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**Decentralized Local Services for Improvement of Quality of Life in the
Republic of Macedonia, Case Study Tetovo Municipality**

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Abstract: The process of decentralization in Macedonia began in July 2005, after the adaption of the constitutional amendments made which triggered the process of the decentralization in the Republic of Macedonia. Having in mind that the decentralization implied structural changes in the Macedonian political system and in relations between the central and the local government, the implementation of the process of the decentralization was designed with a phased approach in order to accommodate the local government institutions with the new competencies. Among others the process of decentralization had an objective to bring the local authorities closer to the citizens through provision of quality local services. In addition it aims to provide an opportunity for broader participation and representation of the citizens in their communities. This paper attempts to answer three main questions related to quality public services: - The process of decentralization has helped to improve the quality of public services? - What areas of public services under municipal jurisdiction are satisfied with it? - How much would you like to be informed about community activities? In this paper we are going to analyze the findings from the field research about the quality of public service that provide the municipality of Tetovo of R. Macedonia. The paper focuses on the satisfaction on the public services and provides recommendations for future improvement of the decentralized public services in the Republic of Macedonia.

Keywords: Decentralization; Public service; Local self-government units; Citizens satisfaction; quality of service

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Considering that the Law on Local Self-government only provides a general framework for the responsibilities of the municipality and the limitations in access to fiscal resources provided by the Law on Financing of Local Self-phased approach has helped relieve the municipalities during this process.

Law on Financing of Local Self-government has paved the way for new revenue sources for municipalities to support the implementation of the new competencies transferred. Of 85 municipalities, 68 entered the second phase of decentralization, fiscal decentralization. This is expected to increase municipal revenues from collection of municipal taxes, state land management, and property taxes.

All this means that the administrative capacities of municipalities should be significantly strengthened if any significant progress was made in terms of delivery and improve services at local level and bringing about better opportunities for development and improving the living standards of citizens.

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1.2. The Authorities of the Municipality and Economic Development

The process of decentralization municipalities are faced with serious difficulties in terms of human and capital resources in providing quality public services for citizens. This fact is noted in the European Commission report filed in 2006 on Macedonia's progress in preparing for EU membership: "There are still serious challenges to be addressed before making the next steps in the process of decentralization. The issue of debt remains a problem, and substantial debt could threaten the functioning of several municipalities. Smaller municipalities have difficulties in providing basic services. Possible under-funding of the education sector is a subject of concern. municipal tax collection remained a challenge in many municipalities. Further progress in fiscal decentralization will require the development of financial and internal control mechanisms to ensure proper planning and to minimize the risk of corruption. Capacity fraud and municipalities to manage state property should be developed, especially considering the limited resources available to stimulate local economic development."

In 2004 UNDP published the National Human Development Report-2004 decentralization called for human development. According to that report, increasing the powers of the municipality should lead to their greater involvement in the planning of local economic development. [This may refer to the main findings of our project] municipalities may have a greater role in implementing social programs, such as those for unemployment or poverty reduction. Specifically, local authorities are able, whether alone or in cooperation with local NGOs to more effectively identify beneficiaries of social programs and thus ensure that social assistance to the poorest.

1.3. The Quality of Public Services and Decentralization

Local development is at the heart of politics and political discussions of decentralization in Macedonia. Decentralization among other objectives such as, approaching the local authorities to the people, providing an opportunity for broader participation and representation, another important goal to provide quality public services. This report will try to answer three main questions related to quality public services:

- The process of decentralization has helped to improve the quality of public services?
- What areas of public services under municipal jurisdiction are satisfied with it?
- How much would you like to be informed about community activities?

2. Methodology

2.1. Methodic Approach, Procedures and Instruments

Satisfaction of citizens from services offered at the level of municipality and its assessment about the impact of decentralization on the quality of services are based on questionnaires, taking into account the specifications and priorities of the municipality. The questionnaire consists of fifteen question (Annex 1) that focus on collecting information for analysis of the four principles first which satisfaction with the services that are under the jurisdiction of the municipality 2nd impact of decentralization on the quality of municipal services 3rd the participation in the process of creating policies 4th suggestions for improving the quality of services. After the actual statistical analysis of the responses of the respondents followed the presentation of guides with focus groups composed of municipal administration (service providers) and focus groups of service users or citizens. According to data obtained from the survey concern the municipality for education as a whole, as well as public hygiene and public greenery is a low assessed. Due to this fact when selecting members of the focus group will be taken to be representatives from the department of educational and community services.

The sample of research advance was not elected according to the criteria of representativeness, but on the contrary, he was a target, situational elected. Namely surveyed all citizens during the interviews

were for a service in your municipality, and approved to answer our interviewers. Therefore, some comments are according to biographical data they collected about participants in the survey.

3. Results of Field Research

3.1. Significance of differences between respondents

In order to verify the objectivity and consistency to the statements of the respondents did check the interconnection of key variables (tab.1 and tab.2).

Thus, a significant rank correlation between general job satisfaction of the municipality as a whole and satisfaction with the quality of municipal services in four key areas, shows that the respondents are consistent in their assessments of ordered services of public administration of the municipality of Tetovo.

Table 1 correlation among key variables

<i>no.</i>	<i>Correlations between variables</i>	<i>Rang coefficient (ρ)</i>	<i>Pirson coefficient of correlation R</i>	<i>significance</i>
1.	General satisfaction and satisfaction with urban planning, construction and spatial arrangement	0,519	0,084	Significance ρ
2.	General satisfaction and satisfaction with the collection of taxes	0,407	0,100	Significance ρ
3.	General satisfaction and satisfaction with the care of hygiene and public greenery	0,614	0,064	Significance ρ
4.	General satisfaction and satisfaction with care, on education and personnel policy	0,464	0,090	Significance ρ
5.	General satisfaction and assessment of the impact of decentralization on the quality of services	0,392	0,121	Significance ρ
6.	Information and assessment of the impact of decentralization on the quality of services	-0,286	0,490	Significance R
7.	Education of students and evaluation of the impact of decentralization and the quality of services	-0,024	0,043	No significance
8.	The age of respondents and assess the impact of decentralization the quality of services	-0,016	0,062	No significance
9.	The age of respondents and their level of knowledge about things in the municipality	-0,024	0,492	Significance R

Correlation between variables and rank coefficient

Table 2 Inspection by χ^2 (chi-square) test of the relevant variables

<i>no</i>	<i>The correlation between attributes variables</i>	χ^2	<i>Scale of freedom</i>	<i>Significance</i>
1.	Gender distribution and assess the impact of decentralization on the quality of service	4,11 2	3	Not
2.	Employment status and impact assessment of the decentralization on the quality of service	1,59 2	6	Not
3.	The level of education of respondents and their level of awareness	0,49 7	12	Not

The connection of assessing the impact of decentralization on the quality of public services in the municipality is the lower limit of the significance of the correlation (ed. no. 5 of Table 1). However,

this connection is sufficient to indicate that the process of decentralization, if not crucial, however contributes to the quality of public services at the level of municipality.

Unlike previous relationship, more informed respondents giving a higher rating of the positive impact of decentralization on the quality of public services (ed. No. 6 of Table 1). This higher correlation increases on the belief that objective, the process of decentralization and of itself is a factor to improve the quality of public services in the municipality.

Testing the connection between the estimates of the impact of decentralization to the level of education of respondents shows no significant relationship (ed. 7 of Table 1). We can interpret those participants with different levels of education the same way you evaluate the impact of decentralization on the quality of services. It further indicates that the estimates can be considered quite realistic or objective. If we added that testing the impact of age (red.br.8 from Table 1), gender and employment status (ed. 1 and order. No. 2 of Table 2) the assessment of decentralization shows independence these three variables from the assessment of the impact of decentralization, then confidence in the objectivity of the assessment of the impact of decentralization on the quality of services in the municipality continues to increase.

Correlation, between the level of awareness and age is significant, which leads to the conclusion that older respondents are more informed about the work of the municipality. Is it just due to age or greater experience accumulated higher levels of awareness, should be further checked.

3.2. Satisfaction with the Work of the Municipality as a Whole

The overall assessment for the municipality as a whole is satisfactory. Under the strict criterion of satisfaction higher than 44% can be considered as a high degree of bvolstvo satisfied. If we add the respondents gave the assessment satisfied then we come to two thirds higher job satisfaction of the municipality. As previously pointed out, this high score is correlated with satisfaction with specific services that will be shown below. But a third disgruntled citizen is a fact negligible, particularly as you can see the section on handling complaints and the level of awareness.

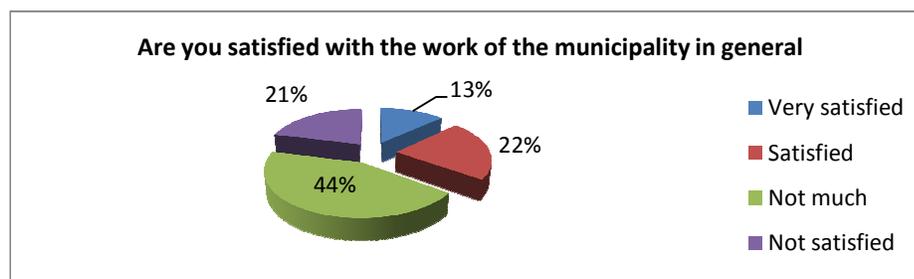


Figure 1. Satisfaction with the work of the municipality as a whole

3.3. Satisfaction with the services of Urban Planning, Building and Planning

Services in the field of urban planning, construction and spatial arrangement are dominant in terms of needs and interests of citizens. Satisfaction with these services is slightly lower than the general satisfaction (fig.7), which can be interpreted in the opposite direction – of satisfaction services of this kind significantly from the general job satisfaction of the municipality.

In addition to statements of the respondents for their relatively high satisfaction with this kind of public services, in addition to state and the objective fact of the intense urbanization of the municipality that is probably, among other things, conditioned by the efficiency of delivery of this kind of public services of the municipal administration.

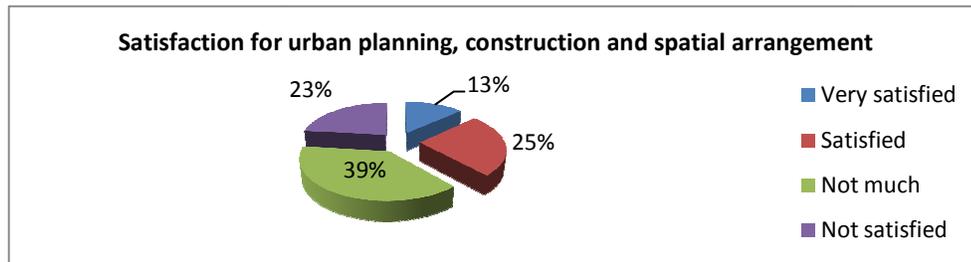


Figure 2. Satisfaction for urban planning, construction and spatial arrangement

3.4. Satisfaction with the Collection of Taxes

The collecting taxes and citizens expressed a high degree of satisfaction (Fig. 8). Since this is the performance of the obligation of citizens to the municipality and the state, this high degree of satisfaction is above the expected level, probably due to the perception that increased collection of all taxpayers in the past, mainly the ones noticed that you regularly perform their tax obligations. Also, this needs to be joined the practice of the methodology and the manner of calculation and payment of tax along with increased technical and human capacities of the municipality leading to greater satisfaction of citizens from this kind of service.

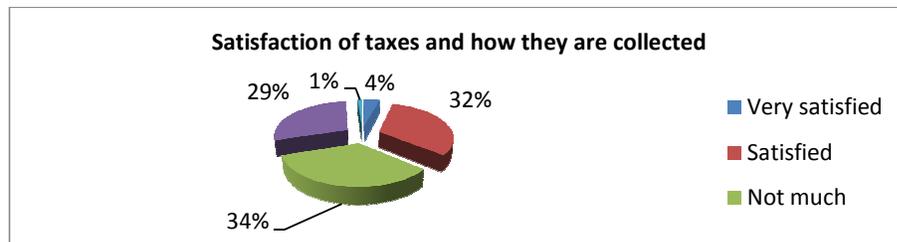


Figure 3 Satisfaction of taxes and how they are collected

3.5. Satisfaction with the Care of Hygiene and Public Greenery

Caring for the urban public hygiene and public greenery in January rounded care of the municipality for the total urban ambience of the city. But while the delivery of services in urban planning at the individual level is within a solid practice, then the perception of the care of the city's public dimension of urban environment is very low (sl.0): less than one third of respondents were satisfied from what they see as a public hygiene and public greenery, and even only 12% said they are very satisfied with the exercise of this function of the municipality or its public enterprises. Un satisfaction of this service is an interesting fact given the fact that the municipality at least once every week knocking on doors of all private courtyards within the municipality and organize more times stopping at special locations such as schools, apartment buildings and other defined collection point of junk. According to data obtained from the focus group about the possible reasons for low hygiene pleasure of greenery and two reasons were cited, first as second citizens' ignorance of the low level of public awareness of the general hygiene. Also pointed out that one of the possible causes of dissatisfaction come from landfill crisis between the municipality of Tetovo and Gostivar in what happened in the first half of 2010.

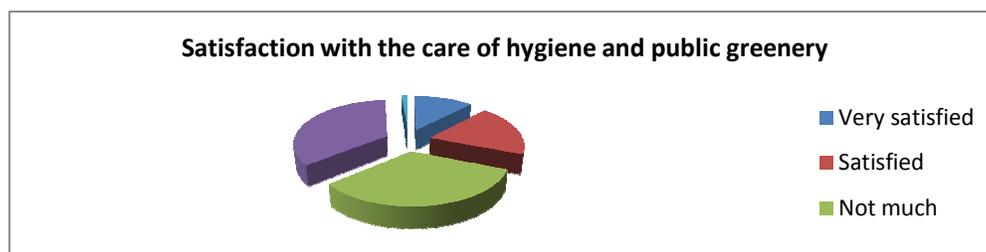


Figure 4 Satisfaction with the care of hygiene and public greenery

3.6. Satisfaction with Care, on Education and Personnel Policy

Unlike the previous two areas of public services, care of the municipality for education as a whole, the conditions of the work and finally on the policy of personnel staffing, and public hygiene and public greenery, is a worrying low assessed (Fig. 10). While in previous areas satisfaction moved within about two thirds of respondents satisfied, here's the other way around - more than two thirds of respondents are not satisfied as treats or municipality specifically January manages the field of education in its jurisdiction (Primary and Secondary Education)

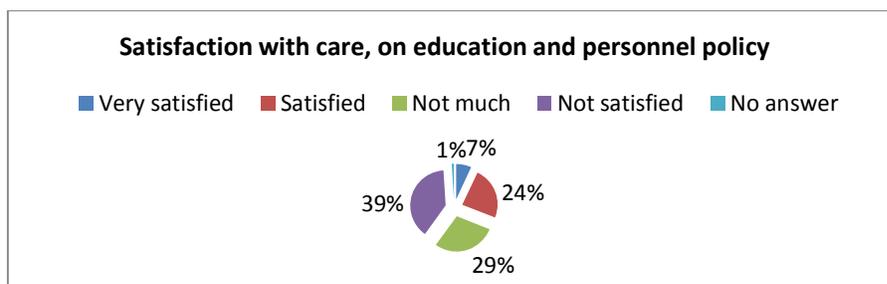


Figure 5. Satisfaction with care, on education and personnel policy

This low rating of the quality of this public service that delivers the municipality, mostly indirectly through the institutions for primary and secondary education, deserves special attention in terms of its explanation, more in terms of the implications of this situation. From the data obtained by survey researchers can anything further as an additional event for the explanation of this condition. Therefore, we give a right to the moment when they gathered additional empirical evidence to rely on our general knowledge of the situation and relations in this phenomenon. In that sense, as a possible explanation of such low grade, this means low quality in this area. You can specify the following general conditions and relations in the sphere of education at the local level:

First, in the field of primary and secondary education is not yet completed the full process of decentralization of responsibilities from central to local level. Lack of awareness of citizens about the responsibilities of state and the municipality in this area leads to the overall situation in the education most people the responsibility to locate in the municipality.

Second, practice the duties of state towards education local level, is often performed differently in situations where local and central government are the same and different political affiliation. It may be an additional aggravating factor, especially in improving the conditions to work in primary and secondary education.

Third, the personnel policies in education, which is primarily manifested by the shift of managerial furniture in schools during each shift of political garniture in the municipality, which may be considered, justified in terms of achievement of the political priorities, unfortunately it just ends at that level but it continues down. Such a practice among many stakeholders in general creating un satisfaction which indirectly affects the overall low score of the services in this area.

3.7. Overall Assessment of the Quality of Public Services and the Impact of Decentralization on their Level

The assessment of the impact of decentralization on the quality of public services is in direct correlation with the degree of decentralization. Unfinished process of decentralization of all legal responsibilities of local government, most likely is a limiting factor for the objective quality of public services, and thus the subjective perception by citizens or subjects (sl.11). Therefore, the assessment that only 18% of respondents think it is a big influence, and over half of respondents believe that this influence is only partial, we can consider as very objective. This in turn leads to the need; this status can be used as an argument in the requirements of local to central government which needs faster to complete the process of decentralization of all authority of the municipality.

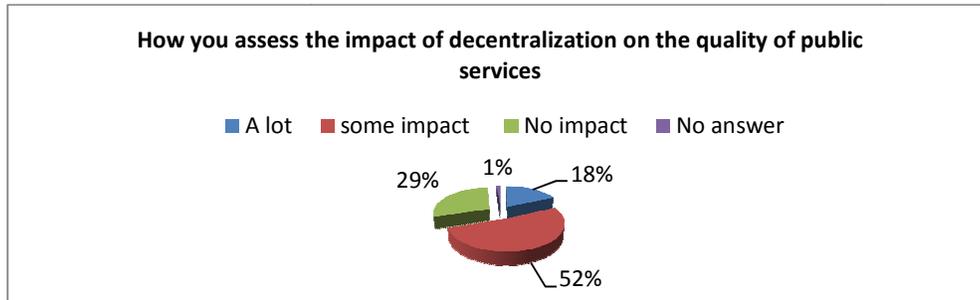


Figure 6 How you assess the impact of decentralization on the quality of public services

The previous evaluation further confirms the assessment of students on the need to further improving the quality of municipal services. Although the rule applies regardless of the level is always welcome and may further improve the quality, however the high level of 85% (Fig. 12) indicates that efforts are needed in this direction is an indicator of attention. Mostly if put in context to specific proposals in that direction given by respondents (sl.13).

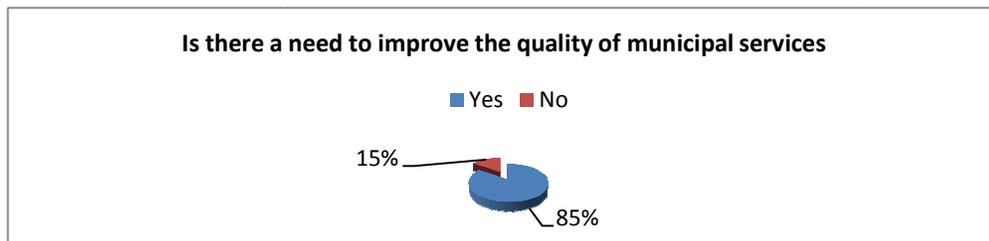


Figure 7. Assessment of the need to improve the quality of municipal services

The received proposals for improving services in response to an open question deserving special attention (Fig 13). Namely the part of the proposals is inconsistency in the answers to previous questions, some of suggestions concerning the achievement of the functions of the municipality, rather than direct public services, such as employment, infrastructure and so on.

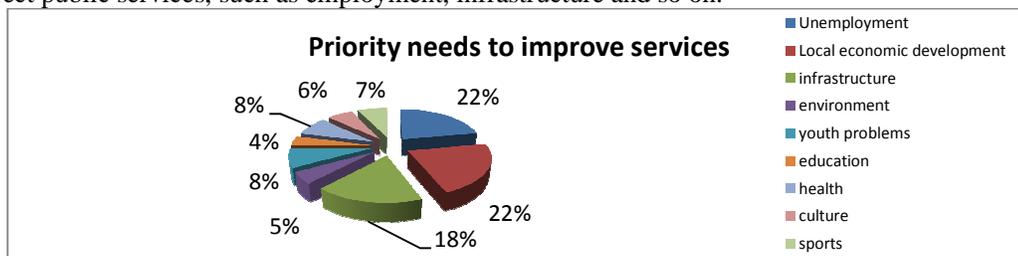


Figure 8. Priority needs to improve services

In our view, the inconsistency clarification of these proposals with previous estimates should be sought in the context of the second group of proposals that are general concern of the citizens (unemployment, infrastructure, local economic development). Therefore, the results of this question should be used more as an indicator for determining the overall priorities of the municipality to define the strategy for achieving more authentic to its responsibilities, not only in the delivery of public services.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Although the research was conducted according to situational selected units of the sample during the survey, however, from a practical point of view, provided a representative sample. Check the reliability of responses from certain demographic characteristics of respondents revealed that the obtained scores isporachuvanite kkomunalni public services are in high level objective.
2. The survey showed that among respondents, with a high degree of riability we can expect the entire population has a high satisfaction with meeting the individual needs of public utilities (urban planning and construction, tax collection). On the other hand, respondents indicated a relatively low quality of general (public) services such as maintenance of public hygiene and greenery and the care of the municipality for education and personnel policy practiced.
3. The previous statement address the need to take internal measures and systemic capacity building of the municipality for greater impact on public utility accountable for performing its function. In that respect must be efforts to build capacity to assume full responsibility in education and thus directly contribute to raising the quality of primary and secondary education in the municipality.
4. In the area of transparency of the operation of the municipality and thereby influence in formig public opinion, concluded Lag information. Other checks, however, showed more positive attitudes toward the relationship between decentralization and quality of public services by informing of respondents. It goes to the need to increase awareness of citizens about the overall work of the municipality and thereby gain their acceptance of policies and practices of raising the quality of public services.
5. With previous efforts would have made contribution to capacity building of the municipality in managing its resources, and thus accelerate the process of decentralization as a key factor for the systemic contribution to raising the quality of public services.
6. The research was initiated indirectly, and respondents strongly emphasized the dimension unemployment and local economic development (LED). Although not directly delivering the public services, however administrative and technical support and building of municipal infrastructure for local economic development matters both directly and indirectly contributed not only to reduce unemployment, but also to provide resources to meet the common needs of all citizens of the municipality, and thus the creation of resources and facilities of the municipality for a better fulfillment of services to citizens.

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Legal Framework

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