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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS PERCEIVED BY CIVIL SERVANTS

INTRODUCTION

One can assume that the state administration is going through constant development, which reflects the changes and needs of the society. The basic philosophy of local authorities in building up new and effective organization models is their orientation towards public services. This means that services offered by local authorities should be designed not only for people but also in cooperation with them (Welsh, 1994). It is thus necessary for the municipality to stay in contact with its inhabitants and to evaluate their needs and attitudes. According to Welsh (1994), the task of local authorities is to analyze the impact of services offered to particular segments of the community, which should be served by the authorities.

The European Urban Charter (Evropská..., 1992) defines the present and future conditions of urban development. It states, besides others, that the enforcement of individual rights should be based on solidarity and responsible citizenship. The citizens of European towns have, according to the above mentioned Charter, the following rights:

- *health* – the right to live in an environment which promotes human physical and psychological health;
- *sport and leisure* – the right to use a large variety of sports and leisure facilities, irrespective of age, abilities or income;
- *culture* – the right to use the facilities and take part in a variety of creative activities;
- *participation* – the right to participate in pluralistic democratic structures and in the municipal management, the participation being characterized by

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cooperation among different partners, by the principle of subsidiarity, by a right to information, and by protection against excessive regulation;

- *personal development* – the right to live in urban conditions that help to acquire personal richness and contribute to the individual social, cultural, moral, and spiritual development;
- *financial mechanisms and structures* – these should enable local authorities to find financial backing necessary for putting in practice the rights defined in the Declaration.

In the frame of creating a new “Conception of Sport and Physical Culture Development in the Liberec Region,” the Liberec regional council has asked the Faculty of Physical Culture to work out a study describing and evaluating the opinions and attitudes of local authorities’ employees toward communal recreation. The stress was put on educational activities of sports character.

The study comprised of three parts:

- The representatives’ attitudes toward leisure activities of sports character, seen in the frame of local politics.
- The present day situation in financing of communal recreation from local budgets.
- The present day situation in the domain of ownership (in the sphere of sport and physical education).

The size of the region and the diversity of the studied subjects made the realization of the study very difficult. Due to the volume of information gathered, we have restricted the article to the first part of the problem: the representatives’ attitudes toward leisure activities in the frame of local politics.

METHODOLOGY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

The client agreed on realizing a survey which would include 23 questions and 8 demographic indicators.

The number of 228 questionnaires were distributed in two rounds. Questionnaires were sent by post to 97 communities and, after a logic control, all 97 of them were used for statistical processing – this means that the return rate was 100%. The results of the survey are described in the paper. In the second round, the researchers spoke to 131 local authorities representatives in the remaining communities of the Liberec region. After a logic control, all 131 questionnaires were applied in statistical processing. The results are being treated.

Note: the authors of the survey use the terminology as defined by the client and they are aware of the fact that objections of technical character could be raised.

REPRESENTATIVES' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEISURE ACTIVITIES OF SPORTS CHARACTER ON THE LEVEL OF COMMUNAL POLITICS

Having taken in consideration the needs of the article, we will state several findings of the research realized in 1999 by the Institute of Children and Youth of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport in cooperation with the Department of Recreation of the Palacký University in Olomouc and departments N°73 and K3 of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport.

In the research, opinions and attitudes were analysed of those regional and local authorities' employees who had already been working in the field of youth and physical education.

The respondents stated that their work did not comply with the initial objectives. It is evident that the classification of particular work positions is not clear: one third of the employees admitted that they used only 10% of their time working on original objectives of the particular position.

There are significant contrasts among the respondents when it comes to the nature of their work (what they think it should be) and the reality:

The respondents consider as **important** the following items:

1. Protection of society against negative influences.
2. Realization and use of state subventions.
3. Support of NGO's, counselling activities.
4. Information.
5. Coordination of the activities of all participating subjects.
6. Participation in creating plans and budgets.
7. Participation in material, economic and personal backing of the activities.
8. Working out proposals of local conceptions.

On the other hand, they consider as **less important**:

1. Creating the conditions for good functioning of the corporations.
2. Working out communications for higher administration units.

The **level of education** and professional training is unsatisfactory. The respondents' opinion concerning their own readiness for the function corresponds with their opinion concerning the methodical leadership of higher structures. The employees want to express that they are not to "blame" themselves.

The **central** system of financing leisure activities in the frame of regions is inconvenient. Decentralized financing of individual bodies (the finance distribution by a particular local administration) is more clear and more "fair."

In respect of the need of creating a clear concept in this domain, we consider as **very important** the following opinions:

1. The issue of leisure time is very important for the public.
2. For the decision making, certain conception issues should be transferred to the competence of lower administration units.
3. There is an urgent need to resolve the issue as a system solution.
4. It is beneficial and necessary to solve the issue of leisure activities as a whole (“from one point”), given that it is possible to coordinate the process with other departments – social department, department of construction, etc.

It is interesting to compare the conclusions of the analysis of opinions and attitudes of the employees already “active” in the sphere (made in the entire Czech Republic) with the results of the survey concerning the Liberec region (see table 1).

We state that the methodology of the two surveys was identical, the only difference being the partition of the communities. We made a more detailed partition in the case of Liberec, according to the number of inhabitants.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the data gathered in the survey, we can state that:

- *The present state of affaires* is very similar to the one described in the research conducted in 1999. We can therefore say that the development rate does not correspond with the needs and developmental trends of the today’s society.
- *In general, it is not true* that the communities have created specific work positions that would ensure the functioning of this domain.
- *Education* of responsible employees is higher in the communities with higher population.
- *The number of employees* with proper education is rising in accordance with the population growth but still does not correspond with the trends.
- *Only one community* has an independent department which is fully focused on the issue.
- $\frac{4}{5}$ *of the communities* do not even consider creating such departments.
- The bigger the community, the more likely it is to have sports *committees*. However, $\frac{1}{2}$ of the communities do not even consider creating such committees.
- *It is encouraging* that only one community considers the issue of communal recreation as unimportant, and only two as less important.

Table 1. Summary of opinions of executive representatives of the Liberec region municipalities

Total number of communities in the region who participated		97							
Number of inhabitants		1–500	501–1000	1001–1500	1501–2000	2001–5000	5001–10 000	10 001–50 000	50 001–100 000
Number of employees who are, in your office, in charge of organizing and managing communal physical education and recreation		3	2	0	0	1	2	1	3
Their education level (in numbers) University of sports character									
University of sports character		0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
University		1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Secondary school		2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Elementary school		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Do you have a department in charge of this sphere?									
Yes		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
No, but we consider its creation		3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
No, and we do not consider its creation		36	28	9	7	3	4	1	1
Do you have a special commission to deal with this issue?									
Yes		7	7	0	1	1	3	2	1
No, but we consider its creation		4	2	2	2	2	1	0	0
No, and we do not consider its creation		28	18	7	4	1	1	0	0
You consider sport and communal recreation									
Important for inhabitants of all age and social groups		19	17	6	5	2	5	2	0
Important mainly for children and young people		21	12	2	4	2	0	0	1
Less important for the life of the municipality (town) and its inhabitants		2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not at all important for the town's (municipality's) life and the life of its inhabitants		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

- *94 communities* consider the issue as important for all age and social groups.
- *67 communities* consider combining communal recreation with tourism as important and beneficial, only 3 communities smaller than 500 inhabitants perceive these issues as not connected.
- *41 communities* support the NGO's by lending them the communal sports facilities for free or for a symbolic price.
- *The majority of communities* support the NGO's by combining several approaches.
- *Grant policies* are also often used to stir up the material and personal development.

The results have shown that the issue of communal recreation – not only in the domain of sport and physical culture – is becoming a subject of interest of state employees on all levels of state administration. It is necessary to add that in most cases these employees do not have the capacity to leave the traditional point of view and that they do not recognize the domain as a space for influencing and forming the modern lifestyle.

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Keywords: municipality, citizen, leisure activities, organisations, conditions

Abstract: It is possible to state that the organisation and way of functioning of the state administration has gone and will be going through an incessant development process, which has responded and will be responding to the changes and needs of the society. The analysis, which can be considered as an audit made for certain clients groups, is, besides others, also a starting point for the elaboration of an overall municipality strategy. The analysis can be realised by means of primary or secondary research. The present state of our society and

the developmental tendencies taken in consideration, it is clear that the existence of leisure activities system will be a significant element in the decision-making processes of state employees on all levels of state (public) administration. The relationship between those who can influence the outer forces and those who occupy positions in the leisure-time organizations defines the dynamics of the future development. The role of municipalities in the domain of public services cannot be replaced. That is why it is necessary to study the opinions and attitudes of employees responsible on the local scale. It is also important for the information transfer and communication to be realized rapidly.

AKTYWNOŚĆ FIZYCZNA Z PERSPEKTYWY URZĘDNIKÓW PAŃSTWOWYCH

Słowa kluczowe: miasto, obywatel, zajęcia w czasie wolnym, organizacje, warunki

Streszczenie: Organizacja i sposób funkcjonowania administracji państwowej jest procesem zależnym od potrzeb i zmian społeczeństwa. Aktywność fizyczna podejmowana przez pracowników z tego sektora będzie wpływać na proces podejmowanych przez nich decyzji zawodowych.