

My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 as a Factor of Local Development

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Abstract

The study is devoted to the characteristics of the implementation of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 (in Polish: Moje Boisko Orlik-2012) in the years 2008–2011, based on the examples of chosen communes from hrubieszowski, tomaszowski and zamojski counties, located in Lubelskie Voivodship. The main aim of the article was to identify the role Orlik sports fields play in the socio-economic development of a commune in the market economy. Thus an analysis was carried out of the functioning of existing and planned investments in the project as well as research in selected local government units not benefiting from the programme.

Keywords: local development, sports facilities, Programme Orlik 2012, Lubelskie Voivodship, Poland

Introduction

In regional studies development is understood as a process consisting in positive quantitative and qualitative changes in the environment, of different spatial scale (Brol 2001, 192, after Kozak 2009). The traditional concept of development focused precisely on economic aspects, yet nowadays a different attitude prevails, in which the social, environmental, political and cultural aspects gain importance. The new outlook is expressed in the introduction of the concept of sustainable development, defined as the right to fulfil the developmental aspirations of the present generation without limiting the rights of future generations to fulfil their developmental needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). This concept is described in scientific literature (among others: Jałowiecki and Szczepański 2002; Zaucha 2012). The definition, as given above, indicates that the economic and civilizational development of the present generation should make maximal use of the current technological resources, yet hindering progressive economic expansion and consumption. For this reason quantitative factors have gained importance in studies on development.

Sport plays an important cultural, social and recreational role in the world today. It also has an educational dimension. It stimulates values such as solidarity and tolerance, contributing to individual development and self-fulfilment. The European Commission appreciated its importance in 2007 acknowledging the fact that it contributes to the implementation of the Lisbon goals: the reinforcement of economic growth and creating new jobs.¹ It can also serve as a tool for local and regional development, economic regeneration of towns and cities and development of rural areas. Taking the above aspects into consideration, the Polish government made a series of actions connected with the promotion of sport and the development of sport and recreational infrastructure. The assessment of the development of sport prepared by the Ministry of Sport in early 2007 showed that despite the opening of a few thousand sports facilities, most of them still did not meet

1. See: White Paper on Sport. White Paper on Sport of 11 July 2007, presented by the European Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee [COM (2007) 391 final – Not published in the Official Journal], available at https://d1dmfej9n5lgmh.cloudfront.net/msport/files/Downloads/20130103151557/BIALA_KSIEGA_NA_TEMAT_SPORTU.pdf?1357226159.

European standards either in terms of numbers or in quality. When in 2007 the UEFA decided to entrust Poland with organizing the European Championship finals in football, the government prepared appropriate projects to build facilities not only for championships, but also for recreational sports. The most important of these was My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 announced by Prime Minister Donald Tusk in his policy statement in 2007—which included building sports centres in every commune. The importance of such undertakings may constitute an interesting scope of research. It is worth analysing if such projects in fact contribute to the socio-economic development on a local level. If that is the case, what is the dimension and can the effects be visible in the scale of the entire country? It should be noted that not only financial but also human and social capital facilitates dynamic local development in Poland. The article attempts to analyse this question based on the example of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012.

1 Materials and research methodology

The empirical materials used in the analysis were collected during field studies. The technique used in the study was a questionnaire entitled “Benefits from taking part in My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 as assessed by local authorities”² carried out with mayors, voits, town mayors, their deputies and secretaries. The choice of sample was intentional and the area of research was 20 communes in Lubelskie Voivodship, in hrubieszowski (5), tomaszowski (6) and zamojski (9) counties. The questionnaire consisted of 55 questions divided into five thematic groups: introductory issues, infrastructure, management, social development and promotion of the commune. The questions included in the introductory part referred to general information on the implementation of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012. The second part concerned the assessment of the surroundings, location, aesthetics and functionality of the facility. The next group of questions aimed at analysing the way of managing the Orlik sports field. The following group of questions included the problem of social development. Final questions concerned using the Orlik sports field in promoting the commune. What is more, persons employed in the Culture, Education and Sports Department of the Marshall Office in Lublin and representatives of the Department of Infrastructure and Sports of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism³ in Warsaw, responsible for the implementation of the programme, were interviewed.

2 Characteristics of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012

My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 started in December 2007, and its basic assumptions were presented in the policy statement of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on 23 November 2007.⁴ It supplements the national investments earlier implemented in the sports infrastructure.⁵ The main aim of the programme is building public sports field complexes with locker rooms and social facilities in all local government units (communes and counties). Implementation of the so-called Orlik sports fields is a chance to reduce the distance between Poland and other European countries in sports infrastructure. What is more, the specific aims include building at least 2012 modern sports centres, most importantly in the communes with poor sports infrastructure; introducing, in cooperation with local governments, programmes aiming at financing sports and recreational lessons in new facilities; facilitating children and teenagers’ access to modern sports infrastructure with the aim of practicing sports and developing physically under the direction of the organizers of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012; and promoting an active lifestyle.⁶

2. In Polish: Korzyści wynikające z udziału w programie Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012 w ocenie władz lokalnych.

3. In Polish: Ministerstwo Turystyki i Sportu, (MSiT).

4. See: Sprawozdanie z realizacji programu Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012, available at <http://bip.msit.gov.pl/bip/moje-boisko-orlik-2012>.

5. In 2006 the first trial programme of building sports centers was launched, called “Building multi-purpose sports fields widely available to children and teenagers.” Almost at the same time the Ministry of Sports with PZU SA and PZU Życie SA started a long-term programme of building artificial sports fields, called “Blisko Boisko” (sports field nearby).

6. See: Sprawozdanie z realizacji programu Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012 za I półrocze 2009, and Sprawozdanie

Tab. 1. Implementation of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik, in 2008–2011

Voivodship	Number of investments completed in the year				Total number of investments
	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Dolnośląskie	51	53	43	26	173
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	46	53	46	36	181
Lubelskie	34	35	29	31	129
Lubuskie	26	19	21	12	78
Łódzkie	47	47	28	31	153
Małopolskie	44	44	36	42	166
Mazowieckie	29	89	41	61	220
Opolskie	6	15	17	9	47
Podkarpackie	33	37	19	36	125
Podlaskie	20	26	18	7	71
Pomorskie	70	36	18	20	144
Śląskie	35	51	28	35	149
Świętokrzyskie	11	15	13	10	49
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	20	41	49	35	145
Wielkopolskie	39	103	70	54	266
Zachodniopomorskie	55	54	43	23	175
Total	566	718	519	468	2 271

Source: own study on the basis of data from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism

My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 is one of the biggest socio-infrastructure projects in Poland after 1989. In four editions of the programme more than 2 270 facilities of this type were built and financing from the Polish Budget reached about PLN 813 million.⁷ Despite the intensive activity of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism, it wasn't successful in implementing the basic aim of the programme (i.e., building an Orlik sports field in every commune in Poland). The planned number of sports fields was achieved in late 2011, yet in some communes and cities more than ten sports fields of this type were built (for example several dozens of them were built in Łódź).

Analysing the data in table 2 one can conclude that the spatial location of the sports fields consolidates the historic division of the country into Poland A and Poland B. The ratio of the number of Orlik sports fields to the number of communes in Lubelskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie voivodships is on the lowest level. The results in Opolskie voivodship are similarly poor. The result in Małopolskie Voivodship is a little better, yet does not exceed the national average. A very good result was achieved in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship, which is in the third position, following Zachodniopomorskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodships.

The results of analysis (map 1) show that the east of Poland is far behind the western part of the country in the number of Orlik sports fields built and the boundary between these two big regions is more or less on the boundary between Mazowsze and Wielkopolska regions. This division refers to historic criteria often described in regional studies (among others: Halamska 2007; Karwińska 2008; Rosner 2011). What is more, other regularities have been noticed. Regions with the highest number of Orlik sports fields are, apart from cities, rural areas located near big and medium urban centres. The further from these, the smaller the number of sports fields. This considered, this order overlaps another one, connected with the model of the centre-periphery relations.

z realizacji programu Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012 za II półrocze 2009, available at <http://bip.msit.gov.pl/bip/moje-boisko-orlik-2012>.

7. See: Sprawozdanie z realizacji programu Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012 za I półrocze 2011, available at <http://bip.msit.gov.pl/bip/moje-boisko-orlik-2012>.

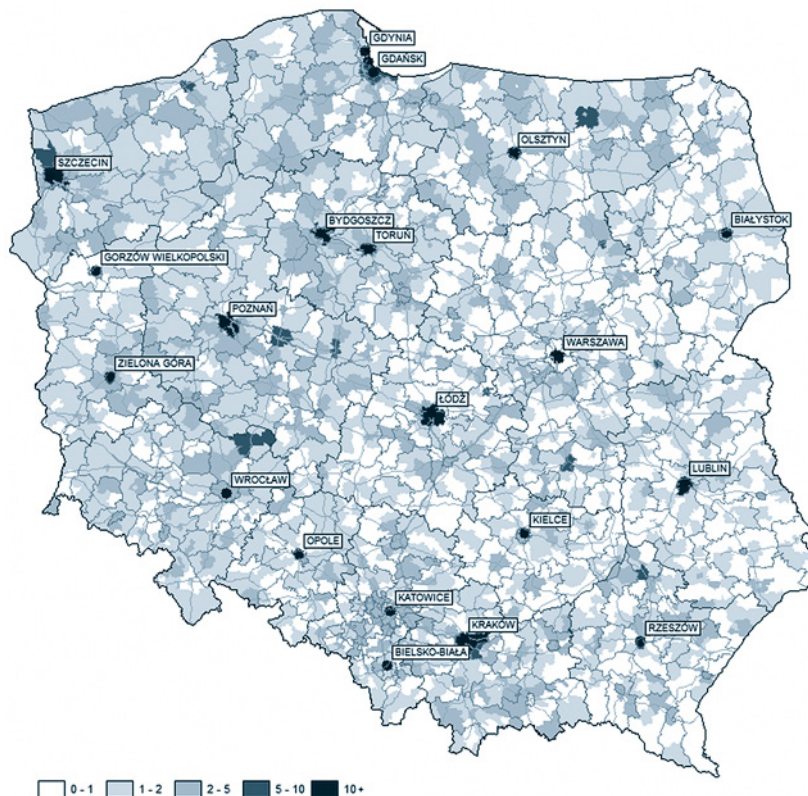
Tab. 2. The ratio of the number of Orlik sports fields to the number of communes in the voivodship

Voivodship	Ratio ^a
Zachodniopomorskie	1,54
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	1,26
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	1,25
Wielkopolskie	1,18
Pomorskie	1,17
Dolnośląskie	1,02
Lubuskie	0,94
Małopolskie	0,91
Śląskie	0,89
Łódzkie	0,86
Podkarpackie	0,79
Mazowieckie	0,70
Opolskie	0,66
Lubelskie	0,61
Podlaskie	0,60
Świętokrzyskie	0,48
<i>Ratio for all voivodships</i>	<i>0,92</i>

Source: own study on the basis of data from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism

^a[In the journal (in both Polish and English texts) European practice of number notation is followed — for example, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style). Furthermore in the International System of Units (SI units), fixed spaces rather than commas are used to mark off groups of three digits, both to the left and to the right of the decimal point.—Ed.]

Map 1. Implementation of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 in regional perspective in the scale of the entire country



Source: own study on the basis of data from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism

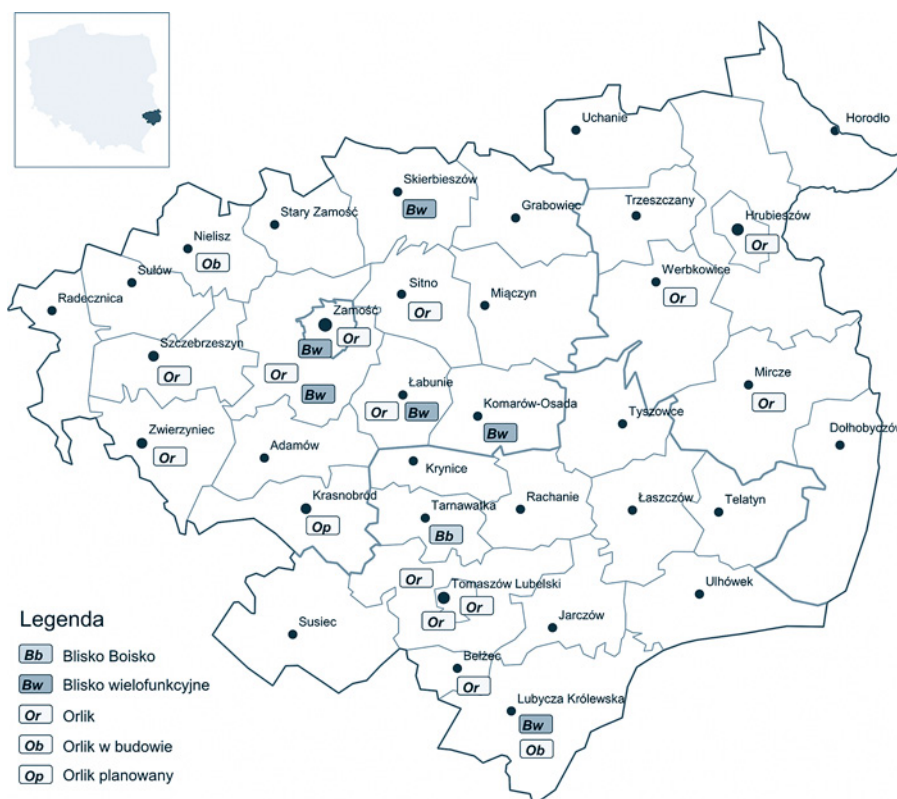
3 Orlik sports fields as a means of stimulating the development of local communities

The assessment conducted in 2005 showed that sports infrastructure in Lubelszczyzna is very under-developed. In 2004 there were close to 2200 school sports fields in the whole region, of which only about one fourth were multi-purpose fields. In addition, there were 77 sports fields, only two of which had capacity of over 10 thousand seats (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Lubelskiego w Lublinie 2005, 84). These facilities were of varied technical condition.

The assessment of the condition of sports infrastructure in the analysed counties was even less favourable. The number of facilities was not enough considering the needs of the residents.⁸ Their quality was also on a very low level. Yet in recent years the interest of local governments in activities aiming at the development of physical culture and sports has risen. Local governments, taking into consideration the development of physical culture and consolidation of good habits among children and teenagers, are eager to undertake actions to develop sports infrastructure. A good example is that many communes took part in My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012. There was a total of 13 Orlik sports fields functioning in the area and in the period analysed in the study. In addition, one facility was being built, and two more were planned in the following edition of the programme (map 2). In the years 2008–2011 a total of 129 Orlik sports fields were built, and twenty more facilities were planned to be built in 2012 (data from the Marshall's Office in Lublin).

Among the communes included in the study, eight had an Orlik sports field. These included the towns of Hrubieszów and Zamość, urban-rural communes Szczepieszyn and Zwierzyniec and rural communes: Łabunie, Sitno, Werbkowice. In addition, one commune had a facility in advanced stage of construction (Lubycza Królewska commune) and another (Nielisz commune) will be a beneficiary of the fifth edition of the programme. Ten of the communes in the study did not take part

Map 2. The location of sports fields within the area of the study



Source: own study on the basis of data from the Ministry of Sports and Tourism and the Marshall's Office in Lublin

8. See: Strategia rozwoju powiatu zamojskiego na lata 2007–2020. [a:] <http://www.powiatzamojski.pl/zamosc.php?get=page,165,7>.

in the programme, for various reasons. These include Dołhobyczów, Hrubieszów, Komarów-Osada, Krynice, Rachanie, Skierbieszów, Tarnawatka, Telatyn and Trzeszczany rural communes as well as one urban-rural commune: Tyszowce. The units included in the study make up 50% of all the communes which could take part in My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 as beneficiaries.

In more than one third of cases the idea to build an Orlik sports field was a result of the residents' own initiative, school principals or local sports community, with support from the local government. Yet in most of the communes analysed the initiators and supporters of the investment were public officers who obtained information on the programme and convinced their superiors to implement it. It should be noted that in some cases it was the voits who inspired the commune council and the residents to implement the project. Many of them had achieved success in sports themselves, which to a large extent influenced the interest in investments of this kind. Different factors determined whether specific communes entered the programme, yet the possibility of obtaining grants to finalize the investment became a strong stimulus to make the final decision to most of them. Apart from financial matters, the participants of the project emphasized the importance of more actions aimed at raising the level of physical activity of children and teenagers. In some communes the voits saw a chance for better promotion and the development of tourism.

The value of investments implemented within the area of study totalled about PLN 13 million. The average cost was thus about PLN 1,3 million. This sum agrees with the data presented by the Ministry of Sports and Tourism in 2008, since the first tenders confirmed that the offers presented by the contractors were between PLN 1,2 million and 1,4 million gross.⁹ The study showed that the most expensive sports field was built in Zamość (the project value was estimated at PLN 1,6 million gross), and the cheapest was in Werbkowice (about PLN 800 thousand gross). The commune's contribution was between PLN 300 thousand to about PLN 1 million. The cost of building an Orlik sports field largely depended on the chosen location. In some cases there were technical difficulties, usually connected with the necessity of carrying out appropriate drainage of the field. The vast majority of project participants (mainly representatives of rural communes) stated that they would not have decided to realise such a project without the Ministry's financial support.

Some units (mostly urban and urban-rural communes) had decided to implement an investment of this type, yet in the perspective of more than ten years. It is worth mentioning that the local authorities of Hrubieszów and Zamość have their own long-term plans to develop sports infrastructure, so they expressed a lesser willingness to similar undertakings in future.

All entities in the study assessed the programme's procedures positively and confirmed they would take part in the program again on the same conditions. Only matters connected with the Act on public procurement law presented some difficulties (especially in case of problems with the bidder.)

The interviews showed that the annual maintenance cost of an Orlik sports field is estimated at about PLN 40 thousand. This is why some communes (particularly smaller, rural ones) demand that the Ministry of Sports and Tourism financially contribute to further maintenance. In the vast majority of cases, companies within the area of the commune engaged in realization of at least one stage of the construction of the Orlik sports field. Yet local companies acted mainly as contractors. Only in one case the general contractor was from the same commune—the Orlik sports field in Machnów in Lubycza Królewska commune was constructed by local company "INSTALBUD" E. Gałek i Partnerzy Spółka Jawna.

Companies from all areas of Poland took part in the tenders, for example among the bidders in Hrubieszów there were three companies from Warsaw, one from Gdynia, Janów Lubelski and Szczecin. The best offer was presented by SPORTPROJEKT Sp. z o.o. from Szczecin. The tender to build the facility in Mircz was won by Firma Inżynieryjno-Budowlana "CHOMAR" J. Chowaniec – Spółka Jawna from Poronin. The biggest number of offers (eight) was in the Commune Office in Werbkowice, of which half were made by local companies, yet P.W. DOMIREX Z. Chmura from Mikołów (Śląskie voivodship) was the best, and it became the contractor of the sports centre. The

9. See: Sprawozdanie z realizacji programu Moje Boisko-Orlik 2012 available at <http://bip.msit.gov.pl/bip/moje-boisko-orlik-2012>.

Orlik sports field in Szczepieszyn was constructed by METAL SYSTEM Sp. z o.o. from Dębica. The communes in the study did not report any difficulties in the functioning of Orlik sports fields, except minor operating problems.

Half of the communes in the study would like to take part in the Biały Orlik programme, but unfortunately cannot implement an investment of this type due to a lack of their own financial resources. Again, there is a clear difference between urban-rural communes and typical rural areas. The first already have their own ice rinks, while the latter cannot afford such expense. In the vast majority of the analysed communes Orlik sports fields were located near schools and are treated as school facilities. In three cases the field was located in the centre. Another two are being built near football stadiums. The most common criterion to choose the location of the sports fields was proximity to a school, which according to most participants guarantees a considerable number of users. Most Orlik sports fields are being built in communes' main villages, only some of them are functioning in other places. In the opinion of the participants of the study such location ensures that all residents have the easiest access to the facility. The ownership of land also played an important role when choosing the location. Yet everybody emphasized that the location facilitates general accessibility of the Orlik sports field.

The majority of participants said that the sports centre is well-planned, developed and functional. Negative opinions referred only to the aesthetics of the sheds (proposed in the project accepted by the Ministry of Sports and Tourism) where the sanitary and locker base is located. For this reason many communes decided to introduce changes to the "typical" project. As the research shows, Orlik sports fields are modern and architecturally tidy, which makes them "raise the level" of the entire neighbourhood and influence its aesthetics, thanks to which people spend time there more often and eagerly. In relation to the sports field, the surroundings were also developed. Among other improvements, there were new access roads built or the old ones modernized, and new car parks, pavements and in some places also bicycle lanes were built. The interviews show that the way of managing the Orlik sports fields differs among communes. In some of them the school is the formal administrator. Others (especially in rural areas) are administered by commune sports and recreation centres and youth culture centres. The latter option seems more effective since animators who do not work for schools are much better at stimulating the entire local community. Engaging school staff in many additional tasks often makes the Orlik sports field become an additional burden to the school. Sports fields administered by commune sports and recreation centres are usually an element of the local sports infrastructure, which makes it a lot easier for its users to access the technical base and professional staff. The authors of the report *Raport z badania jakościowego i ilościowego, dotyczącego potencjału rozwoju programów miękkich na infrastrukturze sportowej powstałej w ramach programu Moje Boisko-Orlik 2012* come to similar conclusions.

All participants stated that Orlik sports fields are used effectively, and the way of managing them was assessed positively or very positively. It should also be emphasized that Orlik sports fields were built as an element of the development strategy of the commune. In addition, authorities are not preparing long-term goals in this respect, they only wish to maintain status quo. Most participants do not have specific plans for the future of Orlik sports fields. They simply assume that they are mainly to serve the physical development of children and teenagers, integration in the local community, etc. Only some of them have a different vision of the functioning of this type of sports centre. Some expect to develop the facility, aiming at making the Orlik sports field part of a cultural and recreational centre, where apart from sports tournaments also bigger cultural events may be organized, such as harvest festivals and other festivities.

In accordance with the principles of the programme, each commune which has an Orlik sports field took part in the project My Sports Field – Orlik 2012 Animator¹⁰. The instructor was usually a school teacher. In one of the entities in the study it was a worker of the commune centre of promotion, culture and sports, and in another it was a football player of the local club. According to local authorities, animators try to engage every resident of the commune, yet working with children and teenagers takes most of their time. Additionally, they are responsible for organizing

10. In Polish: Animator Moje Boisko – Orlik 2012.

different sports events on Orlik sports fields, mostly football tournaments. Apart from the animators, no other teachers are employed, yet if the sports field is located near a school, local physical education teachers can organize their classes there. Only one of the participants noticed that one person is definitely not enough to man the sports field. It should also be appreciated that coaches try to cooperate with the local clubs and businesspeople, though these are rare examples.

In accordance with the principles of the programme, an Orlik sports field's offer is aimed at everybody, so no group can be privileged or discriminated against. In practice the situation varies. The main users of the facilities are primary and secondary school pupils, who practice on Orlik sports fields during their normal PE lessons. They are usually boys, rarely girls. The next group are adult men: colleagues who use the field late in the evening. Additionally, the fields are used by the local football clubs for training. It was stated that no other social groups use the facilities, including women, older people, or older teenagers. The owners in fact do not take any additional actions to widen the range of users. Orlik sports fields are open 7 days a week, at different times, usually from 8 am to 9 pm. The facilities located near schools are usually used exclusively by the school from 8 am to 3 pm. Reservations by other users are possible but only in the afternoons and evenings. Reservations are accepted in person or by telephone by the facility animator. Orlik sports fields are on average occupied most of the day. It only changes during summer holidays, when the facilities located near schools are used a lot less often, while in other locations the level stays the same. Depending on weather conditions, the sports fields are not used from mid-November to mid-March at all, yet it sometimes happens that local football clubs use the Orlik even in winter to prepare for matches.

The study shows that having a sports centre built in My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 initiated positive changes in every commune described. It has been noted that interest in sports definitely rose in the local community. Even though residents' attitude to the investment was in general positive, there were some problems, for example people living near the sports field worried that the noise level would rise. Such a situation occurred in Hrubieszów, yet after the Orlik sports field was opened, no complaints were made to the Town Office. What is more, at one point the residents became supporters of building the facility. The residents anticipated the opening of the sports field and eagerly came to it in large numbers, which shows that they treated the investment in a special way. Local authorities prepared for this event in a special way, for example the Voivodeship of Mircze commune invited special guests to the opening: ex-selector Andrzej Strelau and an Olympic athlete, gold medallist from Munich, Lesław Ćmikiewicz. And the honourable guests of the opening of the Orlik sports field in Hrubieszów were Polish football representatives: current KP Legia Warsaw football club player Tomasz Kiełbowski and a player of PGE GKS Bełchatów, Dawid Nowak, who were both born in Hrubieszów.

All participants of the study stated that building an Orlik sports field may stimulate local development. Local authorities may not see any material or financial benefits of the operation of this type of facility, but point out that it facilitates the development of sport talents among children and teenagers. One of the mayors emphasized its role in building human capital and ability to "propagate spirit among young residents." Additionally, they favour starting new local football clubs, organizing sports events and integration of the local community. For example, the main aim of building an Orlik sports field in Łabunie was to integrate the residents of the local hospice with other residents of the commune. In addition, the participants think that Orlik sports fields facilitate the development of tourism, creating a better image of the commune and influence the development of nearby infrastructure, e.g. pavements, roads, playgrounds and bicycle lanes, etc.

There are a lot of events on Orlik sports fields and close to them, mainly sports events (e.g., Voivodeship cup football tournament, sports day) but also cultural (e.g., festivities) and religious (e.g., church fairs). One of the examples of such initiatives are the onion harvest festival organized by the authorities of the Zamość rural commune, the village authorities, the farmer's wives' association in Żdanów and the board of local farmers association. The festivity takes place every year on the Orlik sports field or near it. The programme includes workshops on the cultural landscape of the commune, sports tournaments (e.g., in women's basketball throw, or running with a balloon) and an arts contest entitled "Żdanów przyszłości" (Żdanów of the future). It should be noted that

during the event the Voit of Zamość commune has time to meet enquirers in all matters connected with the functioning of the commune and in the evening there are football matches, in which teams of commune residents compete in different categories: children, teenagers and seniors. The main aim behind the festivity is to integrate the local community.

Furthermore, the Orlik sports field in Żdanów hosts “Dzień Samorządowca” (local government day). During the event there are sports tournaments, in which children, teenagers and adults living in the commune take part. Every year the event includes handicraft product sales and presentation of the chronicles of the farmers’ wives’ associations. In 2012 about 3000 people took part in “Dzień Samorządowca” In June 2012 the Werbkowice commune organized a sports and recreation festival called “Mini EURO 2012.” The event was attended by over 400 players: kindergarten and primary school children, disabled persons, caregivers, parents, volunteers and sports enthusiasts. The Ministry of Sports and Tourism awarded the authorities of the Werbkowice commune a special prize for organizing the event including an award of a grant of PLN 2 000. The award ceremony took place on 13 October 2012 in Torwar Hall in Warsaw during the finals of the national 3rd Orlik tournament for Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s Cup. On 7–8 July 2012 the Voit of Werbkowice commune organized Werbkowice Day and Sugar Manufacturer’s Day with Gminny Ośrodek Kultury (commune centre) and Krajowa Spółka Cukrowa S.A. During the event there were various cultural activities (e.g., concerts of local music groups and bands, costume theatre, etc.) and sports events, aimed at integrating the local community. On the Orlik sports field there was a football tournament of football veterans for the Cup of the Chairman of MLKS Werbkowice Club and a friendly match with the local sports club.

Similar events are organized on the Orlik sports field in Łabunie. In July 2012 local authorities organized Łabunie Commune Residents Games. Every sołectwo (the smallest administrative unit in Poland) in the commune had a right to be represented in it, and they competed in the following sports: football, volleyball, basketball and tennis. The main aim was to organize an active holiday for the residents of Łabunie commune. In August 2012 a regional amateur 6-a-side football tournament was organized. It was attended by 5 teams and 50 players. It is worth mentioning that Łabunie commune was named the Sports Commune of the year 2011 by Polski Klub Infrastruktury Sportowej (Polish Club of Sports Infrastructure). In the contest not only financial investment into sports infrastructure was considered, but also engagement of the local government in promoting sports and recreation. Also activities aiming at promoting sports and recreation among teenagers were an important element: the award committee also considered the number of school sports clubs operating in the commune, the number of coaches employed and the commune’s expenditures on common sports.

On Orlik sports fields in urban-rural communes there are mainly sports events. In 2012 Młodzieżowy Dom Kultury (Youth Culture Centre) in Szczepleszyn planned to organize four sports tournaments. There was a recreation and sports festival in May, LZS Summer Games in June, and a tournament of street teams during summer holidays. Four teams from Szczepleszyn commune took part in its latest edition, with 6 matches played and 31 players involved. Furthermore, there was a recreation and sports festival in May and another amateur football tournament in mid-October. Local authorities organize a lot of sports and cultural events in the analysed communes. It should be noted though that there is a clear difference between the possibilities in towns and urban-rural communes and typical rural areas. The first have proper venues to organize events (amphitheatres, marketplaces, squares, etc.), and the latter are missing this type of place. Orlik sports fields create such a chance. In all of the facilities studied there are several events and even more than ten of different types organized every year.

Due to the accompanying events Orlik sports fields also serve the promotion of the commune. Local authorities noticed that there is a “positive atmosphere” created around the sports field, for example it becomes a popular place to organize integration meetings for employees of local companies and other institutions (e.g., the border guards). All participants emphasized the idea that an Orlik sports field may be used to promote the commune. In addition, local authorities think information about what is happening on the Orlik fields is easily available. In the vast majority of

cases the official commune web page is used for it. In some, there are also advertisements in the local press.

A distinctive group among the units in the study are the communes which did not take part in My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012. In some of them there had already been an appropriate sports infrastructure functioning. In Tarnawatka commune an artificial sports field was built in “Blisko Boisko” programme, while Skierbieszów and Komarów-Osada communes were beneficiaries of the programme “Building multi-purpose sports fields widely available to children and teenagers.” In next two communes (Rachanie and Tyszowce) the sports facilities were financed with the Programme of Development of Rural Areas. The remaining communes have outdated sports centres, but their local authorities are planning appropriate investments. Most of the ten communes which did not take part in the Orlik programme rejected the project for financial reasons. One commune which tried to build an Orlik sports field and filed a formal building and subsidizing application was Tyszowce, but the Marshall’s Office in Lublin reduced the subsidy to the project and Tyszowce resigned from taking part in the programme. Another rural commune, Hrubieszów, was also planning to take part in the project, but was forced to resign due to protests made by farmers concerning the rising price of rye. At the beginning the councillors were seriously interested in the investment, but later totally abandoned the idea.

It should be emphasized that everybody taking part in the study knew the principles of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012, although at different levels. Most representatives of the local authorities pointed out that building an Orlik sports field is an investment which is too expensive compared to the anticipated effects. An important factor in most communes is also the limited population. Some communes have a very big area, which raises worries over whether there will be enough people interested in using this type of facility. Yet most voits analyse the effectiveness of investing in sports facilities. It can be assumed that they show an enterprising attitude. They know all the available programmes, both the ones proposed by the Ministry of Sports and the European Union (e.g., the initiative “Rural Revival and Development” of Rural Areas Development Programme (PROW)). They try to compare the costs and effects of the investments, exchange experiences with the voits of communes which have an Orlik sports field and make decisions based on that.

Summary

The results of the study indicate that Orlik sports fields did not bring any economic impacts, so they are not a sufficient instrument in local development. But the project played an important social role. Considering the fact that local development is a complex process (economic, cultural and social), it should be assumed that My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 is a significant element. Orlik sports fields play a different role in different types of communes (rural, urban-rural and urban). The ones located in rural areas play a special role. They are often one of the few public facilities, of which there are more in towns. For this reason the author thinks that their role in the rural public space is bigger. A distinctive feature is also that in rural areas they engage the whole community, while in urban areas Orlik sports fields are only typical sports facilities, used only by residents of the neighbourhood.

To sum up, it should be noted that My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 is not sufficient in creating the socio-economic development of a commune. Yet, according to the concept of sustainable development, Orlik sports fields are an important element of the socio-economic process. The research allows for the following conclusions. Firstly, financial resources for development of sports and recreational infrastructure should be allotted mainly for rural areas, because their functioning fosters human capital development and in turn raises the standard of living of the local communities. Secondly, the results of research on the functioning of Orlik sports fields show that the key factor in their effective usage (for their further development) is most importantly optimization of their management. Owners of such sports centres should define the role of Orlik sports fields and local priorities concerning sports — e.g., by preparing appropriate strategies and schedules for using them. Thirdly, the effects of the programme are only a small part of local socio-economic

progress in Poland. The project was not decisive in it. For this reason in local development the pre-eminence of endogenous over exogenous factors should be acknowledged. The latter will not replace the former, but may support them. If own potential is limited, even outside intervention will not create it.

The picture of communes which were beneficiaries of My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 presented here may result in further programmes helping local communities. The analysis showed that support should be aimed at the communes which are best prepared for it. Interventions in communes which do not have conditions to accept them lead to the wasting of public funds. Conviction that substantial help may affect the process of development is sometimes misleading.

It should be emphasized that My Sports Field Programme – Orlik 2012 turned out to be a huge success. In the vast majority of communes it brought considerable and lasting effects, providing widespread positive experiences in many Polish communes. Credit for that should be given to the competences and engagement of local actors who brought about this participation.

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