. Open-ended

questions take time to answer and are harder to process/analyse, but may give you a better understanding of the situation.

Constructing the questionnaire

One of the common formats for questions in surveys is the rating scale for making a judgement about a question. There are several variations of the rating scale, such as *Yes, Maybe, No* or *Strongly agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly disagree* (corresponding from 1 to 5)

A cardinal rule of questionnaire design is: *Keep It Short And Simple!* Finally, prepare instructions needed to aid completing the questionnaires and returning them.

Administering the survey

Assuming that the survey will be used during a public meeting with community members or during a meeting with certain vulnerable group members, the persons who are being asked to complete the survey questionnaire should be given, at least one week before, information on the time and place of the meeting, as well as on the reason for the survey and how the results will benefit those who will participate. Assurance should be given also that the responses will be held in strict confidence.

During the meeting, after distributing the questionnaires the person in charge should:

- Offer greetings, give his/her name, thank participants for taking the time to take part in the survey. Tell participants on whose authority the survey is being conducted. Explain how the information will be used.
- Read out loud the introduction printed at the top of the questionnaire and ask participants to read along silently. Emphasize that participants should not write their names on the questionnaires, because the intent of the survey is not to find out what any particular person thinks but what community members (or the respective group members) think in general.
- Review any examples that have been included in questionnaire instructions or read a few statements out loud and ask participants at random what the selected statements mean to them. This is an important way to prevent misunderstandings. Emphasize the importance of participants responding to all statements on their questionnaires.
- Ask participants to read all instructions carefully before beginning their questionnaires. Tell them the average time it takes to complete the questionnaire. If space is provided on the questionnaire for "comments" urge participants to use the space.
- Encourage participants who do not understand a statement to raise their hands so that you can offer assistance. (Note: If a problem mentioned by one participant could be a problem for others as well, you may wish to explain the correct way to proceed for the benefit of all participants).
- Tell participants to take their time completing their questionnaires. Explain that, after completing the questionnaires, participants are to return them to the administrator.
- Ask participants to begin. Circulate among them as they work to answer questions and to be sure questionnaires are being completed according to the instructions given.

The principal advantage of the survey questionnaire is that it permits to reach the largest possible number of persons at the least cost. Moreover, survey questionnaires are anonymous. This is of particular importance when the issues are sensitive. Strong feelings that might not be expressed in an interview might be expressed on a survey form.

A major limitation in using survey questionnaires is that the answers must be accepted as final. There is no opportunity to probe for clarification or additional facts; there is always room for misunderstanding when the respondent must rely on written instructions alone. Finally, questionnaires may not obtain an adequate response rate and so, the answers may not give relevant information.

Tool: the Nominal Group Technique

The nominal Group Technique (NGT) is a structured group meeting aimed at gathering information about different issues. NGT features the silent generation of ideas, round-robin feedback and public recording of ideas, individual prioritizing and group decision making on collective priority ratings.

NGT was developed by Andre L. Delbecq and Andrew H. Van de Ven in 1968. Since that time, NGT has gained extensive recognition throughout the world and has been widely applied in local development planning processes.

The group leader opens the meeting with a cordial welcome, a statement about the purpose of the meeting, clarification of the importance of each member's contribution, and clear indication of how the meeting's output will be used.

The process consists of six steps.

- Step 1: Silent generation of ideas in writing: the leader reads the question to the group out loud while writing it in plain sight at the top of the pad. Care must be taken to choose clear and unambiguous wording for the question so as to generate the most specific responses possible. The leader then asks group members to write down a number of ideas (depending on how much time is available) they can think of in answer to the question. Group members are cautioned by the leader to work silently and independently.
- Step 2: Round-robin recording of ideas: starting at one person, the leader asks him/ her to read one of the answers out loud. The answer is recorded by the leader and the next group member is asked for one of his/her answers. This process is continued until every answer of every member has been recorded. Members are encouraged by the leader to "pass" if they have nothing further to offer with the understanding that they may re-enter later with any new ideas that may occur to them. Discussion of ideas and side conversations at the table are strongly discouraged.
- Step 3: Discussion for clarification: the leader explains that the purpose of this step is to insure that everyone understands what is meant by each idea. The ideas are taken one at a time as written. Discussion of an item is to focus an understanding not agreement. Members are told that everyone is responsible for clarifying an idea.
- Step 4: Preliminary vote on ideas of importance: the leader asks group members to vote to select five ideas that they think are the best answers.
- Step 5: Discussion of the preliminary vote: members are told by the leader to examine the voting results and to comment on anything that seems unusual, surprising, or inconsistent. The leader stresses that the discussion may persuade some members to change their votes, but that no one is being or should feel pressured to do so.
- Step 6: Final vote: the final vote is simply a repeat of Step 4. It combines individual judgements into a group decision. When it is over, the leader thanks group members for their efforts, repeats what will be done with the meeting output, and closes the meeting.

Since the advent of brainstorming in the early 1950s, group problem solving methods have been a popular target for research study. These methods have been found consistently to produce superior results to the idea production efforts of individuals working alone. Unlike brainstorming, in which members of a group interact with one another from the start, NGT is designed to let people work in the presence of one another in a structured manner but to write down their ideas independently. Because of this characteristic, NGT groups have been found to outperform interactive groups consistently in the number and quality of ideas produced. This seems to be because members of NGT groups are less subject to being inhibited by one another and are less prone to make premature judgements.

Stage 3: Defining the desired future

Objective

This Stage objective is to support the community members imagine and agree on a common, desired future, that addresses their interests but also the needs and interests of the entire community.

The desired future may be longer or shorter term. More far from the present time, the future is described in a less clear and focused way, nearer to the present time the future is described in a specific and concrete way. The process starts with defining the longer term future – called the Vision and continues with identifying the shorter term - more focused desired futures that will help community achieve its Vision step by step, through achieving specific Objectives.

What needs to be done?

Defining a Vision

The *Vision* is a shared statement of where the community wants to be in the future – in 5, 10 or even 20 years' time. It is about how to improve the quality of life and the general welfare of all the people who live in the community now and those who might live there in the future. It is the Guiding Star that gives the common direction for community members when changing their lives for the better.

To be successful, the vision requires the dynamic leadership and commitment of the Mayor and the councillors and the enthusiastic support from the whole community. The vision should be informed and supported by the evidence from the community profile and should be generated through open discussions and consultations involving, in different ways, as many people, groups and institutions as possible including those from vulnerable groups and women

The visioning process has many benefits:

- Generates better communication and helps building consensus within the community by organizing collective thought and action
- Creates a sense of ownership by giving people the opportunity to dream and express what they really want
- Supports innovation and creativity by focusing peoples' minds on the desired future and not on the ways to getting there
- Prepares ground for implementation, as participants will like to see their vision become true over a period of years

Visioning engages peoples' analytical skills, as well as their feelings and intuition, by using different ways to portray the possible future. A Vision statement should include big thoughts in carefully chosen, inspiring words.

Example: Developing a Common Vision for Horezu

Participants in the Planning Conference developed a vision for Horezu through drawings. During presentations the facilitators captured key words, and then put their vision into a text during lunch break, together with the core planning team members. They presented it after lunch in a plenary session, and modified it on the spot, based on participants' comments. This is the result:

Vision Statement for Horezu

Our vision is that Horezu, our city, is a dynamic city, accessible to all those interested. Horezu plays an increasing role in its micro-region due to the high quality services it provides.

*Through a balanced use of its resources, Horezu has gained national recognition and is known internationally for: **ecotourism and cultural tourism, crafts and non-polluting industry, ecological agriculture and continuous education**. The spiritual and religious historical prestige as well as the beauty of its mountains attracts tourists, as do local natural products. Producing pottery and honey,*

animal breeding are traditional occupations practiced with modern technologies, these knowledge and skills being also subject of know-how transfer.

Horezu is an open community, harmoniously united, vibrant in which people learn and are able to help others learn. Already a successful registered trade mark, Hurezi rooster's song of shining victory is heard everywhere.

Defining Objectives

The *Objective* describes also a desired future, but closer in time and not as complex as the Vision. Objectives can be defined in two ways:

- **Starting from Problem or Opportunity definition:** by turning the problem (negative statement) into a positive one, describing the desired situation when the problem was solved, the obstacle was removed or the opportunity was met.
- **Starting from Vision:** by identifying specific parts of the Vision and making a more detailed description of these, as desired steps to be achieved on the way toward the Vision.

Depending on the time frame, the objectives can be *strategic*(long term) or more *specific* program/project objectives (medium or short term); all are descriptions of the desired future, but the objectives that are closer in time are more concrete and clear and as far as possible, their statements should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable (or Agreed by all those interested or affected)
- Relevant (or Realistic)
- Time bounded

Strategic Objectives should cover all three main development areas: economy, society and environment. They should include the idea that, if achieved, the results will impact positively on the other two areas, or at least it will not harm their development and they should include the need to address discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for those groups who the community profile shows are disadvantaged

Example: Integrated Strategic Objectives of Horezu Strategic Plan

- **Tourism:** Develop tourism, which makes effective and sustainable use of Horezu's natural and cultural resources and offers jobs locally
- **Associations:** Establish associative structures that can support local partnerships for the benefit of the whole community
- **Agriculture, Industry, Crafts:** Increase value added in the areas of agriculture, forestry, crafts and small industry, using in a sustainable way the natural resources and having positive social impact
- **Local Government:** Increase capacity of the local government to take a leading and proactive role in local socio-economic development of the whole community

How the Strategic Objectives are defined and which of them are included in the strategic plan depends on who is included in their elaboration process. Civic groups tend to define more objectives related to good governance, citizens' involvement or vulnerable groups' rights. Business groups tend to define more objectives related to economic development aspects. Environmental groups tend to define more objectives related to the environment protection. Women in particular are often excluded from formal and informal decision making forums and therefore their perspective are not heard and their needs not addressed. This is why it is important to include women and men from all groups within a community in the planning process. If all views are represented the result will be more balanced and integrated objectives, addressing all three development areas - economy, society and environment, including all interests and addressing inequality

Deciding Priorities

To be strategic means to decide on priorities. It is a painful and difficult process to decide what the priority ones are among many needs, desires and possible solutions, based on a clear and honest appraisal of what resources are available – both financial and human.

Those involved in the planning process have to be strategic and decide on priorities in all the stages, starting with selecting the most relevant members of the core planning team, continuing with deciding on who are the main stakeholders to be involved and who are the most vulnerable groups which should be supported to participate and how women's voices can be heard

When selecting what objectives should be achieved as a priority, the planning team may take into consideration different criteria, such as:

- Picking the low hanging fruits: selecting those objectives that can be achieved in short time and with limited resources; having quick successes in improving people's lives is crucial for sustaining their long term energy and commitment
- Selecting those objectives that have a positive impact on the biggest number of people
- Selecting those that will have a positive impact on the poorest or those who suffer most discrimination and disadvantage
- Selecting those objectives that address critical/urgent problems, those that if not achieved would put in danger people's health or security, such as providing access to clean water
- Selecting those objectives which, if achieved, will have a positive impact (snow ball effect) on other objectives achievement
- Selecting those objectives that are also in the national or EU development plans, because in that way alternative resources may be available or on the contrary, selecting those objectives that can be achieved with local resources

Inevitably the priority objectives will not include all groups' wishes for a better future. What is crucial is that an agreement is reached by consensus about what should be the criteria for prioritization/selection and that all groups, especially those who have been supported and empowered to take part in the process, feel that there has been a fair consideration of their issues/wishes and that they were able to play a full part in the decision making process.

Once a draft list of priority objectives has been agreed, it should be widely publicised and discussed along with the evidence for why they have been selected as priorities.

Care should be taken to ensure that those with a financial or other direct personal interest in a particular objective are not part of the decision making process. So for example if a member of the council has a relative who owns a property which would benefit from a scheme to improve the road to that house the council member should not take part in any decision on that matter.

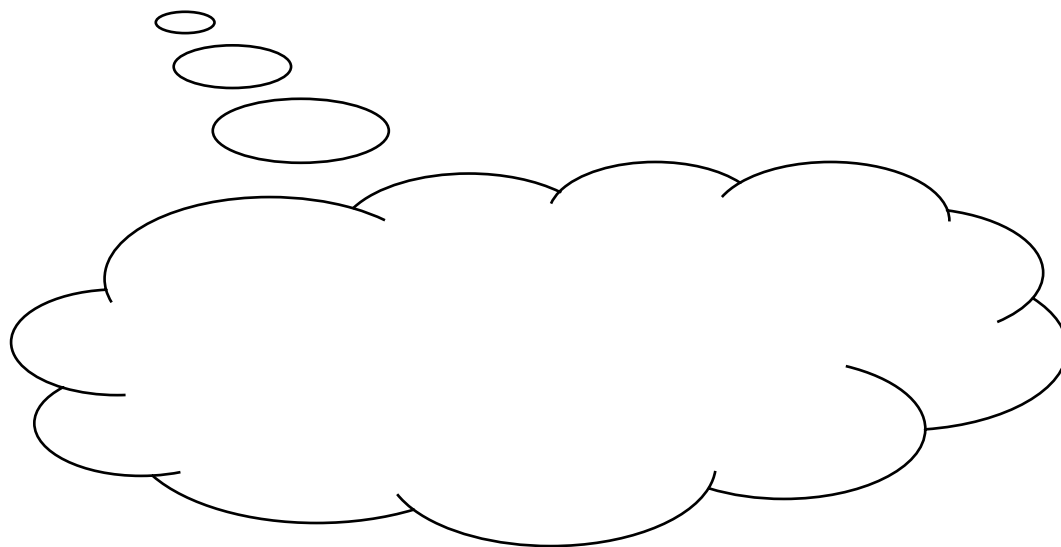
Following discussion all the relevant stakeholders who will be required to put in resources, human or financial, should formally agree that these are the priorities and commit res

Tool to define a Vision

In a big group of diverse stakeholders you can help them elaborate a Vision for their community, by asking them to close their eyes and imagine they are walking through the city 5-10 years from now.

- What do they see?
- How does the city differ from what it was ten years ago?
- What are people doing and how do they look?
- What positive changes have occurred?
- What opportunities did they take advantage from?

After this, ask them make a drawing in some teams, of what they saw during their imaginary walk!



When teams present their drawing, those who conduct the meeting (having facilitator's roles) register the key words of each presentation. A smaller team of volunteers from the group take these words and formulate statements, elaborating a written Vision, to be presented for the group feedback. The statement is finalized after inclusion of everybody's feedback.

You need to make sure that everyone is able to contribute and that everyone's views are treated with respect and consideration. You may consider have a separate group of women to see if their Vision is different from that envisaged by men and then discuss why that might be and how these different ideas can be included.

A Vision statement can be shorter or longer, depending of what you need. Short Visions are in the form of slogans, few words and/or images that people can easily remember; long Visions are texts that inspire.

Stage 4: Identifying the Solutions

Objective

In this stage of the strategic planning process you will identify how the Vision and the agreed priority objectives will be made a reality and this is done by identifying the solutions/strategies to make you progress from where you are to where you want to be.

What needs to be done?

The LPA needs to play a leading role at this stage in order to make sure that the work which has gone into developing the vision and the priority objectives is not lost and that the community can see that there is real progress towards achieving what they have identified as the key areas to address.

This means identifying for each priority objective the strategies to achieve it. In order to identify them you can go through the following steps:

Identifying what might help you and hinder you from achieving your objectives

You have to go back to the Community Profile and the problems and opportunities on which all involved in the planning process agreed when diagnosing the existing situation and select among them, what are the problems that may hinder and what are the opportunities that may help you achieve the respective objective. It is possible that you need to collect more detailed information in order to implement this step.

You can use the following table to organize ideas:

%	+ Opportunities	- Problems/Obstacles	%
	→	←	
	→	←	
	→	←	
	→	←	
100%			100%

After ideas are listed, you may identify the most important and effective ones – the 20% that have 80% impact on achieving your objective, in a negative or positive way. You can assign different percentages to the different ideas (from a total of 100%) in order to differentiate the impact.

Here is an example of how the participants in the Strategic Planning Conference in Horezu identified the problems that hindered and the opportunities that helped them achieve the strategic objectives.

Example: problems and opportunities in achieving strategic objectives in Horezu

TOURISM

Develop tourism, which makes effective and sustainable use of Horezu's natural and cultural resources and offers jobs locally

PROBLEMS	OPPORTUNITIES
Insufficient tourist services and only partially of good quality	Horezu is well positioned in an attractive region: environment, culture and history.
Insufficient training of the staff working in tourism services (client relations, cleaning, marketing)	Existence of well-known cultural events (annual fair of pottery) and tourists are coming to Horezu
Unattractive urban image, especially the city center	Existence of special programs of the Ministry of Tourism
Lack of cooperation with other neighboring touristic attractions	Potential of creating national parks or protected areas

ASSOCIATIONS

Establish associative structures that can support local partnerships for the benefit of the whole community

PROBLEMS	OPPORTUNITIES
Low number of associations due to the lack of associative culture, lack of trust among community members and poor communication	Schools' / Children's club has positive experience in programs of cleaning the city and other civic initiatives
Lack of civic spirit / conservative mentality, reticence to new ways, resignation	Existing local government's initiatives within schools
No sport clubs	Students in architecture could work on plans for improving the quality of city center
Lack of central public spaces for meetings and gatherings, spaces for cultural events	Existing social events which gather people in the city

AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, CRAFTS

Increase value added in the areas of agriculture, forestry, crafts and small industry, using in a sustainable way the natural resources and having positive social impact

PROBLEMS	OPPORTUNITIES
Lack of collection and processing facilities for products (milk, meat, mushrooms, fruits)	Existence of some production spaces and food products local specialties
Low productivity of animal breeds	Existence of trade fairs for traditional products in Romania and abroad
Old and low productivity orchards	Forests as economic resource of raw material for small industry and traditional crafts
Pastures of low quality, poorly maintained	Bee-breeding as a profession with an established tradition, with advanced technology and expertise and well-established markets
Difficult access to credit for agriculture	Legislation which encourages formation of associations of farmers and agriculture workers
Loss of traditional markets	Diverse and valuable crafts tradition
Lack of knowledge and modern technologies and current use of old technologies	Existence of training programs, vocational education and consulting services
	Work force qualified for food industry

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Increase capacity of the local government to take a leading and proactive role in local economic development

PROBLEMS	OPPORTUNITIES
Poor enforcement of existing legislation related to protection of environment and historical heritage and city cleaning	The territorial role of the city (offering administrative services for the micro-region – like education, justice, health)
Poor quality of roads (poor quality of streets and roads maintenance makes some of them basically not fit for public use)	Existence of land available in municipal property, well equipped with infrastructure (electricity, water)
Old water supply system	Existence of under-used buildings (e.g. House of Culture) which can host development activities (e.g.. Information center)
Incomplete sewage system	Production facilities available, not used
Lack of information related to funding programs	Existence of governmental programs for modernizing infrastructure
Lack of internet access	Existence of national and international capacity building programs for local governments and public services
Limited capacity to design and implement projects	Local government is open to change and improve
Lack of transparency in the activity of local government	
Limited financial resources	
Poor quality of cleaning and waste management services	
Lack of information for citizens, investors, companies	
Insufficient cooperation with local governments in neighboring communities	
The rural features of the community	
Inadequate office space for city hall	
Lack of jobs for youth	

You may do this analysis in a more sophisticated way, using an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses inside the community and the opportunities and threats that come from outside (SWOT analysis), in this case your table will look as follows:

Internal Environment

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

External Environment

It is important that as many stakeholders as possible from the community including representatives of vulnerable groups and women as well as men take part in this analysis so that they share the information about issues and what is possible but also contribute to developing the solutions. In this way the resources of the whole community are used.

Identify solutions/strategies

We define strategies as a set of activities/actions that will help you achieve your objective. So, in this step you and your team may answer the following questions:

- How can we limit or solve the problems, in order to achieve the objective?
- How can we use the opportunities in order to achieve the objective?

For example, here is again Horezu example on the strategies which were identified by using the opportunities and overcoming the problems, in order to achieve the objective linked with improving Local Government capacity:

Example: Strategies identified in Horezu to achieve the objective LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Increase capacity of the local government to take a leading and proactive role in local economic development

1. Short and medium term program to improve quality of roads. Promotion and lobbying activities for this program with county and national authorities.
2. Sanitation program to ensure compliance with EU environmental standards using a participatory approach
3. Program to improve quality of public services and utilities.
4. Program of urban cadastre
5. Continuous development of human resources in local government
6. Urban planning program through strategic partnership between local government, private sector and civil society
7. Project to promote youth participation in the local economic development in partnership with schools
8. Establishment of an information centre for citizens, companies and self-employed, tourists within existing office spaces and internet based with support from House of Culture
9. Project of economic promotion in partnership between local government and business sector that focuses on offering employment to disadvantaged groups members
10. Using larger scale public events to promote the city, its government and its businesses
11. Recruitment by the city hall of staff well qualified in communications, internet and websites management, projects management with external funding, urban planning

If you chose to use the SWOT analysis that the questions to ask are:

- **S-O Strategies:** How can we use Strengths to meet Opportunities?
- **W-O Strategies:** How can we use Opportunities to overcome Weaknesses?
- **S-T Strategies:** How can we use Strengths to avoid Threats?
- **W-T Strategies:** How can we minimize/overcome Weaknesses and reduce vulnerability to Threats?

You can use this table to list them:

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	S-O Strategies	W-O Strategies
Threats	S-T Strategies	W-T Strategies

In this step use all your creative thinking and generate as many ideas as possible. Register all ideas and do not judge them. Only after all ideas are listed, look at them and select the most important and effective. Criteria for selection may include:

- Strategies which implementation are under your control
- Strategies that have the commitment, support or acceptance of the key stakeholders (forget about those that nobody want to take the responsibility to implement them)

- Strategies that do not need too many resources to be implemented, having results in short term (do not forget that picking the low hanging fruits is an effective way of keeping people's trust and support for the planning process)
- Strategies that on the first glance are realistic and achievable

Structure solutions/strategies in programmes and projects

The strategies may be very different, some of them ideas that can be implemented in short term, others more complex ones to be implemented in long term. It is useful to pack them into programmes (longer term and complex strategies) and for each programme, to identify projects (short-medium term and more concrete strategies).

In that way you will be able to develop clear action plans for their implementation including who is responsible, with whom he/she will work, what is the period of implementation, what other resources are needed, what are the indicators of success.

Stage 5: Implementation

Objective

This main objective of this stage is to assure that what you planned and committed to happen becomes reality and people see clear positive impacts on the way they live, work and socialize. In this stage you will assure the smooth implementation of the planned programs, projects and activities.

What needs to be done?

Organizing the implementation and assuring the necessary resources

The implementation of the programs and projects included in your Strategic Plan will not happen just because they are written on a nice piece of paper and they were approved by the Local Council. First of all somebody, an organization (your local government or other institutions or groups from your community) should take the responsibility for their implementation. For the sake of clarity we will call these people *program or project managers*, even if they have other responsibilities in the organizations they work for. We would expect that the mayor would take a leading role in this group. Their main tasks are those of a manager: plan, organize and coordinate teamwork, monitor and evaluate activities implementation and use of resources (especially financial resources).

The first step they have to do is to come together with the program/project stakeholders and elaborate an implementation action-plan, a work-plan, in which there will be listed the activities/actions, their period of completion, what resources are allocated for this purpose, who is responsible for their implementation, with whom they will work, what are the expected results and the indicators of success.

Sometimes those responsible have first to identify and acquire the necessary financial resources, before planning in detail the actions to be taken, for example they have to write project proposals to apply to different international funding agencies or they have to plan the local government budget accordingly or to search for other sources of finance.

The implementation action-plan needs to be realistic, deliverable and transparent and take account the needs of vulnerable groups and women and men.

To do this the following has to be in place:

- The commitment, support or acceptance of the key stakeholders including the people and organisations in the community who have contributed to developing the Vision as well as the local council itself and other key local and national bodies
- Access to specific resources: human, material, financial and technical
- An assessment of the impacts on vulnerable groups and women and men of the various actions to show that they do not discriminate either intentionally or unintentionally and promote empowerment and equality of opportunity
- Clearly defined responsibilities for each action
- Time Schedule including the duration and correlation with other programmes, projects and activities.

Identify clear outputs and outcomes for your programs/projects

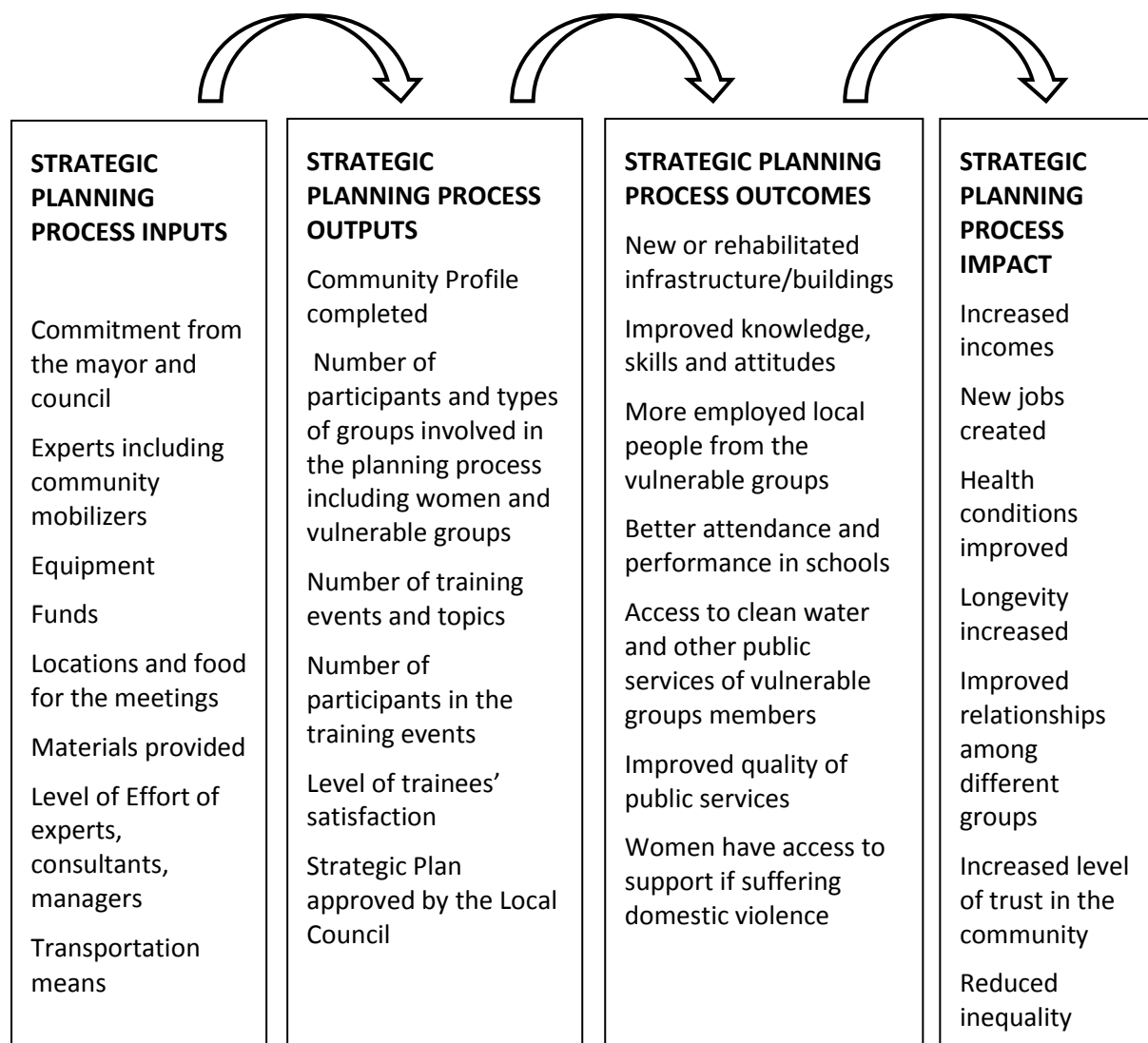
The programs/projects objectives are the expression of the desired situations to be achieved in the future and so, should include in their statements the planned results, as follows:⁸

- **Outputs:** the direct results that are planned to emerge from processing the inputs through the respective programs/projects

⁸ Specific objectives include outputs, strategic objectives include outcomes or impact

- **Outcomes:** the planned changes/improvements due to the achievement of outputs
- **Impact:** the longer term changes/improvements due to the achievement of outcomes

Outputs, outcomes and impact are linked in a logical chain of planned results/changes as shown in the following example of a scheme, applied to the strategic planning process:⁹



You can demonstrate that certain inputs are responsible for achieving certain outputs – for example if the inputs are skilled trainers, a good training design, user-friendly training materials than you can demonstrate that the planned outputs, be they the number of participants or their high level of satisfaction, are the direct results of processing these inputs.

It is possible also to demonstrate that certain outputs result in the planned outcomes, for example you may be able to demonstrate that the training events resulted in participants' improved knowledge and skills; but it is very difficult to demonstrate that the impact is due only to the programs or projects outcomes, because other external factors may contribute to it – for example improved health conditions may be the result of accessing clean water but may be also the result of other activities, such as improved housing conditions or better and more healthy food.

Participation and Involvement

⁹Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, UNDP Evaluation Office 2002

Those involved in the planning process should participate in the selection of both output and outcome indicators. Participation tends to promote ownership of, and responsibility for, the planned results and agreement on their achievement it also improves transparency and good governance if citizens are able to hold local government and others to account for the delivery of the planned improvements. Balanced and representative participation of community members is also a good strategy to avoid conflicts escalation among different community groups.

It is important also that all groups are involved in discussing ways they can contribute to the implementation, in this way the plan becomes something which is owned by the whole community and not something which is just done to them. As in all the other stages, consideration needs to be given to identifying the impact of the various proposed actions on the needs of the most vulnerable and also specifically on how they will impact on women to ensure that there is no unintentional adverse effects and that positive impacts are promoted. You can use the Equality Impact Assessment Tool provided in stage 2 – Understanding the present, for this purpose. The role of the mayor is key in making sure that no programme or project is agreed or resources are released unless the impacts on women and vulnerable groups have been assessed, any adverse impacts addressed and that the opportunity for positive impacts is taken.

Example: Strategies to improve the physical environment in Shijak, Albania

One of the objectives identified by the town of Shijak in Albania was to improve the physical environment of the town in order to support local businesses and increase the number of visitors.

A programme of work was identified to take this forward. The main square was identified as a key place which everyone in the town could use and which would improve peoples' feelings of belonging to the community. Three specific projects were identified following consultation:

1. Improving the surface of the square part of which was paved and part was earth, which became very muddy when it rained
2. Improving the lighting
3. Putting on events in the square

Consideration was given to the possibility of making sure that these projects met the needs of vulnerable groups in the town so:

- The surface of the square was agreed after discussion with disabled and elderly people including having different coloured stones at the edges of the roads so that people whose sight was not good could see where the road started.
- The need for improved lighting had been raised in consultation with women in the town who did not feel safe walking through the square at night and they were asked to advise on where the lighting should be positioned to make the square feel safer for them.
- Young people were asked to put on events which would bring together different people in the town and as a result they were asked to put on events for other towns and have made this a business.
- The businesses in the square increased their trade and employed more people and a local market was established which allowed local people to sell their goods.

Taking into account the needs of different groups did not add to the cost of the projects but greatly improved the outcome for everyone in the town.

Stage 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Objectives

The objectives of this stage are to ensure that progress is being made on delivering the action plan and that it is leading to the results that were agreed. This will ensure that there is accountability of those delivering the plan to the community and increase trust in local governance.

Effective evaluation will ensure that lessons are learnt, best practice built on and as a result better decisions will be made in the future.

What needs to be done?

Monitoring and evaluation can take place only if the programs/projects have clear inputs and clear objectives/planned results that can be measured, quantitatively (in numbers) or qualitatively (by how people feel for example). You need to establish the indicators of success, by answering the questions: *How do we know if we have achieved the respective output, outcome or planned impact?*

An outcome indicator has two components: a baseline and a target. The baseline is the situation before a program/project begins; it is the starting point for results monitoring. The target is what the situation is expected to be at the end of a program/project. For example if the objective is to improve the education of children from poor families the baseline is the number who attended school regularly against the number in the community at the start of the process say 40%, the target is to increase the percentage who attend to 50% in year one 70% in year two and 100% by year 3. Output indicators rarely require a baseline since outputs are being newly produced and the baseline is that they do not exist. For example if the objective is to provide a safe house for women suffering domestic violence were none exist at present then the output is that the safe house has been provided. The Community Profile can include these baseline indicators when describing the existing situation.

In order to establish a monitoring and evaluation plan you need to answer further some questions, such as: *What data should we collect? How often we have to collect them? Who will collect them? How much it will cost to collect them?*

It is advisable that you have 1-3 relevant indicators of success/outcome or output, which are clear, easy to collect and interpret. Too many indicators are counterproductive. You should seek to find a good balance between *what should be* and *what can be* measured.

You can choose among the following different monitoring and evaluation tools for collecting and interpreting data, as appropriate for your specific situation:

- Analysing reports (progress, final) and other project documents (work-plans, financial management/budgets, etc.) It could include an analysis of where budgets and resources have been used to ensure that there has been a fair distribution.
- Observing activities implementation through field visits
- Collecting stakeholders and beneficiaries feedback through surveys, interviews, focus-groups or steering committees meetings

We have the following practical advice for you to follow in this stage:

- Regular reports need to be made to the community in particular to those groups who were involved in the process of identifying the needs and priorities on progress, but not limited to them
- Any problems which have arisen should be explained and new timetables or revised plans agreed
- Learn from what works and what doesn't – e.g. women from a rural area were invited to be on a planning group looking at local infrastructure planning, the discussions were technical and often very boring so the women stopped coming. In the future it was agreed to work

with them to identify their issues and feed these into the discussions and make sure that they were addressed and feedback to the women on progress.

- A mechanism needs to be in place so that any issues relating to the implementation of the plan are discussed to avoid difficulties including consideration of the needs of particular groups. E.g. work to improve the sewage system in the area meant that the water supply had to be disrupted for a few days. Notices were put up but many people in the area couldn't read therefore had no knowledge that the water was not available and had no one to contact
- Continue to consult and involve people to make sure that the priorities are still the correct ones or if circumstances change, for example if resources are reduced or become available or if new problems arise.
- Celebrate success by making sure that the hard work everyone has put into the process is recognised and that everyone knows what has been achieved. Not only will this mean that the community is stronger but that more people may be encouraged to participate in other consultation and discussions about issues concerning the community in future.

GLOSSARY OF MAIN CONCEPTS

This Guide is about local socio-economic development through participatory planning incorporating a Human Rights and Gender Equality based approach. In order to build a common understanding on the main concepts used in this Guide, we will define the following of them in this Glossary:

- Development
- Local
- Local Development
- Community Development
- Empowerment
- Social Development
- Economic Development
- Gender Equality (GE)
- Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to development

Development

Development is a *processthat* makes something better than it was. But not always developmenttakes place through growth. We all grow as children, but after reaching a certain age we stopgrowing. However we don't stop developing just because we have stopped growing.Wecontinue todevelop by changing and improving.

The change process happens even if we want it or not. And changes can occur also unexpectedly,can be unplanned, unintended and in less fortunate situations, unmanageable. Changes can havenegative effects. The key issue in development is that we should stay in control of the change process so that weare able to:

- plan and implement positive and manageable changes
- anticipate and minimize the negative effects of the expected or unexpected, unintended changes

Local

The council is being asked to produce a development plan for the „local” territory over which it has jurisdiction so local in this case is defined by the administrative boundaries. However when studying the local area different aspects (economic, cultural, social or environmental) the „local” territory that will be taken into account may not overlap with the administrative boundaries.

- *Economic and market boundaries*are definedby the economic exchanges and links between suppliers and producers (small towns are under the economic influence of big neighboring cities or market towns influence over a number of smaller neighboring villages)
- *Natural boundaries*are definedby similar natural features and natural borders (rivers, mountains, hills) with other neighbouring territories
- *Cultural boundaries*aredefinedby similar values/believes, traditions and cultural identity

Based on these criteria, the local council, especialy if the comunity is small and the resources are scarce, may decide to join other neighboring communities, in order to elaborate a common socio-economic development plan, and expand in that way the meaning of „local” territory on which this plan is focusing, including more jurisdictions with similar challenges and potential.

Local Development

Local Development is *the Process* that aims to *identify, mobilize and integrate Local Resources* (often undervalued and underused) in order to make a positive change that is economically vibrant, socially just, environmentally sound and politically accountable.

Using a Human Rights and gender equality based approach means using the skills, creativity, ideas and energy of women as well as men and of the vulnerable groups which have often been left out of the process so that the whole community can benefit.

During the last decade, *Local Development* has been increasingly the focus of public policies at different levels, European Union, national or local (regional, municipal), being seen as an alternative to the *top-down* approach to development.

Community Development

Development of the community does not have the physical, service and economic infrastructure as its major focus. Rather, it seeks to uncover and expand the knowledge and skills of people in the community. The belief is that community-wide improvements (be they physical, service or economic, infrastructure) cannot be fully realized unless people representing all parts of the community are involved in deciding the future of their community. So, the emphasis is on finding the talents that exist in the community – not just from those who are most active and involved already but from all sections of the community and locating people with the potential to be community leaders. Building on the skills that people already have serves as the best foundation for dealing with the variety of concerns that exist in the community.

Community development activities share three important characteristics:

- **Asset-based:** Community development efforts begin by developing an understanding of what exists in the community right now in the social area — the abilities of local residents, associations, and institutions. It does not begin by focusing on what is wrong with the community or what may be missing.
- **Internally - focused:** Strategic planning or priority setting focuses on assets found within the community and does not rely upon the advice of outside experts or consultants.
- **Teamwork:** Local people, informal and formal organizations and institutions work hard to connect with one another in order to be sure they are working as a team, and not against one another.

Community development is based on the genuine belief that:

- Every person has talents, skills, and gifts important to a community, even if they belong to the majority or minority, vulnerable or powerful groups
- Each time individuals use their abilities, the community in which they live is strengthened and these people feel a sense of empowerment
- Strong communities are places where the capacities of all local individuals are identified, valued and used.

The development of the community is built upon the talents and resources of its members and is what makes the local development plans become reality and be sustained in time.

Empowerment

Empowerment is the starting point for local development and its core element along with the local governance and local service provision. Empowerment is the process of enhancing the real possibility that an individual or a group, especially those frequently marginalized, socially excluded and discriminated, can make and express choices, and transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes. Individuals, households, and communities need both *opportunity* for meaningful decisions and actions and *capacity* to make meaningful choices and act on them or express them through institutions open to their voice in order to be truly empowered¹⁰.

¹⁰Linking Community Empowerment, Decentralized Governance, and Public Service Provision Through a Local Development Framework, Louis Helling, Rodrigo Serrano, David Warren, September 2005

Empowerment implies *a special emphasis on redressing inequities* in voice, choice, and access across all segments of the local population. Opportunities may not be equally available to all. Differences in income, social status, gender, belonging to a particular ethnic or religious group and other vulnerability factors may give some people less opportunity than others for voice and choice related to improving the quality of their lives. Special rules, measures and processes are needed to increase the opportunities available to all groups, especially vulnerable, to participate effectively in local affairs.

The local development impacts resulting from empowerment:

- people and communities, especially those frequently marginalized, socially excluded and discriminated, have the opportunity and the capability to participate effectively in social, economic and political spheres at the local level
- local governance and local service provision include improvements in people's welfare, their social and economic status
- human capital is accumulated by increasing the health and education status of individuals
- social capital is accumulated by social inclusion and increasing the capacity for collective action by local residents and organizations
- Economic capital accumulates through increased capacity for employment and investment by individuals.

Community empowerment is both a means and an end to local development: empowered people are both better endowed with the resources that enable them to satisfy their needs and better able to participate in the governance and local development as a whole through which they can continue to improve their lives¹¹.

Social Development

Social development is determined by the level of *social capital*, a concept that describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit, a higher level of social development.

The central thesis of the social capital theory is that "relationships matter". The central idea is that „social networks are a valuable assets". Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

Actually researches have proven that higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes, and lower crime rates. In other words, those with extensive networks are more likely to be "housed, healthy, hired and happy".

Measuring the level of social capital in communities can be complex. It can be done through surveys with a range of questions focusing on measuring:

- *The levels of trust* - for example, in what measure individuals trust their neighbours and in what measure they consider their neighbourhood a place where people help each other
- *Memberships* - for example, to how many clubs, societies or social groups individuals belong
- *Networks* and how much social contact individuals have in their lives - for example, how often individuals see family and friends.

Formal and informal networks are central to the concept of social capital. They are defined as the personal relationships which are accumulated when people interact with each other in families,

¹¹ Guide Human Rights Based Approach and Gender Equality in Local Development and Decentralization, JILD 2010

workplaces, neighbourhoods, local associations and a range of informal and formal meeting places. Different types of social capital can be described in terms of different types of networks:

- *Bonding social capital (exclusive)* – describes close connections between people and is characterized by strong bonds e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic group
- *Bridging social capital (inclusive)* – describes more distant connections between people and is characterized by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends
- *Linking social capital* – describes connections with people in positions of power and is characterized by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power; it is good for accessing support from formal institutions. It is different from bonding and bridging in that it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing

It is important to note that there are situations when the experience of living in close knit communities (having high level of bonding social capital) can be difficult for those who feel or are considered to be “different”. In these cases some groups can ignore, exclude or subordinate the other groups (having low level bridging capital). So efforts toward social development should focus on improving relationships and understanding between these groups (by increasing the bridging and linking social capital).

Economic Development

Local Economic Development is a *process* in which local people from all sectors work together to stimulate local economic activities, resulting in a resilient and sustainable economy with decent jobs and improved quality of life for everyone, including the poor and marginalized.

Through the LED process underused local resources are mobilized and social capital strengthened, in order to achieve the vision, goals and objectives towards which the whole community aspires. This may be possible only when the various stakeholders join forces and that is why we strongly promote that the Local Economic Development process:

- Involves public, private and civil society sectors representatives and encourages the establishment of partnerships, in order to identify local priorities and solutions to the economic challenges
- Builds the capacity of local actors to proactively respond to changes
- Aims at improving all inhabitants quality of life, including the vulnerable groups
- Takes into account not only the local territory strengths and weaknesses but the external opportunities and threats determined by national policies, territorial economic trends, economic inter-linkages and communications between areas, impacts of globalisation

Many economic theories are elaborated through analyzing concrete successful economic situations and generalizing the lessons learned in order to be used and applied elsewhere. Reality is always more than one theory, but theories help us understand various key aspects of the complex reality.

A social discipline such as economics deals with the behavior of people and human institutions, which are subject to continuous change. That is one of the reasons why some theories, which are valid today, may become invalid tomorrow. With these reserves, we will present shortly the following conceptual frames of thinking that could help you identify your desired economic future and what you have to do, as decision and policy makers, to achieve it:

- **Adding Value to Local Resources**
- **Export Base Theory**
- **Competitive Advantage Theory**
- **Economic Development Drivers**

Adding Value to Local Resources

It is obvious that it is far more advantageous for a local territory, instead of exporting its local resources at a cheap price, as raw materials, to add value by transforming them into local products that are sold at a higher price. Not only the influx of money is increasing, but also the number of local jobs as well as the level and sophistication of necessary working skills. When elaborating your own LED plan you may want to know that adding value to local resources involves:

- **Identifying valuable local resources** not only among the most obvious natural resources, but also among the human and social resources that determine local traditions and culture
- **Creating valuable local products** based on local resources, by observing the following four factors
 - *Typicality*: the level of authenticity that reflects the local/regional identities, character and culture
 - *Originality*: the level of creativity used in the product design, form or function
 - *Eco-sustainability*: the level the environment sustainability is taken into account in the local product processing and distribution
 - *Quality*: the level of materials or production methods purity and integrity
- **Identifying and facilitating the access of these local products to wider markets** via collective initiatives, such as common branding, processing, marketing and/or distribution activities

Not surprisingly many local economic development initiatives have been successful by focusing on local food products: the need for food is sustainable and valuable local food products can easier find outside markets or attract outside clients into the local territory.

Export Base Theory¹²

The Export Base Theory will help you identify your local economic activities and understand in what measure they are and should:

- Bring-in money into your local area
- Re-circulate this money
- Limit the money leakages outside your local area

The export base theory considers that a local economy has two types of economic activities: basic and service (non-basic), determined by the geographic definition of the “local”.

Basic Economic Activities

These are the activities that produce locally and export goods and services through selling them in markets located outside the local area or through attracting outside buyers inside the local area. The basic economic activities attract outside money into the local economy, providing jobs and income for local residents. Examples of basic economic activities are:

- Public services provided to a larger area than the defined local area: health, education, courts, consulting, waste management, etc.
- Local Government Agencies or citizens activities bringing money from outside sources into the local area
- Agriculture, fishery, forestry, mining, manufacturing, animal breeding businesses, selling products to outside markets
- Other businesses activities, producing locally and selling to outside buyers goods and services related to: vacation/business travels, banking and finance, real estate and consulting, health, notaries and lawyers, etc.

¹² Public Policy Education Program, Module Four: Understanding the Local Economy, by David Mulkey, University of Florida, February 2000

Service Economic Activities

Service economic activities could be any of the basic activities mentioned above, if their products and services are sold in the local market. They re-circulate the money locally, creating jobs and income, multiplying basic activities effect and preventing the money “leakages” outside the local economy. Leakages can take the form of:

- Savings in non-local institutions
- Money investments in outside ventures
- Taxes and fees paid at higher levels of government
- Businesses’ profits that go to non-local shareholders
- Payments for imported goods and services from outside the local area

Based on the Export Base Theory, LED plans should include strategies that:

- Attract and develop basic economic activities in the local area to bring-in new money that create jobs and income for local residents
- Develop service (non-basic) economic activities to multiply the new money effects by re-circulating it locally and preventing the „leakages”

Competitive Advantage Theory¹³

Michael Porter’s Competitive Advantage Theory will help you understand how to achieve succesful economic situations by building and using the local *competitive advantage* instead of relying only on the local *comparative advantage*.

The territorycomparative advantage is determined by factors, which in general, are inherited and difficult to be changed:

- Land
- Location
- Natural Resources
- Labor & Local population

The territorycompetitive advantage over other places is determined by the power of *economic clusters* -geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, suppliers, service providers and associated institutions - which resources, knowledge and skills, give them a key position even the world supremacy, in their field of economic activity.

Some well known examples of succesful *economic clusters* with powerful competitive advantage are:

- USA/Silicon Valley – computers industry
- India/Bangalore – software outsourcing
- France/Paris – fashion industry
- USA/Hollywood – movies industry

Based on the Porter’s Theory of Competitive Advantage, (central and local) Governments have a crucial role in supporting the Local Economic Development. They should promote strategies which, instead of relying on traditional comparative advantages such as natural resources and pools of cheap labor, are stimulating:

- *Competition* in order to encourage, even push, companies to raise their aspirations and performances, by reallocating resources away from the inefficient declining economic sectors toward more efficient companies and growing sectors
- *Regional economic development strategies* that can help avoid potentially negative internal competition between closely related businesses. A regional strategy can identify how complimentary industries can take advantage of their proximity to one another. Such

¹³ Michael Porter, The competitive Advantages of Nations, 1998

planning will help provide the required capacity for different organizations to work together effectively.

- *Diversification* is also useful, and can be achieved by producing in a cluster different or complementary products or services. Diversification will help prevent the cluster from becoming overspecialized, and hence over sensitive to minor economic fluctuations and national/international competition. At the same time, it is important to maintain a cluster's general specialization.
- *Demand* for advanced and high quality products, by supporting innovation, educating and defending customers rights
- *Cooperation* between related industries and private, public and civil society organizations belonging to a certain territory, in order to form viable economic clusters. Many successful clusters have developed naturally over time in response to historic and market conditions, but others have been encouraged to grow through favorable government policies and support, such as tax regulations and incentives, zoning regulations and other location advantages.
- *Creation* of key factors such as skilled labor, capital and infrastructure by public investments

Economic Development Drivers Theory

This theory will help you understand and identify the existing and necessary levels of your local economy drivers: High Labor Skills, Investments, Innovations, Entrepreneurship.

High Labor Skills

High Labor Skills are economic drivers because:

- Today an increasing number of jobs require them
- Higher skilled workers are able to adapt, introduce and operate advanced production techniques and innovations
- Diverse and specialized skills are prerequisite to innovations
- Where pools of skilled labor are available, there are greater opportunities for businesses development and investments

Investments

Investments are crucial economic drivers and they are made by both, private and public sectors.

Public investments should be equitable and targeted to support not only economic, but also environmental and social development.

Private investments are often called Foreign Direct Investments – FDI, which stimulate the development of new infrastructures or technologies. They are beneficial for the local areas *only* when:

- The profit “spills over” into host communities and businesses
- The new technologies do not have a negative effect on local competitors, especially on smaller businesses

When locating a business, investors often seek the following:

- A stable macro-economic, political and regulatory environment
- Open competition and access to markets
- Readily available sites
- Appropriate, available and reliable utilities and transportation systems
- Skilled labor
- Local suppliers and resources
- Appropriate education, training and research facilities
- A good quality of life: clean environment, access to culture and education
- Manageable regulation and taxation systems

Innovations

Innovations are a crucial source of economic development, by the creation of new products or the design of new production processes. Public and private sectors support innovations by investing in research and development activities.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the ability to create new enterprises having positive influence through the increase of jobs, incomes, fiscal revenues and service economic activities, which recirculate the income and decrease the leakages.

Based on this theory, LED plans should include strategies that focus on:

- Making equitable and sustainable public investments, which take into account also the special interest of vulnerable groups and gender equality
- Investing in research and development, supporting innovations
- Attracting FDI that bring benefits to local areas
- Building local entrepreneurs capacity and high labor skills
- Supporting knowledge transfer between universities, local businesses and public authorities
- Supporting SMEs establishment and operation through specific public policies

Gender equality

You may ask yourself why do we have to base the local development on the gender equality principle? The short answer is that researches and studies demonstrated that societies where women are not afforded equal rights as men can never achieve development in a sustainable manner.¹⁴

Gender equality principle considers the equality of men and women as a fundamental human right and so, women should have the right to equal opportunities and treatment.

This right does not disregard the fundamental difference between women and men in relation to their sex which is the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women but looks at *gender* which is defined by the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes which a society at any given time considers appropriate for men and women.

United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1979 the international *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, which came into force in 1981, ratified by most countries. CEDAW established an agenda of action for the States ratifying the Convention in order to end the discrimination against women:

- States must take measures to eliminate prejudices and customs based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of one sex or on stereotyped roles for men and women.
- States are required to enshrine *gender equality* into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women. However, special protection for maternity is not regarded as gender discrimination. Appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of trafficking in women and forced prostitution are also not regarded as gender discrimination. Equal opportunity in education for female students is required, and coeducation is encouraged.
- States must also establish tribunals and public institutions to guarantee women effective protection against discrimination and take steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination practiced against women by individuals or organizations.

¹⁴ The [United Nations Millennium Goals](#), aimed to end world [poverty](#) by 2015

A mechanism for insuring that a gender perspective is taken into account is to use **Gender Mainstreaming**. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)¹⁵ define the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows: *“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality”*. **Gender budgeting** is the application of gender mainstreaming to the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.”

Example

The city of Bristol in the UK applied a gender analysis to the budget spent on sport and found that over 80% of the budget was spent on sports played by men – particularly football and rugby. This situation had gone on for many years without the councillors being aware of this situation. Once the information was known new initiatives were introduced to target young women to get them involved in sport and resources were moved in order to fund netball and swimming which were sports which women were more likely to take part in.

The rights of women have been recognized at international and national level including guaranteeing women’s right to own property in marriage, to vote and stand for election, to have equal opportunity for education and employment, to be paid equally for equal work and to be protected during maternity.

In Moldova the Constitution proclaims equality of men and women as a human right and the Law No. 5-XVI of 09.02.2006 ensures this equality. However despite this legal recognition equality of women and men in daily life is still not a reality, as the following figures demonstrate¹⁶:

- Employment rate is 49% for women 62% men
- 22% of women are in Parliament, while only 17.5% of them are mayors
- Women receive on average 70% of the pension of men
- Women suffer high rates of domestic violence but there are few prosecutions
- 57% of teachers in higher education are women but only 13% of heads of HE Institutions are women.

These inequalities are the result of assumptions and stereotypical views about the different roles of women and men in the family, education, culture, the media, the world of work and the way society is organized, including political representation.

As local government is closest to the people it is best placed to take actions to combat continuing inequality and promote equality of women and men in all its activities by looking at the effect or potential effect of its policies and practices on men and women, boys and girls.

Human Rights Based Approach

*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*¹⁷

This is the wonderful first article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights(UDHR)* adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Human rights are universal legal guarantees protecting

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC July 1997

¹⁶ UNDP

¹⁷ Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

individuals and groups against actions and omissions that interfere with fundamental freedoms, entitlements and human dignity. Human rights law obliges Governments, including local governments (principally) and other duty-bearers to do certain things and prevents them from doing others. Among the rights guaranteed to all human beings under international treaties, without any discrimination on grounds such as race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, are:

- The right to life, liberty and security of person
- Freedom of association, expression, assembly and movement
- The right to the highest attainable standard of health
- Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention
- The right to a fair trial
- The right to just and favourable working conditions
- The right to adequate food, housing and social security
- The right to education
- The right to equal protection of the law
- Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence
- Freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Freedom from slavery
- The right to a nationality

There is no hierarchy among human rights, all are equally important be they economic, political, civil, cultural or social rights.

Human rights are not just ends or goals to which we vaguely aspire. Nor are they some perfect utopia that we can all dream about. They are the benchmarks of a just society; they give people the right to have control over their lives and future.

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to development considers that there are two stakeholder groups, *the rights holders*, or the group who does not experience full rights, and *the duty bearers*, or the institutions who are obligated to fulfil the rights of the rights holders. In the situation of local development planning the right holders are the individual citizens including members of vulnerable groups and the duty bearers are the local council and any other organisation of government. Rights-based approach aims at strengthening the capacity of duty bearers and at empowering the rights holders, supporting them to collaborate and work together.

Local development improves when we use human rights based approach, by making sure that those who are usually left out from the process of development are included and enjoy also its benefits. We know now that charity and cheque-books are not effective in trying to eradicate poverty and address the problems many disadvantaged and marginalized groups face. Real changes happen only if they are included and empowered; only the other more powerful groups change their attitudes, to be more emphatic and to be open to work together and find solutions. For that to come about we have to engage in partnerships and participation, we have to build trust by behaving with integrity, accountability and transparency, we have to approach development through the principles of sustainability and integration.

The level of development of a society can be measured by the extent to which we include and protect the most marginalized and most vulnerable; by our standards of integrity, transparency and accountability; by the extent to which people are empowered.

We have described in the Guide all these principles as the ones on which local development should rely, but they are also the very principles of the GE and HRBA to development.