

INNOVATIVE METHODS OF MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract:

The considerations presented in this paper are focused on performance of management in public sector in the context of innovative approaches to solving problems relevant to communities and society. Modern times require the process of management in public sector to be based on use of modern methods, as only they assure the appropriate use of resources and obtaining projected outcomes. The aim of this study is to identify and discuss the latest trends related to the management in units of public sector. Paper focuses on demonstrating the advantages of strategic management (including planning), integrated strategic management, management of integrated projects and project management. Participatory management methods are also discussed, i.e. Living Lab and the participatory budget, activating encouraging local communities to actively participate in the decision making process. The paper is based on literature review and empirical experience within scientific research as well as practical experience regarding performance in public sector organizations.

Keywords: public management, public affairs management methods, innovative management methods, participatory management methods

1. INTRODUCTION

Both the theory and the practice of public management are constantly in search of new approaches towards goals behind activities undertaken by public sector organizations. It involves a search for management methods which shall lead to achievement of these goals. Organizations as such are of purposeful nature, and for public organizations their purpose lies in realization of public interest. Their essential feature is to satisfy collective public needs by means of wide variety of public goods and services (Kozuch, 2005). Constantly changing environment requires a systematic search for new, innovative approaches and methods for public affairs management. The aim of this study is to identify and discuss the latest trends related to the management in units of public sector. The choice of presented approaches was made on the basis of empirical experience within scientific research as well as practical experience regarding performance in public sector organizations.

Innovative methods are described as intermittent changes which consist in intended implementation and application of new management method within given city, aiming to obtain significant benefits for a single urban unit (West, Farr, 1990, pp. 9). A need to implement innovative solutions may result from various factors, e.g., political, economic, social and technological (Brown, Osborne, 2012, pp. 13-21).

Time period for realization of tasks set for public sector organizations often goes beyond one year, thus it requires a long-term, strategical approach. Public organizations more and more often make use of strategic management in order to perform tasks inflicted upon them.

Nowadays both scale and pace of changes that take place within social, economic and spatial systems of globalized economy are so high, that it is necessary to verify the assumptions relating to management system (including planning) in organizations (Markowski, 2011, pp. 25; Nowakowska, 2015, pp. 21). This is also relevant for development process and functioning of self-government units. The best solution in this situation is a holistic approach towards management and planning as it seems to better fit the requirements of dynamic processes in territorial networks. Self-government units opt for integrated planning of the development process.

The public management, seen as search for effective organization of public programs realization process (Frączkiewicz-Wronka, 2009), led to a new approach in which management is based on a smart city concept. Public authorities are required to implement such management while deciding on directions for city development and on rules to be used within decision making process regarding city functionality.

Experience from developed countries shows that innovative management methods based on participation, including for example Living Lab (e.g. Lama, Origin 2006, Stawasz, Wiśniewska 2015; CoreLabs) or participatory budgeting are being popularized.

2. THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK OF THE PAPER

Deliberations included in this article refer to management methods and concepts that are relatively new to public sector. The most important ones shall be described within the context of experience gained by the Polish self-government units. Boundary conditions within which self-government administration operates include relatively short self-government history in Poland, election of authorities for relatively short tenures, quite often strong political background of these authorities, wide range of public tasks, competences vested by law, limited material and financial resources, responsibility for decisions, expectations and claims of the society, etc. Innovative approach to solving local and regional problems is necessary to perform all duties and realize set tasks. Performance patterns created due to theoretical and empirical studies on management in developed countries with long history of social life democratization are now more widely known also in Poland. Their adoption and application within the self-government administration shall undoubtedly contribute to increasing the effectiveness of activities undertaken by public domain management structures.

The methods and approaches used in the management of public sector organizations shall be presented here in the theoretical and empirical context. Theoretical approach builds on review of the most important definitions and concepts presented in the source literature. The empirical part refers to experiences gained by the Polish public organizations, including most of all the self-government units. The content of this paper builds on experience of workers from the Department of City and Regional

Management of the University of Łódź, gained from cooperation with self-government units. In the period of 2013-2015 the researchers have been participating in project called "Systemic support for management processes in the self-government units", co-financed by the European Union with the use of the European Social Fund financial resources. Task called "Development of innovative solutions in the field of public management" has been accomplished within this project. The task consisted in identification of local problems in 16 self-government units (which were selected in an open competition), as well as search for and establishment of adequate solutions to chosen local problems, presentation of obtained results, evaluation of costs and benefits behind the recommended solutions. The optimal solutions were based on a Living Lab methodology, with focus on innovative approaches. The authors strived for giving a new view at possible application of innovative solutions for public affairs management in the local self-governments. This is possible due to comparing the past academic achievements in this field against empirical experience gained within the project. Thus this article presents those approaches to public affairs management in the city, which based on project's outcome proved to bring the most benefits to the supported self-governments.

3. INNOVATIVE METHODS IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. Strategic management

First and basic management function is planning. Therefore, organizations like self-government units should search for most effective approaches in this area. A necessity to apply strategic management in the Polish self-governments is beyond any doubt. The units that took part in the before mentioned project "Systemic support for management processes in the self-government units", declared their readiness and showed their experience regarding application of such approach.

By using one of the most popular definitions of strategic management (Griffin, 1996, pp. 244), it is safe to assume that strategic management in the public sector organizations is a complex, ongoing managerial process, focused on formulating and implementing efficient strategies, which allow the organizations active in the public domain to be perfectly adapted to unstable environment. It is a way to approach chances and face challenges that become available to the organization. In other words, strategic management is the decision making process that allows choosing goals and paths for further development as well as methods and modes of performance (Miszczuk, Miszczuk, Żuk, 2007, pp. 172; Kot 2001, pp. 125). The strategic management in the operational sense is the informative and decisional process (supported by some management functions, such as: planning, organization, motivation, control), which aims at defining key problems in the organization's activity and highlighting the organization's potential to survive and develop, focusing mainly on impact that its surroundings have and on influential aspects of organization's potential main factors (Stabryła, 2000, pp. 11). Strategic management becomes efficient through the implementation process and it is conducive to better relations between organization and its environment and to achievement of strategic goals (Griffin, 1996, pp. 245).

In case of the Polish self-governments, strategic management, process of defining strategies and of undertaking actions to implement the strategic goals has started in the 1990s'. Nowadays this approach is widely used to define development processes in the self-government organizations. But J. Gościński noticed already in the 1980s' that „many aspects of contemporary management differ from the one used in the past, or even yesterday. [...] A premeditated development strategy and long-term policy are crucial to success" (Gościński, 1972, pp. 108). Since this statement is fully correct, it is safe to assume that strategic management does not convey characteristics of innovative approach. It is widely used and its usability does not raise any reservations. A concept of integrated management, based on integrated planning, has been defined on a higher level of management in self-government units. In a long term such approach enables obtaining synergy effects in the self-government units, which result from skillful use of economic, social and spatial resources as well as cooperation of various stakeholders on many platforms.

3.2. Integrated development planning – integrated projects

In Poland the self-governments, including units taking part in the before mentioned project, notice complex nature of processes that are crucial for development on local level. That makes it necessary

to reach for solutions giving a wide perspective of planned actions, both in relation to impact areas and entities taking part in planned solutions.

Integrated development planning highlights that already during diagnosing and planning stage of the process it is necessary to take into consideration relations between various entities, organizations, institutions, social groups, involved in varied activities with diverse impact on creation of development processes. Integrated planning may be described as holistic process that consists in setting goals and building paths to reach them and which takes into account relations between the most important players in that “game” for development (Turała, 2015, pp. 32).

Furthermore this approach highlights a need for cooperation and partnership building which may take form of joint actions undertaken on many levels, by diverse entities and sectors (Danielewicz, Sokołowicz, Żak-Skwierczyńska, 2015, pp. 122). Integrated projects serve as practical examples of such planning. These are complex and multilayered undertakings, during which actions are integrated and coordinated between sectors. Cooperation, public-private partnerships and institutional partnership are conditions that guarantee successful implementation of these multi-entity projects.

The most crucial features of integrated project include the following:

- consolidation of various development dimensions: social, economic, environmental;
- pursuing objectives common for various entities;
- merging powers and actions of various entities (partnership);
- building the projects based on each partner's readiness to contribute financially, materially and to share know-how;
- need to settle partnership relations (planning of actions, roadmap, budget); (Danielewicz, Sokołowicz, Żak-Skwierczyńska, 2015, pp. 125).

Nowadays some revitalization projects are the most important projects being implemented in Poland. The Polish cities are in difficult situation resulting from area management structure used in previous years. In the past, centrally planned economy in case of the cities meant that the areas outside of historically shaped center were vigorously conquered in order to serve as construction site, mainly for concrete-block buildings. Another characteristic feature of this period was a delayed construction and development of technical and social infrastructure which did not meet social needs. Furthermore modernization in central areas was not a priority back then. Away from cities' centers new quarters were built, with concrete-blocks large buildings, accommodating approximately 60 000 – 100 000 inhabitants. The process of city's natural evolution was hampered, as result of eliminating private ownership, abandoning market economy rules, lacking of ground rent, cessation of migration from villages to towns. Developed urban structures under such conditions became a reason for development of structural and functional thresholds, as well as a barrier to development of various functions, including metropolitan ones.

Revitalization (as integrated project for improvement in fragment of urban area chosen with objective criteria) is a chance for new chapter for the Polish cities. According to provisions of the National Urban Politics 2023, revitalization is an important part of approach towards urban development, thus it should become a key social and economic program for the city with regard to its problem areas (National Urban Politics, 2023, pp. 78). Revitalization should be well-thought-out, planned and complex integrated project which is created and implemented by means of the most innovative ideas and concepts in the field of city administration and management. Furthermore it should be implemented by means of the state of art technical and technological solutions.

3.3. “Smart city” concept

In 2014 Poland introduced new rule for limiting territorial self-government debt. Main cause behind changes introduced by new Public Finance Law is an increase in public debt, as well as a high debt of self-government units. The new rule consists in individual approach towards debt limit seen as function of given unit's operating result. For self-government units it caused real difficulties in incurring further debt. They started to search for long-term approaches in public service management, enabling long-term, regular savings. At the same time, in 2004 self-governments became key beneficiaries of the European Union structural funds, which can be obtained in order to implement modern and environment friendly infrastructural undertakings.

Smart city concept is an innovative approach providing for a modern management in the cities (urban areas), where cities are managed by means of state of the art technical resources offered by new technologies (including ICT) and in accordance with ecological requirements. All of these should be performed with keeping in mind the importance of tendency to save resources and to attain set goals. Innovative technologies, used in many areas of human activity, mainly in area of information technology and communication, allow a significant increase in urban space functionality and help decrease costs of public services rendered by the city. They support “smart” management in public domain organizations, though it is obvious that it is the people (authorities, society, users, and decision makers) who decide on implementation of rules behind this concept.

The “smart city” concept is not unambiguously defined and interpreted, different authors put emphasis on its various aspects (Kominos, 2002, pp. 1-2; Florida, 2005; Murray, Minevich, Abdoullaev, 2011; Hollands, 2008).

However in general, smart is the city which in long-term can demonstrate sustainable growth (high economic productivity) and offers high quality of life, promotes investments in human capital and in social capital, makes use of modern technics in the ITC field and of technological solutions guaranteeing quality of public services and which is managed in accordance with the governance rule. Both functionality and development of cities will naturally evolve in accordance with rules of sustainable growth and smart city concept. Smart city concept therefore refers to use of new, effective solutions in all management functions.

More and more Polish cities become a part of smart city concept (Stawasz, Sikora-Fernandez, Turala, 2012). Their actions focus mainly on increasing efficiency of energy use and launching smart communication systems.

3.4. Living lab

Within the framework of this project, a task called “Development of innovative solutions in the field of public management” was performed, where solving local problems in accordance with Living Lab concept was one of the implemented approaches. First of all it enabled testing of the Living Lab concept, but on the other hand it also enabled recognition of conditions for smooth implementation of participative approach to management in self-governments.

The Living Lab is a relatively new concept used for solving local problems. Its idea relates to creation of all types of innovative solutions, with assumption that they are developed in accordance with conditions in which they actually operate and with involvement of users. The users are being involved in given idea development process, in creation of prototype, its testing or validation¹. This concept may be used in creating novelties both in the field of products or consumer services, as well as in relation to public affairs.

Thus, Living Lab is the concept involving users on particular stages of idea and innovation creating processes, such as discovering novelties, preparing prototypes, validation and improvement (Lama, Oigin, 2006). It is however necessary to bear in mind that involvement of just prospective users in the Living Lab concept is not enough. It is essential to involve possibly wide group of stakeholders as well. Taking into account the inhabited area, for example understood as the city, in which the local community lives and tries to fulfil its needs, both the inhabitants as well as economic entities, together with tourists, employees of the municipality office, local authorities, representatives of municipality subsidiary units, heads of municipal enterprises and many others, belong to the group of stakeholders. These entities may represent various interests, sometimes even contending ones. A claim for satisfying these various interests is often difficult or even impossible to pursue. However it can be said that when interest of one group is safeguarded, it may directly or indirectly also lead to safeguarding interest of the other groups. An adequate approach to needs of different interest groups requires a support for novelty creation process from public authorities and potential suppliers of new solutions (business environment), as well as academia (which provides for creative human resources, laboratories, procedures etc.). Thus in order for the Living Lab to be efficiently implemented, a partnership, most often public-private partnership, is created, within which business, academia, public

¹ Validation means a final evidence that defined solution is effective in relation to assumed functionality, meets set requirements and standards.

authority and inhabitants work together to create, validate and test new public services, business ideas, technologies, etc. (Stawasz, Wiśniewska 2015, pp. 20-21).

The project realized according to assumptions of the Living Lab concept shows some specific features that can be defined in the following steps (Stawasz, Wiśniewska 2015, pp. 56):

1. official formation of a team to realize project;
2. establishing structures to support strategic and control management;
3. defining partial tasks and taking responsibility for them by stakeholders;
4. decisive verification of project's assumptions;
5. defining solution concept;
6. preparing solution prototype;
7. solution testing;
8. idea validation (the entirety of activities aiming at examining adequacy, accuracy or exactness);
9. control and monitoring;
10. promoting activities within the project and communication;
11. solution implementation and its popularization.

This concept refers to all essential management functions: planning of cities activities, where users are being involved in the decisions; organizing – involving citizens interferes with current organization structure; leading – public managers are supported by involved stakeholders; and controlling, as the decisions are taken on the basis of citizens perspective (control function is integrated in the concept).

Due to the fact that the Living Lab concept is very innovative, the creation of efficient processes, connections and relations is based on experience gained within initiatives implemented so far. In 2006 the entities that use the Living Lab concept established the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) in order to share know-how, experience and best practice. Five initiatives from Poland is registered within this Network. It is not to be said though that the Living Lab concept is popularized among the Polish territorial units. The undertakings that are being implemented are in accordance with the Living Lab methodology only partially.

3.5. Participatory budgeting

In practical functioning of the self-government units both decentralization process within democratic system that has been taking place in Poland for over 25 years now as well as innovative, effective and efficient public affairs management, require involving local communities in the decision making process. The active participation of inhabitants in the management processes makes it possible to implement various undertakings in accordance with expectations and needs of various social groups, to build and strengthen social capital, to create synergy effects, to prevent alienation of authorities from the society. The concept of social participation in the decision making processes on local level has both its advocates and opponents. However, in societies that have ever greater knowledge and understanding of management rules, which also are well aware of their rights, the efficiency of actions undertaken by public authorities may be lowered if citizens are not actively involved. Initiatives, proposals may meet with some resistance and lack of understanding on users' part, and then there is a risk of conflict between authorities and community. The following instruments may be listed within social participation: social consultations, participatory budgeting, and local initiative (Boryczka, 2015, pp. 61).

The participative budgeting (in Poland also sometimes called civil society budget) is a process that gives inhabitants a possibility to take part in discussion and have a direct influence on decisions as to which funds within budget shall be spent on projects submitted by citizens themselves. Financial resources within this budget may be intended for public utility tasks. Participatory budgeting in particular integrates two management functions: planning of financial resources and controlling (citizens exercise control function through financial decisions).

Such a participation of local society in decision making process as regards disbursement of public financial resources is widely used in many countries around the world. There is no single, universally binding model of participative budget. Its individual features depend on its goal and purpose which it is going to serve. The participative budgeting dates back to the 1980s'. Such a tool was implemented for the first time in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The participative budgeting concept has been evolving for quite a

long time to finally reach its primary form (with marginal changes introduced from year to year) in the period of 1991-1992. During consecutive years this solution has been popularized in Brazil. By the year 2008, almost 200 urban areas in this country has introduced participatory budgeting, impacting approximately 44 million inhabitants. Further on the participatory budgets were implemented in about 510 South American cities (data from 2010), and then it came time for Europe (around 200 cities), Africa, Asia, North America. Thus it became a worldwide phenomenon (Ganuza, Baiocchi, 2012). In Poland first participative budget was launched in Płock in years 2003-2005. The Municipal Office, PKN Orlen and the United Nations created so called "granting fund", which aimed at raising funds for realization of projects submitted by local nongovernment organizations. Similar steps were implemented in Sopot in 2011 and were named "civil society budget". Since then it is a customary name used to describe participative budgeting in Poland. In 2012 Elbląg, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Zielona Góra followed in Sopot's footsteps. The activities based on rules similar to those of civil society budgeting were also undertaken on the voivodeship level (Podlaskie), quarter level (in cities such as Gdańsk, Lublin and Kraków) as well as institutional level (in one of Warsaw's community centers). The city of Łódź has successfully implemented two editions of civil society budget.

The civil society budget is most often created in few steps, first by defining what priorities community members have when it comes to public expenditures, then choosing budgetary delegates representing local communities, providing for self-government unit's technical support, organizing meetings in order to debate on priorities and vote, and finally implementing those ideas which have a real influence on inhabitants' quality of life.

Theoretical studies, as well as empirical experience of the cities that use this participative democracy model, show that it results in higher quality of life, increased satisfaction in relation to public services, increased transparency and credibility of public authorities, increased participation in public life (especially of excluded individuals) and civil society education (Stawasz, Wiśniewska 2015, pp. 205).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Strategic management is widely used in practice by the Polish self-governments. However it is the integrated management concept that makes management more efficient and makes it possible to create synergy effects in the long-term. In Poland such approach is used mainly in relation to revitalization projects.

The changes within regulations on self-government debt and availability of the European Union funds for innovative infrastructural undertakings result in increased interest in the smart city concept. The Polish self-governments mainly invest in projects that result in energy savings and projects in the field of modern communication systems.

The Living Lab is the most innovative amongst the implemented approaches. This concept makes it possible to create innovative solutions that are in accordance with users' needs. It has, however, some limitations, which are consequences of for example lengthy decision making process, transaction costs of project's implementation, dispersed responsibility for the project and risk of gaining strength by stronger stakeholders' groups.

More and more self-governments implement the civil society budgets, giving citizens the possibility to make decisions in relation to objectives on which some fraction of financial resources within the self-government unit should be spent. Introduction of the civil society budget brings significant benefits. It results in the increase in efficiency and productivity of implemented development policy, it increases inhabitants' involvement and creativity, it enhances interconnections between inhabitants by giving them possibility to be part of the decision making process, it increases the citizens confidence in local authorities, and involves them in democratic processes, builds citizen society and social capital (Gałęcki, 2013). There are possible obstacles when it comes to budget implementation, for example it is necessary to provide for participation of local (regional) community members in the realization process, to involve self-governments officials, local politicians; furthermore some of the politicians may be reluctant due to the fear of losing influence on budget's structure; another obstacle may be a significant increase in local community's expectations and connected with them difficulties in practical use of the budget (Sorychta-Wojaszczyk, 2015).

It has to be taken into account that innovative management methods within the self-government units require strong involvement on the part of local stakeholders' groups and mutual trust. They also require public managers to have new skills and understanding of the simple fact that in the long-term public affairs cannot be managed without cooperation between authorities and society, otherwise social conflicts will arise.

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