

Participation in the PROIECT APUSENI

A Learning process for scientists and the local community

Introduction

One major objective of the Proiect Apuseni followed a Participatory Action Research approach. How are participatory Methods applied in a completely different regional context such as mountain area in a country Romania, was one of the leading questions. The experiences with the local people, the regional stakeholder as well as the Romanian and German Scientists should be examined and documented.

Participation in Romania compared to Germany means, that

- society and informal networks need to be reflected more intensive, to identify key persons, which should be involved in the process, for example in the steering committee.
- politicians and experts in the administration have great influence on the project itself, but also on the attitude of others.
- changes in business and economical habits are very complex. The lack of financial resources and know how are making projects in this area difficult.

Amount and Quality of the participatory process

The concept of the participatory process generally approved to be feasible. The distinction between informing, participating and cooperating with stakeholder matched resources of both scientists and stakeholder.

Especially the foundation of the steering group in the commune of Garda de Sus, the acceptance and the structural settings improved. The Quality of the participatory action process was continuously monitored. Briefings of the staff members on how do set objectives, planning and the evaluation of every action lead to high standards of the methods and competences within the project team.

Participation and acceptance within the local community

- A majority of the local community got involved in the participatory process, if objectives were clearly communicated and the intensity of the methods were appropriate.
- Non verbal aspects and methods were of enormous importance. Even and adequate behavior and clothing of the staff members, as well as participation in social events supported the cooperation of scientists and the community.
- The scientific objectives of the research project have to be translated into potential practical outcome to the local people.

Participation and Science

A individual view of ones profession and scientific area of interest can effect the participatory process. Social Science is focussing the human behaviour, whereas the engineering sciences are more or less working on objects rather than humans. Qualification of the staff members is necessary from the beginning to gain a common view as well as defining the scientific outcome of the participatory process.

Pilot actions and their effects

With seven of these pilot actions over 140 people got involved in the Proiect Apuseni.

Outcome of the pilot action to people

Contribution to awareness and Know-How-Transfer - Pilot actions lead to an intensive cooperation between scientists and local people. They brought up all issues of a sustainable rural development, organised knowledge of important aspect of the applications and helped with defining the paths of sustainable development.

Cooperation within the region - Every pilot action forced the local people and small businesses to cooperate, since cooperation leads to a common view of things, like the tourist association in Ghetar.

Exemplary Results which lead to Change of Habits - Especially the actions taken in the field of tourism led to new practice and even investment.

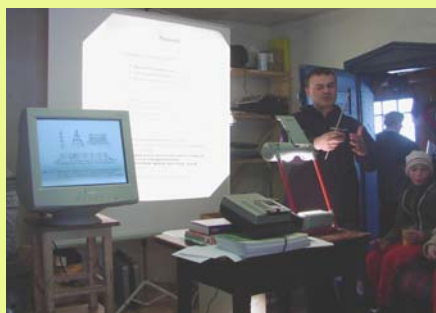
Limits of the pilot action were to be found, where

- the necessary financial resources were not appropriate.
- no key persons or entrepreneurs could be found to take interest or the affords of the project team was to little.
- the social norms would not allow to change habits.

Pilot project: optimised greenland utilisation



Picture 1: experiments in plant nutrition, April 2002



Picture 2: education during winterbreak, February 2003

Pilot project: medical plants



Picture 3: amica, bottling of the amica tincture, amica tee

Pilot project: tourism



Picture 4: tourist information in the town center of Ghetar



Picture 5: "Cabanas" - typical accomodation for tourists



Picture 6: the glacial cage attracts tourists from all over Romania