

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

INNOVATIVE FACTORS OF DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE IN THE CONDITIONS OF A PANDEMIC

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Annotation. *The importance of rural development for the economy and society is actualized. The expansion of the powers of local communities requires the coordination of the community and the individual villager interests; and improving the quality and safety of life. Without overcoming the negative tendencies in the functioning of rural areas our state would not be able to compete effectively with the economic systems of developed countries. Such trends are observed in various spheres and first of all in the demographic sphere. Improving the situation in rural areas can be achieved through the return of migrant workers from abroad, and the migration of urban residents to the countryside.*

Keywords: *rural areas, innovation, development, pandemic, factors of development.*

Statement of the problem in its general form. Since independence, Ukrainian society has resisted economic, social challenges, and military aggression. For more than a year now, not only Ukrainian society, but also the entire world community has been in a state of crisis caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. There were borders not only between states, but also between regions and cities of one state. The personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights of citizens have been restricted in order to preserve their health and life. However, this crisis can contribute to the development of rural areas in Ukraine and accelerate the introduction of innovations that can reduce the negative impact of quarantine.

Problems of rural development have long been studied by Ukrainian experts. Their works reflect the thorough results of research on the principles of multifunctional development of the village, rural areas and rural space. However, despite the importance of research, the directions of rural development in the crisis have not yet been fully explored, especially in terms of innovative factors.

The purpose of this article is to study the factors overcoming the crisis of rural development.

Presentation of the main research material. Rural areas play an important role in the functioning of any state. On average, rural areas in the world make up 75% of the total area, where 51% of the world's population lives. In Ukraine, more than 30% of the population lives in rural areas. It is extremely important that these areas are convenient for healthy and productive living.

Rural development contributes to strengthening the economy and society. This is a prerequisite for Ukraine to achieve its goals of becoming the world's leading food supplier. Strong rural communities ensure that farmers maintain a competitive position with less negative effects on the environment, landscape and society. They support small and medium-sized businesses in their communities.

The effective start of rural development processes began in 2015. This is the adoption of the Law of Ukraine «On Voluntary Association of Territorial Communities». As of October 1, 2020, 907 united territorial communities (UTC) were created in Ukraine, of which 409 were rural and 205 were settlement. In Ukraine, 67.7% are rural and settlement communities.

In the process of administrative-territorial reform, the UTC included 9,240 villages. The expansion of the powers of local communities requires: harmonization of the development of agricultural production and rural territorial communities, the interests and initiatives of each villager, improving the quality and safety of life.

The villages are very different from each other. Today, significant sources of income of the united territorial communities are the funds of private investors, the funds of the residents of the community, including those received abroad as income of workers.

First of all, such funds are used by households for their own needs, such as children's education, repair work, purchase of real estate, improvement of their own land. It is important in the process of community development to realize the feasibility of directing these resources to long-term projects. The implementation of such projects has a multiplier effect for the whole community. For example, the creation of enterprises, farms, agricultural cooperatives, infrastructure development and improvement of common areas.

Local governments also use credits to finance the development of their community. Credit sources of financing for rural development have many potential advantages such as the ability to obtain significant financial resources, accelerating the development of local infrastructure. But there are also risks such as project failure, increased debt burden on the local budget and reduced financing of current expenditures, additional costs of project insurance and its examination. A separate source of funding for local socio-economic development is grant funds. Today in Ukraine, grant sources are often crucial for financing various local development projects. Grant assistance can be in the form of funds, consulting services, equipment, materials.

During 2016–2020, Ukraine received a lot of funds in the form of international technical assistance, which is designed to support decentralization and UTC: the EU ULIED project - a total of 97 million euros; American project DOBRE - total amount - 50 million US dollars; Projects of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom of Sweden,

the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Swiss Confederation, Finland, Canada - more than 20 million euros.

European experience of rural development shows that an effective decentralized system of territorial organization of public administration is a component of a modern democratic state. The institutional basis of such a system is capable local self-government and balanced regional development.

In Ukraine, the European Charter of Local Self-Government is a guideline for local government reform. The changes that are being implemented today provide for the implementation of the principles of subsidiarity, the ubiquity of local self-government, financial self-sufficiency, and the widespread use of democratic mechanisms.

Ukraine faces the task of bringing local self-government and territorial organization of power in line with European standards and fulfilling the state's international obligations in this area.

Some European countries, such as Poland, realized the concept of decentralization and implemented it more than 100 years ago. They had positive and negative experiences of such changes. Negative experience is confirmed in the journalistic works of Ivan Franko. «Changing the system by itself does not have to lead to good, but, on the contrary, can lead to great disaster. We have a good example in old Poland. The main basis of the state system was noble freedom and equality. Every nobleman was the eldest lord and did not recognize any authority over himself. The decision of state laws, taxes and the army depended on the good will of the representatives of the region, and each decision could be stopped by the vote of one representative. This system led to the complete enslavement of peasants and the decline of cities» [11].

Based on our own traditions and international experience, we need to go the way of modernizing all spheres of public relations, including the decentralization of public power. Ukraine cooperates with the countries of the Council of Europe. Particular attention is paid to the study of the experience of legislative support of local government reform and territorial organization of power of those countries that are close to the Ukrainian realities in terms of political, economic, legal, geographical, demographic, social, cultural and other conditions. In addition, the practice of European countries with traditional decentralized systems deserves special attention.

Therefore, the world uses many different approaches to rural development. In urbanized countries, rural development programs focus on innovation and sustainable development.

Recently, the concept of «rural areas» is widely used in the scientific literature. But in determining their essence, content, there is a discrepancy between the practice of applying this concept and the degree of its scientific and applied study.

The draft Law of Ukraine «On Planning of Territorial Infrastructure of Rural Areas» stipulates that a rural territory is an area in which the share of the rural population in its total population exceeds 15-50 percent. Rural territory is divided into: clearly defined rural areas, where the share of rural population in its total population exceeds 50 percent; rural areas, where the share of the rural population is 15-50 percent of the total population [6].

S.Melnyk [1] defines the rural area as a historically formed element of the settlement network that combines the organizational and functional set of settlements, villages, hamlets, single-family and other residential entities under the jurisdiction of village (settlement) councils.

According to V.Slavov and O.Kovalenko, «rural area is an economic-ecological category, a regional-territorial formation with specific natural-climatic, socio-economic conditions, where economically and ecologically balanced and energetically interconnected different resources (natural, labor, material, energy, information, financial, etc.) in order to create a total social product of a particular area and a full-fledged living environment for present and future generations» [8].

O.Bulavka, clarifying the essence of the category «rural areas», notes that the organizational structure of rural areas embodies a two-block construction: the settlement network - as the basis of their development and the actual land area with forest, water resources and minerals [4].

V.Yurchyshyn, notes that the rural area, firstly, the socio-natural spatial formation, and secondly, the settlement network, an element of which is the rural area [10].

O.Pavlov in his works proves that the social component of rural areas is personified by the rural community, its defining social center. On the one hand, due to the fact that only he has the ability to breathe life into a particular rural area. On the other hand, the defining place of society in rural areas is due to the fact that its functioning should be gradually subordinated to the interests of creating in each rural area the best possible living conditions for its inhabitants [3].

We agree with their view that the concept of «rural areas» has a significant number of features. Their internal structure is complex. Especially stand out: production and economic, political, social, natural components.

Thus, rural areas are the spatial basis of production and the natural environment and place of human life where it is necessary to achieve better living conditions for its inhabitants.

Until 2019, there were negative trends in the functioning of rural areas. Without overcoming these trends in rural development, our state was not able to compete effectively with the economic systems of developed countries. In these countries, the living standards of rural and urban populations tend to converge as much as possible. Differentiation of living standards of rural and urban population in Ukraine threatened the outflow of the most active and able-bodied part of the rural population to cities, intensified external labor migration.

Today, many people have a desire to leave large urban areas and return to the villages, where you can enjoy the peaceful surroundings and fresh air. The spread of COVID-19 only reinforces this trend, as people in large cities live too close to each other.

There is also a forced return of migrant peasants from abroad. According to various estimates, the number of migrant workers is 1-2 million Ukrainians, ie 15% of the total rural population. All of them, having gained experience in the standards of quality of European life, have more progressive views and their own motivated needs, as well as

have the necessary level of knowledge and skills to create new business projects in rural areas.

Rural areas have significant natural, demographic, economic and cultural potential. In the case of its rational use, they are able to make a significant contribution to solving key problems of socio-economic development of the community. However, a significant part of rural settlements today is in a depressed state, after the processes: depopulation of the population, large-scale labor migration, closure of social facilities.

As a result, the processes of derivation are intensified. The form of derivation was the strengthening of inequality in access to social benefits of the rural population, the lack of opportunities to meet basic needs, self-restraint, lowering the level of consumption standards.

A significant problem of rural areas is the raw material orientation of the economy. The vast majority of the rural population does not participate in the distribution of income from the use of raw materials. This creates a conflict between business and rural communities and deprives communities of a major source of development.

The consequence of such a model of economy was the collapse of rural industry, social infrastructure, job losses.

The paradox of the situation in rural areas today is that some state measures were aimed at stimulating agricultural production and supporting competition in the agricultural sector. These are positive measures. But they occur against the background of «optimization». The essence of which is to curtail the activities of the socio-cultural sphere. This contradicts the innovative model of development as a strategic course to achieve economic growth in Ukraine.

Adverse trends in the deterioration of quality of life in rural areas are observed in various areas. In the demographic population there was an outstripping decrease in population, which led to an increase in the demographic burden in rural areas. The problem of unemployment has worsened in the labor market.

Today, the need to make serious adjustments to the methodology of developing rural development strategies is obvious. It is necessary to specify the goals, principles, tasks and tools of integrated rural development with reference to European principles and standards.

In order to determine the directions of rural development, it is necessary to pay attention to the approval of the Community Development Strategy.

A community development strategy is a long-term plan of consistent balanced actions aimed at maximizing the resources available to the community to achieve success, sustainable development and full realization of the goal.

The main tasks of strategic planning are: analysis of the socio-economic condition of the community; formulation of a promising realistic future vision; SWOT-analysis of strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats; definition of strategic goals, the achievement of which will allow to realize the vision; development of operational goals and objectives to achieve strategic goals [12].

A strategy is a general plan to achieve one or more long-term or common goals in

conditions of uncertainty. In the sense of "general art", the term came into use in the 6th century AD. It was translated into Western languages only in the 18th century. From then until the 20th century, the word "strategy" came to mean "a comprehensive way to try to achieve political goals, including the threat or actual use of force, in the dialectic of covenants" in a military conflict in which both opponents interact [12].

Ukraine has developed a Concept for Rural Development until 2030. Its main directions:

- ensuring the development of socially necessary, competitive, and environmentally safe for the population the agricultural economy;
- improving the quality of life of the rural population, especially children, the disabled and the elderly;
- maintaining ecological balance, taking into account the balanced use and increase of natural resources of rural areas.

Overcoming the problems in this area requires direct state intervention. This can be done through the creation of a clear policy and legal framework, funding for specific targeted programs of rural social development.

The basis for such changes should be infrastructure innovations, taking into account today's challenges.

For example, the introduction of quarantine measures has accelerated existing trends in telecommuting, as well as its extension to new areas. Companies and employees have already invested in the necessary equipment, infrastructure, software settings, and acquired new skills. After the quarantine is lifted, some companies will deliberately leave some employees remotely.

Already, such elements of infrastructure as high-speed Internet, Internet banking, cloud technologies, innovative postal services have made it possible to effectively organize a large number of jobs at home.

First of all, we should focus on the elements of infrastructure that form a comfortable living (working) conditions. Today there is a large number of innovations that can quickly, efficiently and at a reasonable price to solve any organizational and household issues.

The strategic goal in the innovative provision of rural areas is the formation of favorable conditions for the use of the latest advances in science and technology in all spheres of management and life in rural areas.

These can be:

- development of projects of innovative development of rural areas on the principles of sustainable development;
- creation by the state of conditions for formation of effective system of production of innovations;
- deepening cooperation between the community and business;
- promoting international cooperation in the transfer of experience in rural development;
- formation of an effective infrastructure of innovation activity;

- application of new energy-saving technologies and energy-generating systems, small energy facilities, renewable energy sources, focused on the specifics of rural activities;

- intensification of interaction with foreign funds, partners.

Conclusions. The government's priority in the field of rural development is to create the necessary preferences for people who are forced to adapt to quarantine restrictions, which would stimulate them to work and develop business in Ukraine. This will make it possible to launch the following mechanisms for rural development, which will not only reduce the negative impact of quarantine, but also have a long-term effect on rural development:

- modernization and diversification of the rural economy;

- application of special management regimes for state support of households, which act as a preventive tool for deepening integration processes in the economy of rural areas;

- partnership of the state and UTC bodies in the implementation of state programs of structural restructuring of the rural economy;

- development of the state standard of living conditions of the rural population in terms of employment, education, health care, housing and communal services, development of industrial and social infrastructure;

- development of local self-government and strengthening of its financial base.

Thus, important factors in the development of rural areas of Ukraine in a pandemic are the return of peasant workers from abroad, as well as the migration of urban residents who moved to rural areas during quarantine. It is important to identify and consider these factors in a timely manner for the common good.

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