



Rural Development in Hungary through Social Learning

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Abstract

Rural areas in Hungary have undergone a major transformation in recent decades. Currently, there are significant regional disparities within Hungary. The most disadvantaged villages are the small villages with a population of less than 500 people. These villages are often functionally deprived, lacking educational and health facilities and facing a number of social and economic problems. Because of the specific development characteristics of peripheral and rural areas, the emergence and development of innovations are different from those in the centre regions. Disadvantaged settlements in peripheral areas operate differently from communities in developed areas, and rural development must therefore be implemented differently. Good practices from abroad and from Hungary show that there is no single set of rules for innovation in rural and peripheral areas, that every successful solution is unique and that they are not created in academic workshops but in practice, on the ground. New solutions to social problems or new products can also be considered as social innovations for rural development. The aim of this presentation is to examine the concept and characteristics of social learning that contribute to the creation of social innovation. The wider dissemination of social learning theory, which is closely linked to social innovation, was associated with Albert Bandura in the late 1970s. The concept has undergone significant changes in the decades since then, and several parallel approaches still exist. It identifies interactions in society as the main method of learning and, as a result, some level of change in society. Social learning can also be understood as a process by which a community becomes capable of some action or activity that it was not capable of before. In the presentation, two Hungarian rural development good practices from small villages of less than 500 inhabitants were presented, which were implemented through social learning.

Keywords: Hungary, public employment, rural development, social learning