

→ The draft of a City vision

Country Serbia

Project title The draft of a City vision

Twinning Municipality of Sittard-Geleen (the Netherlands)
Municipality of Valjevo (Serbia)

Project period June 2008 to December 2009

Project budget € 53.401,91

Project objective

The establishment of a city vision for Valjevo that enables the municipality to more effectively plan and coordinate projects and activities for improving the municipality.

Project summary

Sittard-Geleen supported Valjevo in the development of a city vision, approved by the city council and the assembly. Based on a SWOT analysis, round table conferences and meetings with citizens and experts, Valjevo developed a vision what the city should look like in 2020 and how to get there.

Core information

The city of Valjevo is located in the west of Serbia. With 96,761 inhabitants it functions as the economic, administrative, and cultural centre of the Kolubara District. Agriculture and industry are the backbones of the local economy. The river Gradac flowing through Valjevo is the cleanest river in Europe. Valjevo has a twinning with Sittard Geleen since 1988.

Problem analysis

The city of Valjevo was lacking a vision what it wanted to be for its citizens. As a consequence goals of projects were not clearly defined and coordination between several projects was lacking. There was insufficient cooperation with stakeholders within the community as enterprises, the Chamber of Commerce and NGOs. Furthermore effective cooperation between politicians and civil servants was lacking. Thus, there was a high risk of wasting money and unsatisfied citizens who did not see their situation improving.

Project implementation

As main coordinator of the project a Change Team was established at the beginning including all relevant stakeholders as the mayor, the head of the administration, the president of the city assembly, and the vice president of the chamber of commerce. Next to the Change Team a Project Team was established

for implementing all the project activities. As a first task the Change and Project team created an action plan for the implementation of the project as well as a communication plan. This plan contained weekly press conferences about the development of the city vision, articles in the local news paper, and information on the municipal website www.valjevo.org.rs etc. Furthermore members of the Change and Project team personally provided citizens with flyers to invite them for participating in upcoming activities. The first activity – in which 100 citizens participated – was the development of a SWOT analyses of the city. Based on this analysis an ambition document was developed that has been discussed with several target groups. The outcome of this participatory process was a city vision document that has been approved by the city assembly. Besides that a manual on how to develop a city vision has been realised that describes the process.

Process management

The process itself was a novelty for the local community since it engaged large numbers of local stakeholders. This bottom-up approach resulted in a raising awareness of the local community and commitment to the project. This citizens oriented participation process made the city administration more aware of the need to involve citizens for future city development projects as well.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Involve all relevant stakeholders with the community.
- Organize activities that generate a maximum of exchange of ideas.
- Keep the citizens continuously involved on the process.