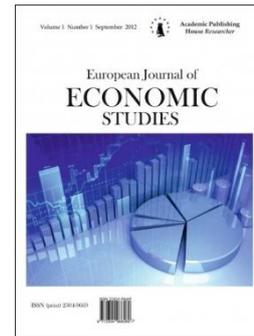


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Articles and Statements

Environmental Awareness of the Population: the Case of the Municipality of Voždovac (Belgrade)

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Abstract

Environmental awareness is to understand the fragility of our environment and the importance of its protection. Promoting environmental awareness is an easy way to become an environmental steward and participate in creating a brighter future for our children. Before you can begin promoting environmental awareness in your own community you must first make sure that you have a thorough understanding of environmental issues. People's actions do not reflect such high levels of environmental consciousness (Ai Hiramatsu et al., 2015). Such contradiction between attitude and action has been mentioned in studies (see Stern, 2000; Kollmuss, Agyeman, 2002; Giuseppe, 2006; Ando et al., 2007; Harju-Autti et al., 2014). The aim of this paper is to review environmental awareness, for example Belgrade municipality Voždovac.

Keywords: municipality Voždovac, environmental awareness, research, survey.

1. Introduction

Environmental awareness according to Wielewska and Zuzek (2015) citing research Hull (1984) and Zarządzenie Głównym (2007) indicates that refers to the ideas, values, and opinions about the environment as a place in man's life and development, common for certain social groups during a historical period. It can also refer to the state of people's knowledge, opinions, and notions about the role of the environment in human life, including the state of knowledge about methods and tools for the management of using, protecting, and shaping the environment. People develop their environmental awareness under the influence of commonly accepted social norms, information in the mass media, and various forms of environmental education. Hull (1984) by Wielewska and Zuzek (2015) defining the concept of environmental awareness, gave it two dimensions: individual and collective. In the individual dimension, the term referred to experiencing ways of thinking about the natural environment by individuals, whereas in the collective dimension, it referred to standards of understanding, experiencing, and evaluating the biosphere. Environmental awareness is, according to him, "a form of social awareness manifesting itself both in the thinking and experiences of individuals and in standards of understanding, experiencing, and evaluating the biosphere which function in society".

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Attention is focused worldwide on the environmental change, inequalities in development, and political instability. There is awareness that the earth is one unit of interrelated activity, which can disrupt the single fragile ecosystem. Commoner thesis is that social, economic, technological, and political factors are important intervening factors between the environment and population views. Now the focus is on research (Clarke 1993). The goal of sustainable development for the present and future generations is important conceptually. Sustainable development implies that population activities must be integrated with environmental awareness. The UN Population Fund directs activity toward reordering priorities and emphasizes greater energy efficiency and resource conservation... Population-environmental education is best linked with human geography syllabuses, which pertain to multiple levels and periods of analysis and are sensitive to the great diversity of cultures, economies, politics, and environments (Clarke, 1993). In our example, we point out the ecological awareness of the population of the Belgrade municipality of Voždovac.

2. Area Research

Municipality of Voždovac is located in the southeastern part of Belgrade. It occupies an area of 14.864 ha, with about 167,000 inhabitants. Borders with municipalities: Vračar in the north, Zvezdara in the northeast, Grocka on the east, Sopot on the south, Barajevo in the southwest, Čukarica and Rakovica on west and Savski Venac in the northwest. The most important tourist potentials on the territory of the municipality of Voždovac are: mountain complex Avala with the Monument to the Unknown Hero, mountain home Čarapićev scope, area Šuplja rock, natural lake in the village Trešnja, artificial lake Bela River in Ripnj, artificial lake between settlements Pinosava and Resnik, memorial – park in Jajincima, house Vojvode Stepe in Kumodraž. On a wider space Avala as important tourism resources are identified thermal water, Zavojnička River as well as rural settlements Beli Potok, Zuce, hamlet Brđani, Pinosava with the possibilities of developing rural tourism or developing economic content in the function of tourism. However, nature itself took care to remind people of this fact. In the municipality of Voždovac, there are also Banjica Forest and several parks such as: Park Šumice, Park Jajinci, Memorial park Topovske sheds and wooded area Stepin grove (www.wikipedia.org).

3. Research Method

"A valid method that it is the shortest route, allows the attainment of its goals" (R. Descartes). Proceeding from these conclusions R. Descartes, we want to emphasize that the methodology in this paper is not an end in itself but as a completely and organically related to the subject line and functionally subordinate to the proclaimed goal. The whole procedure involved the conduct of research using the combined method for the observation with the key involvement, and creating and using the following sources: oral (survey), written (relevant literature). The results presented textually (see Bulatović, Rajović, 2013; Rajović, Bulatović, 2017a).

3.1. Sample

The sample included 305 inhabitants of the Municipality Voždovac. Sample included people of different age – sex distribution and educational level. Age range covered is from 18 to 60 years and over.

3.2. Instrument

For research purposes, we have created a curriculum. Questions divided into five categories: insight into environmental awareness, waste management, municipal infrastructure, environmental actions and of the state of the environment. The questionnaire made after the model of an instrument designed for the intentions of this research, using the formulation of rules of inquiry questions: Curry et al (2005), Yamada (2009), Anderson et al (2010), Pušić and Pajvančić-Cizelj (2012), Lekić and Jovanović (2015). The survey was, conducted by a group of students (young environmentalists) Higher Vocational School of the Textile Design, Technology and Management in Belgrade in the second half of 2015 and 2016 years under the direction of Professor Jelisavka Bulatović. In this context, in terms of results and their interpretation, we used to study Sumski (2007), Koković (2010), Säynäjoki et al. (2014), LEAP (2015).

4. Objective Research

The main aim is to determine the state of environmental awareness of residents. The basic starting point of research is the concept of active protection of the environment, in our example, the Municipality Voždovac is that the environment must be protected in advance as a whole. According to Sola (2014) “the involvement of public in the implementation of environmental education programmers and campaigns cannot be over-emphasized but this is not the case. Air, water and soil pollution is on the increase. To minimize these problems, environmental awareness is imperative (see Rajović, Bulatović, 2017b; Bulatović, Rajović, 2017a; Rajović, Bulatović, 2017d; Bulatović, Rajović, 2017b). Lack of adequate environmental knowledge is an obstacle in achieving a sustainable future for humankind at both global and local levels. Measuring the level of environmental awareness in a population can be difficult but environmental awareness programmed can help reduce the impacts of human activities on the environment”. Educating adult, community, traditional and religious leaders on the importance of environmental health and on the well use of the natural environment by Sola (2014) is also very critical to sustainable development (see Rajović, Bulatović, 2017e; Bulatović, Rajović, 2017c; Rajović, Bulatović, 2017f).

5. Survey – Questions and Answers

Abiding by the rules of survey phrasing: Henson (1994), Bulatović and Rajović (2011), Bulatović and Rajović (2013), Gotkiewicz and Sternik (2014), Rajović and Bulatović (2015), Khajeshahkoochi et al (2015), Rajović and Bulatović (2015), Bulatović and Rajović (2016), Nišić et al (2016), Bulatović and Rajović (2016), Morrison and Beer (2017) we review the questions and answers given.

5.1. Analysis of Results and their Interpretations

Based on survey data, in the form of a short summary, we point to the following major findings:

- It is interesting that almost all respondents (92 %) declared to act environmentally responsible and that is something made for the benefit of the environment.
- With the term "sustainable development" was introduced more than half (55 %), but the alarming statistic that as many as them (34 %) is or has been partially aware of its true meaning.
- Questionnaire survey answers that only (33 %) of respondents knew the standards and legislation on environmental protection.
 - On the question of whether a section, association or group of pupils/students who are actively engaged in issues of environment 48 % of them answered yes, 22 % with no, while not familiar 30 % of respondents.
 - More than half (46 %) respondents of the municipality Voždovac classified domestic waste, while 54 % of the respondents do not.

Table 1. Results inquiry

Questions	Reply in %
1. What priority do you give to the environmental problems in municipality Voždovac?	
the most important	24
important, but we have bigger problems	52
not particularly important	23
not important	1

How would you describe the state of the environment in municipality Voždovac ?	
excellent	1
satisfactory	13
not satisfactory	54
bad	32
3. Who are the biggest polluters in municipality Voždovac ?	
agriculture	7
industry	37
utility companies	12
citizens	44
4. What are in your opinion the biggest environmental problems in municipality Voždovac?	
solid waste	26
water pollution	39
air pollution	16
soil pollution	19
5. What are the major factors that affect the state of the environment in municipality Voždovac ?	
poor level of civic and environmental awareness	63
inadequate and unenforceable laws	11
lack of experts in competent institutions	10
failure to comply with the environmental laws	17
6. Who are, in your opinion the key actors in environmental problem - solving?	
competent institutions	42
companies, potential and actual polluters	18
organized groups of citizens and NGOs	7
all citizens	33

7. Do you behave in an environmentally responsible?	
yes	92
no	8
8. Are you familiar with the term "sustainable development", and do you know it's true meaning?	
yes	55
no	34
partly	11
9. Do you know the standards and legislation on environmental protection?	
yes	33
no	4
partly	64
10. Is there a section in your neighborhood, association or group of pupils / students who are actively engaged in environmental issues?	
yes	48
no	22
I'm not familiar / familiar	30
11. I sort household waste?	
yes	46
no	54
11. You in your neighborhood separate collection for different types of waste (glass, paper, plastic, cans ...)	
yes	17
no	83
12. Is there in your neighborhood uncontrolled disposal of municipal waste?	
yes	66
no	34

13. Are you satisfied with the organization of municipal waste?	
yes	29
no	71
14. What are your sources of information about waste and its disposal, landfill and protecting the living space?	
TV	55
print	12
school / workplace	11
"story"	22
15. Did you know you just by law have the opportunity to propose initiatives on the location of municipal waste disposal and regulation of the settlement?	
yes	25
no	75
16. Are you satisfied with the utility infrastructure of settlements?	
yes	87
no	13
17. Are you well - known projects by the local government to protect the environment?	
yes	26
no	42
I do not think about it	32
18. Do you think local government should do more for the purity of the settlement and improvement of environmental awareness?	
yes	97
no	3
19. What should I do?	
adopted important laws on environmental protection for violations of the same draconian punish	34

money helps	30
suggests important	20
projects on ecology	12
i do not think about it	2
a reason	2
20. Have you participated in any environmental action in your neighborhood?	
yes	30
no	70

Source: Calculating data from the authors.

- Separate collection of different types of waste (glass, paper, plastic, cans...). Are not represented in sufficient numbers so that the population is forced to dispose of waste without sorting the containers (83 %).

- More than half of respondents (66 %) declared the existence of uncontrolled waste dumping in town. As we saw on the ground, it is sufficient that only one truck unloading trash beside the road and within 24 hours the resulting "mini" dump.

- Only 29 % of respondents said they were satisfied with the organization of municipal waste disposal. If we consider that 71 % of respondents said they did not, it seems that there are dumpsites in the settlement. Here, in particular emphasizing the 23 "wild dumps" on the territory of the municipality.

- Television, it is quite obvious, the most powerful medium we use to inform people about these important issues. In second place printed. Schools and the workplace as a source of information as a warning, and are the last place. Even the impact of the information they hear from other "story" more. Poll suggests the following answers: television (55 %), newspapers (12 %), school/work place (11 %), the story (22 %).

- Based on the data analysis we found that only 25 % of respondents are aware that this is the law and they can propose an initiative on the location of municipal waste disposal and regulation of the municipality Voždovac. Completed rehabilitation of the existing square with a fountain and the surrounding associated area, planted with evergreen plants.

- A large number of respondents (87 %) are not satisfied with the public utilities of the on municipality Voždovac. Namely, intensive urbanization of the municipality could be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, the high costs of construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure networks and installations.

- Disturbing is the fact that 42 % of respondents answered that it is not known projects with the goal of environmental protection by local governments, and 31.98 % of them not to think about it.

- Most respondents (97 %) believe that local governments do not participate enough in promoting environmental awareness and the awareness of population about the importance of environmental protection.

- Questionnaire in the survey gives the answer of the respondents to the local government can significantly improve and preserve the environment, namely: the adoption of important laws on environmental protection (34 %), for violations of the same draconian punish (30 %), financial assistance to village in municipality (20 %), adopt important projects in the field of ecology (12 %),

their reasons (to hire more people to care about the cleanliness of the settlement, the introduction of community policing ... is put forward by 2 %) and not think about it 2 % of the respondents.

- The respondents were asked to prioritize the environmental problems in municipality Voždovac and the answers obtained can be analyzed from different aspects. The most common answer (52 %) was that environmental protection is important, but we have bigger problems (unemployment, low personal income...). Bearing in mind other long-term economic difficulties, this response is absolutely justified. On the other hand, if we sum up all the positive answers (important + the most important) and compare them with all the negative answers (not particularly important + not important) we obtain a satisfactory ratio of 76: 24, which means that for every three citizens who perceive environmental issues as important, there is only one citizen who ignores these problems (see [Nišić et al., 2016](#)).

- Respondents described the state of the environment in the municipality of Voždovac in the following way: excellent (1 %), satisfactory (13 %), not satisfactory (54 %) and bad (32 %). From the given data it can be explicitly concluded that as many as 76 % of the respondents indicate not an unsatisfactory or poor state of the environment. Our research evidence based on similar research Middleton et al (2011) indicates that "...the surroundings within which humans exist and that are made up of - i) the land, water and atmosphere of the earth; ii) micro-organisms, plant and animal life; iii) any part or combination of (i) and (ii) and the interrelationships among and between them; and iv) the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and well-being" (see [Rajović, Bulatović, 2015a, b](#); [Rajović, Bulatović, 2017g](#)).

- The respondents were extremely self-critical and to the question of who are the biggest polluters of the environment in municipality Voždovac, they marked the citizens as the major polluters (44 %). Industry and mining, traditionally perceived as "dirty" polluters, follow with 37 %. With this attitude the citizens of municipality Voždovac refuted the stereotype, which can be attributed to the urban environment in which they live. This indicates a high degree of recognition of personal responsibility. As well and Middleton et al. (2011) we conclude "the state of our environment will determine the level of our prosperity now and for future generations. As we strive to address social equity and economic development in the years to come, our ability to improve the state of the environment and secure environmental sustainability will shape our future".

- With 39 %, water is marked as the most endangered medium, immediately followed by solid waste with 26 %. It is interesting that respondents are the least concerned about the medium that surrounds them - the air! At this place we are calling for research Middleton et al (2011) and emphasizing "while there are increasing expectations on local government to take custodianship of the environment this is within a municipal climate where funding, skills and capacity are under severe pressure across all areas of municipal functions. The environment has long been a secondary priority in the face of extreme poverty and the need for development and economic growth. Thus the push for local government to achieve greater performance in this sector is countered by many opposing pressures. However, it is important to emphasize that development and economic growth that is achieved at the expense of the environment (i.e. those results is not sustainable and impoverishes future generations by reducing their options and ability to meet their own needs.

- The majority of respondents (63 %) believe that the low level of civic and environmental awareness affects the state of the environment in municipality Voždovac. The respondents were again self-critical and, among others, hold themselves accountable for the actual situation. In the opinion of the respondents, key stakeholders in solving environmental problems are: competent institutions (44 %), all citizens (33 %), followed by companies, potential and actual polluters (18 %), organized groups of citizens and NGOs (7 %) (see [Nišić et al, 2016](#)).

- In any environmental action is not took part (71.36 %) subjects in the settlement, although the majority (84 %) wanted to. One such action was in mid 2017 years on the initiative of the Parents Council of the elementary school "Đura Daničić". Namely, a great ecological action was organized for a more beautiful and arranged school yard, which included students, the Eco patrol of the municipality of Voždovac and the local community. The aim of the action is to develop ecological awareness, eco activism and team spirit in children, with the example of a positive practice of jointly regulating green areas. The children were led by their teachers and teachers who had the role of the team coordinator, all activities were adapted to their age, and concrete cleaning

work was done by Eco patrol. It is planned that in the coming period an exhibition of the best and most beautiful eco - messages and artworks will be made by students of this school, inspired by the practical activities that have been carried out today.

"In order to realize the concept of sustainable communities, it is secure future and prevents the devastation of the environment, which produces a risk society, it is necessary to perform a deep transformation and consider the environment as a whole. The most difficult exam that a man taken from its beginning to today, can be successfully overcome and lay solely and only the introduction of quality excellence and sustainable development" (Danelisen et al, 2008).

6. Conclusion

An especially important link in environmental protection is people, with their behavior and relationship to the environment. Environmental awareness depends on many factors, the influence of which is exceptionally complex because of the way they interact with one another and exert joint effects (Smrekar, 2012). The factors that affect environmental consciousness and the human relationship to the environment were dealt with by Holgdate (1979), Špes (1998), Waring and Glendon (1998), Smrekar and Breg (2008) are "to study environmental degradation as a factor of urban landscape as well as dealt with seeking an environmentally aware body that could represent a core for expanding the idea of environmental protection as a whole and also its individual features" (Smrekar, 2012).

Survey included of the Municipality Voždovac. A total of 305 interviewed persons of different age and educational level. Our goal was to determine the state of environmental awareness. Surveys have shown the results and interpret the causes of the situation. In conclusion the survey may be implemented in a very high environmental awareness of inhabitants of Municipality Voždovac, according to their own opinion, but out of the question of whether it is an actual picture. This fact leads us to the question of self – criticism surveyed population, and the conclusion of under – informed people about the significance and importance of ecology. At this indicates the fact that even 48 % of respondents classified waste. Surprisingly, the fact that 42 % of respondents answered that it is not known projects with the goal of environmental protection by local governments, and 32 % of them not to think about it. Also, 84 % of respondents stated that the settlement does not exist in sufficient number of separate collection of different types of waste (glass, paper, plastic, cans...). Television is the most powerful medium through which the respondents informed about municipal affairs. It has been shown and that the influence of school and workplace concern. Intense urbanization of villages could be accompanied by appropriate infrastructure, the high costs of construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure networks and installations. Further, there are also inevitable negative consequences for the environment. Here we speak to one of the Indicators of households especially households in the marginal zone were without access to public water and sewerage. Accordingly, the hygienic conditions of housing in these locations may not be satisfactory. Sewage is the major municipal infrastructure system, but untidy. The sewerage network has unwanted outbursts pumping stations are in dilapidated condition, facilities for waste water does not meet the legislative standards. The majority of respondents 97 % said that local governments do not participate enough in promoting environmental awareness and the awareness of population about the importance of environmental protection. Almost 34 % of respondents provide the answer to the local government can improve the environment by adopting the law, while on the other side of them, 29 % said that took part in the environmental action of the City. On the other hand, if we sum up all the positive answers (important + the most important) and compare them with all the negative answers (not particularly important + not important) we obtain a satisfactory ratio of 76:24, which means that for every three citizens who perceive environmental issues as important, there is only one citizen who ignores these problems. With 39 %, water is marked as the most endangered medium, immediately followed by solid waste with 26 %. It is interesting that respondents are the least concerned about the medium that surrounds them – the air!

Our research records are based on similar research Viler Kovačić (2001) indicates that with economic growth, the use of natural resources also increases, resulting in increased production of larger quantities of waste (see O'Brien, 2007; Larijani, 2010; Haghghatian et al, 2013; Rajović, Bulatović, 2017h). Although waste is an important source of pollution and a threat to all elements of the environment, normative regulations for waste management have long been one of the most

poorly regulated areas of environmental protection in Serbia. The reasons can be sought in the social relationship to waste and the way it is handled. Law on Environmental Protection of Serbia regulates an integral environmental protection system that ensures the realization of the human right to life and development in a healthy environment and a balanced relationship of economic development and the environment in the Republic of Serbia ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No. 135/2004, 36/2009, 36/2009 – state law, 72/2009 - state law, 43/2011 - decision of the Constitutional Court and 14/2016). The implementation of this law provided a new approach to solving the problem of environmental protection in general and also the problem of waste management, which is increasingly more pressing with accession to the European Union, the legislative framework was substantially improved. In any case, this is not sufficient; all stakeholders must be informed, educated, and made aware.

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