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MULTIPURPOSE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES (EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS)

Key words: multipurpose development, sustainable development, education, ecology,
non-agricultural activity, Poland, Spain, Romania

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to present, by means of case studies, examples of activities in the field of multipurpose development businesses which, due to services offered, their location and recognition, can serve as good practices and provide inspiration for the development of such activities in rural areas of selected EU countries. A key aspect of multipurpose rural development is to shift from single-function development towards farm diversification in order to engage in and develop non-agricultural activities. The concept of multipurpose rural development, where agriculture is no longer the sole function of rural areas, has often become a panacea for maintaining the basic form of agriculture, especially in areas affected by severe fragmentation of agricultural land. The examples found in three countries (Poland, Spain and Romania) showed that agriculture can be combined with non-agricultural activities with environmentally-friendly, innovative and educational concepts. The analyzed cases also showed that entrepreneurship in rural areas is often carried out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, and the multifunctional nature of these activities indicates that even small farms are able to survive. However, it is important that it is not only agricultural activity, but other activities connected with it, using natural and cultural resources of farms and villages, such as processing or education.

INTRODUCTION

Multipurpose rural development is a major research problem addressed by scientists and politicians [Durand, Van Huylenbroeck 2003, Pałka 2004, Doitchinova 2005, Vejre et al. 2007, Zegar 2008, Dubownik 2010, Kosenchuk et al. 2019]. Multipurpose rural development consists of undertaking new non-agricultural economic activities by the rural community, but often complementary to agriculture [Sawicki 2007]. It is often equated with strengthening the part of the economy referred to as non-agricultural sectors, both by establishing new operators and enhancing the operations of existing farms with different forms of non-agricultural activities [Davis, Pearce 2001]. This kind of transformation is

important for farms located in areas whereby the agricultural function plays a dominant role. Because of this effect, it can be considered a condition for the efficient implementation of multipurpose rural development processes, which also includes multipurpose agricultural development. It contributes to improvements in the financial situation of farms and helps manage surplus labor [Marsden, Sonnino 2008, Dziekański, Pawlik 2019].

In European Union countries, agriculture is heterogeneous in a number of ways because of its multitude of impacts and conditions. The first type of conditions is related to natural aspects such as climatic conditions, land relief, soil type and quality as well as forest cover and lake density. The second type includes historical conditions related to partitions. Changes in the European economy started over two centuries ago and have also been reflected in demographics and agriculture. As emphasized in many scientific papers, reports, and expert assessments by the EU, FAO, and EUROSTAT, agriculture differs strongly between European Union countries. European agriculture fulfills many other functions of both social and economic nature. In the European Union, an important problem is the importance of agriculture as a sector of the economy, which not only produces food and agricultural raw materials but also fulfills a series of other functions [Ploeg, Roep 2003, Zajac 2014]. Developed to solve that issue, the European Model of Agriculture assumes that, in addition to “commercial agriculture” (which is competitive, related to market and non-agricultural parts of agribusiness), there is also a “multipurpose agriculture” in charge of delivering market goods (direct sales, the processing of agricultural raw materials, non-agricultural economic activity) and non-market goods in the form of landscape values, nature, biodiversity and environmental rebalancing. Currently, a discussion is ongoing in the EU on how to make farmers produce food using methods that do not degrade the environment while simultaneously complying with environmental enhancement principles by: reducing threats caused by an excessive use of industrial inputs; reducing soil erosion through a rational use of agricultural land resources and regulation of water resources; and shortening the distance between farmers and potential consumers by eliminating certain stages of agribusiness [Matysik-Pejas et al. 2017]. Importantly, legal standards increasingly often place special emphasis on tourist values of rural areas by making the landscape more attractive and promoting agritourism development [Hediger 2004, Aznar et al. 2007, Zajac 2014, Roman et al. 2020]. Rural transformation mostly depends on the importance and nature of regional agriculture. The basic agricultural operator is a farm, the main concept of which is to maximize income. Importantly, for family members, the farm is a place of work, which also provides them with a basis for subsistence. Hence, agricultural transformation affects both farmers and their farms [Roman, Golnik 2019]. Rural and agricultural development in the European Union continues to be strongly impacted by regional or even local conditions. It takes on different forms largely dependent on regional particularities or local environments which, in turn, are affected by a series of advantageous or restrictive factors and characteristics [Grosse, Hardt 2011, Kłodziński 2012].

Sustainable multipurpose rural development is an important component of rural policy [Wigginger et al. 2003, Prus 2008, Mölders 2014]. This results from two aspects. First, as a multifaceted concept, rural policy requires coordination and cooperation between

different sectoral policies which contribute to rural development. Second, because of the shift to non-agricultural activities, the targets of multipurpose development will always be valid. Moreover, the essence of multipurpose rural development is to rationally use productive inputs available in rural areas and properly allocate the socioeconomic activity of humans across the economy. Many authors, both from Poland and abroad [Sattler, Nagel 2010, Zegar 2010, Czubak 2013], emphasize that multipurpose development cannot be restricted to the creation of new non-agricultural jobs in rural areas. This is a broader concept as it addresses rural and agricultural problems, and should be approached on a comprehensive basis. Also, as noted by [Cazaux et al. 2007], the extra-agricultural and socioeconomic activation of rural areas is a process whereby the development of agricultural entrepreneurship plays a very important role. As traditional rural areas take on new functions, rural unemployment embarks on a downward path. The problem of developing non-agricultural functions in the rural economy and the need to preserve a broad range of social functions of rural areas are a crucial determinant supposed to largely contribute to an improvement in the standards of living for the rural population [Tocco et al. 2013]. In European Union countries, multipurpose rural development is a major category of the policy for agriculture and rural areas. The implementation of this concept could be driven by the economic diversification of Union countries (especially of their rural areas) and the development of a supporting toolkit to be employed under the Common Agricultural Policy [Wilkin 2010, Rosner 2011, Kłodziński 2012, Dziekański 2019].

In countries such as Poland, Germany, France, Romania and Spain, agriculture plays an important role, as reflected in intervention measures taken by state authorities under national and transnational policy programmes. According to Melissa Poulsen and Marie spiker [2014], Sławomir Kowalski [2011] and Monika Stanny et al. [2018], a multipurpose approach to rural areas was needed in order to incorporate new lines of rural evolution. The ability to meet objectives such as improving the standards of living for the population and improving investment efficiency in rural areas depends on the development of a series of production services and on an adequate supply of productive inputs. Importantly, changes taking place in EU agriculture not only affect agriculture but also rural areas. A more in-depth analysis reveals that farmers and rural residents come up with more and more new services and forms of rural leisure. With a broad range of services offered, rural areas become an attractive place for recreation and relaxation. The rural population engages in production and service activities not only related to food economics but also non-agricultural economics. In addition to having an impact on the pace and lines of rural transformation, the multiplicity and diversity of entrepreneurial actions in EU rural areas drives differences in social and economic development and development potential at a local level.

The purpose of this paper is to present activities in the field of multipurpose farm development by means of case studies which, due to services offered, their location and recognition, can serve as good practices and provide inspiration for the development of such activities in rural areas of selected EU countries.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The first part of this paper consists of a survey of library resources. This enabled the analysis of relevant literature on multipurpose rural development based on scientific and popular science papers. The empirical part relies on the case study method used to process the data collected. The essence of a case study is that it adopts a holistic approach to the observation, reconstruction and analysis of phenomena surveyed. Also, it allows to introduce an actor's perspective to the study [Zonabend 1992]. "A case study neither requires a defined minimum number of cases nor a randomization procedure. In such circumstances, the researcher works on the situation he/she presented in the case description. The case study method may either consider a single case or a multiple case. The latter means the replication was carried out based on specifically selected cases instead of repeating a survey based on the sampling procedure. If replication is infeasible, the researcher is restricted to the analysis of a single case" [Yin 1998]. As noted by Robert Yin [1998], the generalization of the analysis of a single case or multiple cases is a method for developing theories but does not refer to the population.

The inspiration for choosing two examples from Spain and Romania was the Birth Of Ideas project¹. Data for case studies from these two countries were supplemented by means of the standardized interview in 2018. The third example is from Poland, the information was gathered on the basis of sources from the zagrodaedukacyjna.pl portal and the standardized interview in 2018. The countries were selected because of their location in Europe: Poland is located in central Europe; Spain is a Western European country; and Romania is situated in the south-eastern part of the continent. The criterion for selecting individual farms was their multifunctional nature of activity, as well as the orientation of their agricultural production in terms of ecology, while maintaining cultural heritage and educating target groups in this regard.

The case studies described in the case study allowed to draw conclusions regarding multipurpose rural development in selected EU countries. The knowledge derived from the case studies can be used in practice when developing similar projects.

RESULTS: A CASE STUDY FOR SELECTED EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

"AN ARTISTIC FARM": AN EXAMPLE FOUND IN POLAND

The first case covered by this analysis is a farm located in one of the sixteen Polish voivodships, the Małopolskie Voivodship. The artistic farm is an organic agritourism farm located in the Małopolskie Voivodship, in south Poland. It is an example of a multipurpose farm, where the main direction of production is not indicated. The owner, Maria Karaś, together with her husband, have been running it for 18 years as an organic agritourism farm. Since 2010, it has been a member of the herb farms network; since 2014, it has been operating as an educative farm. The holding is a certified organic farm. It has an area of

¹ Birth of Ideas project has been funded with support from the European Commission, under ERASMUS+, with the reference number 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015658. The authors of the study took part in the project.

over 3 ha, mostly meadows on which sheep graze. The farm also has a herbarium which primarily serves an educative purpose because the owners also run an educative farm. The establishment has been a member of the Aromatic Herb Rural Network of Lesser Poland for 8 years. Currently, the network comprises of 20 farms with herbs as the common characteristic. In addition to herbs, the farms also offer handicraft related to it, which is added to tissue paper bouquets or decoupage art, for instance. Also, the farm uses herbs to produce soap, cream and candles, as well as wine-based liquors and cosmetic oils (e.g. lavender, marigold and thyme). As part of its agritourism activities, the farm offers 4 guest rooms and catering services. The dishes are usually based on herbs.

The products made on the farm are intended for guests, and are also used as a product portfolio at trade fairs. Educative packages are prepared for children, elderly people and the disabled. The farm offers four packages [Zagroda Edukacyjna 2020]:

1. At ease with herbs.
2. Artistic combinations: the art of paper flower making.
3. As it was some time ago: the tradition of making sauerkraut.
4. From the lamb to the strand.

Note that the owner has been the leader of Porębianie, a local music band, for nearly 30 years. Also, the products manufactured at the farm are intended to promote the region during band performances.

In order to develop their business, the owners cooperate with the Lesser Poland Agricultural Consultancy Center, the Krakow Agricultural Consultancy Center and regional tourist organizations. However, the owners' gainful off-farm activities are the main source of income for the farm, whereas the farming business is only an additional earning opportunity. The farm was awarded in several competitions: the Green Summer voivodeship competition; the Environmentally-friendly Farm; My Beautiful Garden; the Best Organic Farm; a Beautiful and Safe Farm. The farm is also consistent with the concept of multipurpose rural development because, in addition to basic organic farming activity, the owners engage in non-agricultural activities such as craft, agri-tourism and educational activity.

FORLONG – FOR A LONG TIME: A SPANISH CASE STUDY

The second example of non-agricultural entrepreneurial attitudes that not only promote multipurpose development but also a sustainable one, is a Spanish farm located in the region of Jerez de la Frontera, with its main production direction focused on viticulture and wine production. Wine and adequate geographic and climatic conditions melt together to create the region's history which is well known to the owners of Forlong. In a place known as Forlong in Puerto de Santa Maria, olive trees and vineyards have been cultivated for many centuries. The land was owned by an English merchant called Forlong. Alejandro and Rocío found that out when searching for information on the origin of the name of the farm who offered them jobs. The Vigneron area, which makes reference to French vineyards, has been cultivated by families who live in this very specific region. While staying true to their history, they realize the obvious fact that state-of-the-art methods do not conflict with traditional techniques in innovative methods designed to improve wine quality.

The commitment to organic wine growing is an obvious part of the history of Rocío and Alejandro. Also, many native cultivars which practically became extinct after the outbreak of phylloxera in the 19th century, are now being reintroduced [TSA 2020]. Forlong, with an area of 10 ha, is a family vineyard which takes the following development measures [BoI 2020]:

- integrated activities related to wine-making: vine growing, wine-making and marketing,
- enotourism activities, organizing vineyard and wine cellar tours.

The entrepreneurs' strong commitment to succeed is reflected in the efforts they make to create new wine types and in the perseverance they show when sharing their experiences. The way they care for their vineyard, the harvests, the wine-making and bottling process and marketing efforts all require perfect planning and organizational skills.

The commitment to organic farming, the reintroduction of old native vine cultivars and adding value to local culture is what makes the farm a socially responsible company. The selection of bottles, brand logos, labeling, the ongoing organization of wine tasting events and participation in sectoral fairs is a way to generate marketing resources and deliver customer services. Environmental analysis revealed several long-term trends:

- the main focus is placed on ensuring environmental sustainability through ecological activities,
- the acceptance of organic products by some consumers,
- entertainment and emotional aspects involved in wine consumption,
- the importance of the combination of agricultural products and their original quality.

The above experience reveals a higher level of innovation and has the following components:

- looking for new ways of vinification, starting with remaining local cultivars,
- using methods relative to organic and biodynamic farming which are not common in the region,
- brand appearance, especially including labels.

The Forlong vineyard perfectly fits the concept of multipurpose development, mostly because, in addition to being a wine producer, it carries out environmental, marketing, educative, and enotourism activities.

THE HISIAȘ APIARY: A CASE STUDY IN ROMANIA

Flavius Huber is a Romanian beekeeper. His apiary is located in Hisiaș, a village in the district of Timișoara. His main activity is manufacturing organic apiculture products such as various types of honey, fresh pollen, propolis, beeswax and royal jelly. His other activities consist of organizing educational visits in the apiary for everyone interested in apiculture and the life of bees. Apiculture products, sold by the beekeeper, are highly sought after in the local market. The buyers are people of Hisiaș, the village where the apiary is located, and many Timișoaran residents. The beekeeper's customers are strongly interested in organic products because highly processed foods are offered in abundant quantities in the city. In addition to selling high-quality apiculture products, the owner also informs his customers of the positive effects of apitherapy, and invites them to visit his apiary so they may take a closer look at beekeeping [BoI 2020].

The owner is committed to remaining up-to-date with the latest developments and current information, trends and technologies related to beekeeping. He also participates in meetings organized by the Romanian Beekeeping Association and shares his experiences with other European beekeepers.

His essential qualities are openness and friendliness. Since ancient times, beekeeping has always been a useful profession. It will never become obsolete because bees are essential for every form of life, from plants through to animals and humans. Therefore, beekeeping is a never ending art which provides benefits to many people and is a means of subsistence for many farmers [BoI 2020]. The creativity of the beekeeper is manifested by the fact that he started the beekeeping business in land inherited from his grandparents, located in Hisiaș, in the district of Timișoara. He combines apiculture with product sales and educational activities. He participates in fairs and expositions, and shares his experiences with other beekeepers while growing his small business each day. His organic apiary and beekeeping education activities are consistent with the concept of multipurpose rural development.

SUMMARY

In many other EU countries, agriculture plays a lesser role in providing the rural population with both jobs and an income. However, it remains a major part of the rural economy. Many member countries continue to be dominated by small family farms engaged in agricultural activity. However, agricultural activity is often not enough to ensure high standards of living and employment. Hence, the population of these areas increasingly focuses on the development of non-agricultural activities enabling the better use of labor resources while activating rural residents. The development of rural entrepreneurship can contribute to developing non-agricultural functions of rural areas and seizing opportunities offered by existing local human resources. This is in line with the priorities set out in the EU's current development policy which places greatest emphasis on promoting a competitive multipurpose agricultural sector and supporting alternative sources of rural income.

Also, the conclusion from the case studies analyzed above is that multipurpose rural development is very often related to the concept of sustainable development. Respect for regional tradition and culture, combined with the promotion of an environmentally-friendly lifestyle, is an inherent part of multipurpose rural development. Another important aspect is innovativeness of production, promotion and educational activities, introduced as part of carrying on with tradition.

As shown by the case studies described in this paper, small farms can survive and preserve their individual nature provided that they embark on a path of multipurpose development. However, it should be noted that agricultural and non-agricultural activity on a given farm is not always the only source of income. As presented in the case study from Poland, it is also paid work outside the farm.

Moreover, on the basis of the described examples, it should be stated that, in the activities of multipurpose farms, promoting ecology and tradition has become one of the main goals of the educational offer.

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WIELOFUNKCYJNY ROZWÓJ OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH W WYBRANYCH KRAJACH UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ (PRZYKŁADY REALIZOWANYCH PRZEDSIĘWZIĘĆ)

Słowa kluczowe: wielofunkcyjny rozwój, zrównoważony rozwój, edukacja, ekologia, pozarolnicza działalność, Polska, Hiszpania, Rumunia

ABSTRAKT

Celem opracowania jest przedstawienie przykładów działalności w zakresie wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju gospodarstw rolnych, które ze względu na oferowaną usługę i miejsce położenia oraz rozpoznawalność, mogą posłużyć jako przykłady dobrych praktyk, a także być inspiracją dla rozwoju tego typu działalności na obszarach wiejskich w krajach UE. Istotnym sposobem rozwoju wielofunkcyjnego wsi jest odejście od monofunkcyjnego rozwoju obszarów wiejskich i przejście do dywersyfikacji gospodarstw rolnych w kierunku podejmowania i rozwijania działalności pozarolniczej. W ramach koncepcji wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju obszarów wiejskich, warunkiem jest odejście od rolnictwa jako jedynej funkcji terenów wiejskich. Oznacza to tworzenie nowych miejsc pracy, w zakresie szeroko rozumianej przedsiębiorczości pozarolniczej, zwłaszcza na obszarach charakteryzujących się dużym rozdrobnieniem agrarnym. Wybrane przykłady z trzech krajów: Polski, Hiszpanii oraz Rumunii, pokazały że można połączyć rolnictwo z działalnościami pozarolniczymi, a także koncepcjami ekologicznymi i innowacyjnymi i edukacyjnymi. Analizowane przypadki pokazały także, że przedsiębiorczość na obszarach wiejskich często jest realizowana zgodnie z zasadami zrównoważonego rozwoju, a wielofunkcyjny charakter tych działalności wskazuje, że nawet niewielkie gospodarstwa rolne są w stanie się utrzymać. Jednak istotny jest fakt, że nie jest to tylko działalność rolnicza, ale połączone z nią inne działalności, wykorzystujące zasoby naturalne i kulturowe gospodarstwa oraz wsi, takie jak przetwórstwo i edukacja.

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