

“Value Analysis for Social Purposes” – A case study by Zsuzsanna Szeiner, VMA

Abstract

Efficiency is an important factor that supports competitiveness in the private, as well as in the public sector. However, while there are well-known practices that help to "streamline" processes or even the organization itself, the pursuit of efficiency in the public sector, more specifically at local governments, is implemented within the Weberian bureaucracy (regulation, rationalized operations, limited individual freedom). Local governments have to face a number of unusual blockages nowadays, that have been solve in public eye, and in favor of public. The rapidly changing social and technological environment and consequently, the changing needs force local governments to change into an innovative way of thinking. The tasks, whether they are unusual or customary, should have been solved by professional methods. The Value Methodology, which is a highly applicable and widely used method for processing complex tasks on a product or process, promotes a slim and efficient operation for organizations in both sectors. In the following technical paper, a case will be introduced on a project where a concern at the local governmental level utilized the value methodology to solve a social issue.

Introduction

Gúta, a small village with a population of approximately 11,000 inhabitants is situated in southern Slovakia with two large parks, Saint Rozalia Park (27,919 sqm) that is located between two elementary schools in the town and another big park around the Roman Catholic church with its playgrounds. The St. Rozalia Park in the city center can, and has for a long time, offered great opportunity for families, school and nursery school groups, teenagers, walk-in retirees, city visitors, etc. In recent years, the park begins to be a place for the city's homeless people. These people became permanent "residents" of the park, and the playground in the town center. At the same time, the original targeted users of the park have disappeared so St. Rozália Park is depopulated, and has turned into an undesirable area. The cleanliness of the playground near the park is also an issue, littering is very frequent, and sleeping in the area of the playground is customary. The exact number of homeless people is unknown, however, it is about 10-12 people. Because of these mentioned issues, the normal use of park (by families, children, and the elderly) has disappeared. Homeless people use these public areas for executing their social, sleeping, eating and other needs. The appearance and purity of the park are inadequate and the basic public health conditions are not being maintained. Public indecency occurs there regularly (in the direct neighborhood of the two primary schools). Keeping the town parks clean and tidy, belongs to the competence of the local government. In practice the maintenance of parks and other public areas is executed by Guta Service Company, which belongs to the city administration. The local police and the state police take care of public security. Livelihood in public areas are neither regulated nor prohibited by any law or municipal decree. The city administration is unable to handle the situation and the problem is increasing get worse. Residents are dissatisfied and outraged. The mayor stated at a public resident forum, that he was awaiting proposals to resolve the existing situation. Subsequently, a local civil organization commissioned to conduct a Value Methodology study to seek to solve the problem.

Pre workshop activities

At the very early stage of this study, the project owner civil organization's leadership team determined the requirements that should be take into consideration during the selection of team members. The problem itself was well known for everyone in the town. The value study team composition had been completed on the basis of Value Methodology, so the team members possess expertise in relevant

areas of the matter. The team was given the space for acquaintances of the following areas: a social worker familiar with the problems of socially disadvantaged groups, a local policeman whom is in daily connection with the problem itself, city administration, a municipal representative, a civil right activist whom is a member of the project owner NGO.

Following the first meeting the team members were informed about the activities and basic principles of the team work. The team defined the purposes of the project that was followed by the distribution of tasks. Valuable outcomes of the pre-workshop phase included: a photo-documentation of current park life, a list of residential complaints (downloaded from social network) and information based upon the team members long-term experience regarding the case. Project boundaries were described after the team members mutually shared the case relevant information

The team members steady opinion that it is necessary to deal with the issue of "housing" in the park to solve the problem. Without this, it is not possible to make an effective solution that works in the long term.

Project Boundaries: Keeping the parks and playgrounds clean and tidy, elimination of the incompetent use of public areas to day care of homeless people in town and everything in between.

Information Phase

During the information phase, the team gathered all of the relevant information about the problem itself, evaluated solutions developed by different towns within the country dealing with the same or similar issue and deeply analyzed the issues at hand. Information about regulations and other related laws that would have any influence on this issue were also discussed.

Purposes

The main purpose of the project is restoring the real park atmosphere. The long-term goal of the work is to achieve and maintain a state in which the town's parks are used by families, children and elderly people. To let them enjoy such green places, it is necessary to keep these areas clean, waste-free, with proper maintain and clean so a healthy environment can be the norm. Developing a solution must meet the needs of the stakeholders and restore the proper use of town parks and playgrounds by removing unauthorized users in the parks while keeping the parks and playgrounds clean.

Project stakeholders

In the case of supporting the proper use of parks, the groups of people that the value study project targeted included:

- Local resident near the Parks
- Families with small children
- Teenagers
- Retired people
- Local government personnel
- State police/Local police
- Tourists
- Homeless
- Relatives of homeless people

Function Phase

As the team got acquainted with all details of the problem, the needs of stakeholders became formulated. These needs stakeholders performance or customer needs where then translated into functions using the Random Function Identification Worksheet below in Figure 1 below.

FUNCTION RESOURCE MATRIX	
Needs	Functions
Park near residence	
Public security	Ensure Safety
Clean environment	Enhance Aesthetics
Peaceful environment	Maintain Peacefulness
No dog droppings near the park	Remove Waste
No dog droppings in the park	
Support park atmosphere	Enhance Atmosphere
Families with small children	
Clean parks	Maintain Cleanliness
No trash in the park area	Maintain Cleanliness
Clean seats in the park	Maintain Cleanliness
No homeless in the park	Eliminate Undesirables Establish Guideline
Playgrounds should be kept ok	Maintain Cleanliness
Swings, climbers should be maintained	Maintain Equipment
No damaged swings	Monitor Environment
Maintenance of an aesthetic environment	Enhance Aesthetics
Damaged benches should be repaired	Maintain Equipment
Garbage dumps should be regularly emptied	Remove Waste
Public indecency should not be allowed	Ensure Safety

Figure 1: Random Function Identification Worksheet

The project team generate 26 expected functions that were identified according to Value Methodology process with an active verb followed by a measurable noun.

The next important step in the Function Phase is to organize these function for the project. This was done utilizing a Customer Fast Diagram per Figure 2 below:

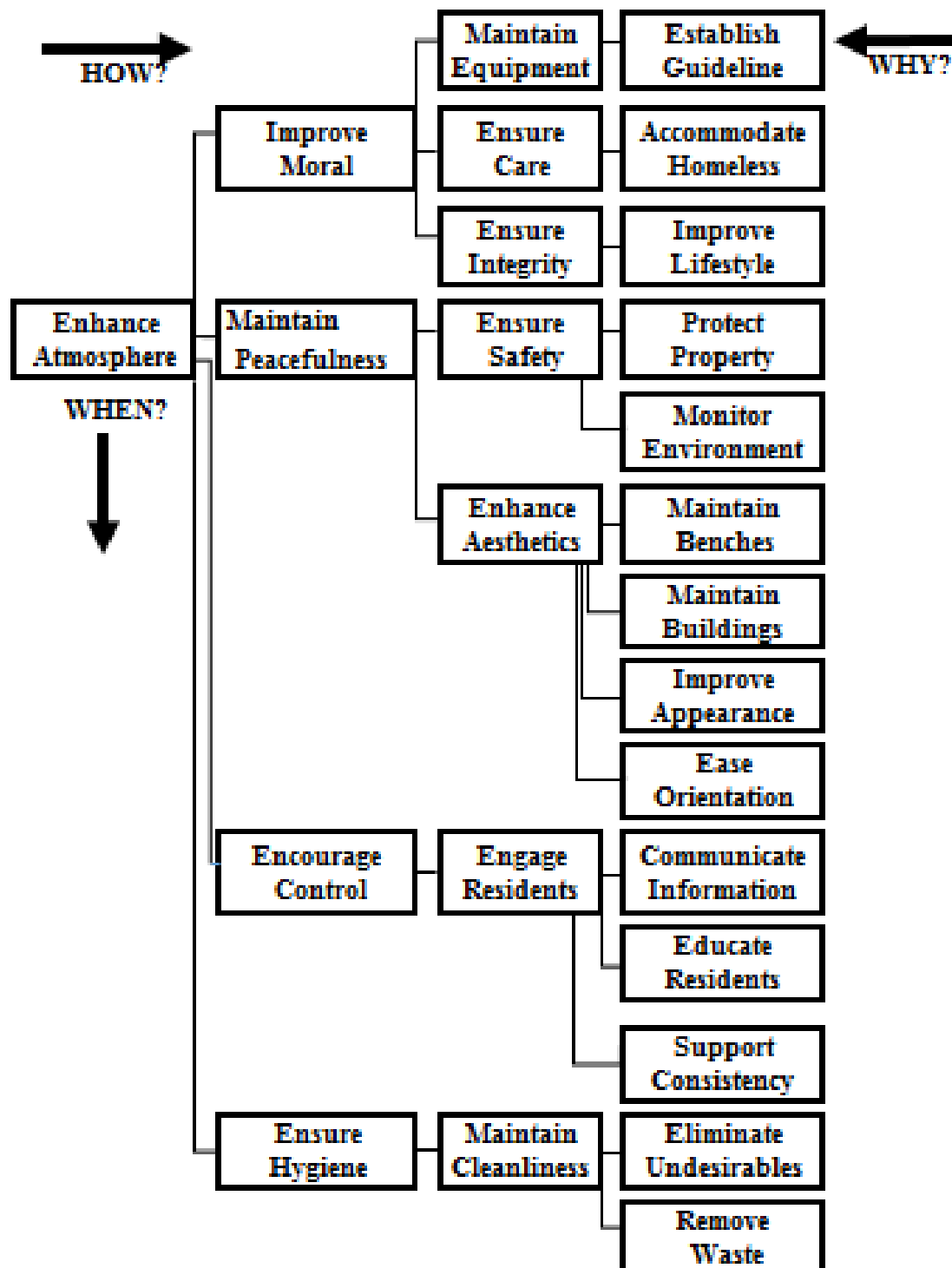


Figure 2: Customer FAST Diagram

Prioritization of function performance

Establish Guideline – The proper use of city parks is not defined. Does not exist any municipal decree that regulates the use of public areas. There exists only one prohibition, that bans alcohol consuming in St. Rozalia park. Sleeping on the benches, littering, bathing in the fountain or leaving away pet waste are not prohibited. The single prohibition of alcohol consuming is not effective. The local police has no tool to keep away improper actions in public areas.

Accommodate Homeless – Dealing with problems of most marginalized groups of people is completely missing from the local social program. However the state financially supports the foundation and maintenance of “social houses”, where the social care is carried out according to the level of exigency. The purpose of these facilities is to help people in deprived situation get back to the society.

Improve Lifestyle – From the humane point of view the lifestyle of the people staying in the park and playground needs to be improved. That is highly expected from the city municipals to ensure to every human being the minimum requirements to normal life. Those, who cannot solve a negative life situation should be supported.

Improve Appearance – However the park in the town center is well maintained, architectures that improve the aesthetics of the park are very rare. A large part of the park is a completely blank green area.

Protect Property – The town’s properties are protected by the city police and the state police. City police belongs to the city administration, its rank enable to serve 2 person at a work shift. One of them patrols outside, the other serves inside the police station. They have no capacity to monitor the town center constantly. Area of parks and playgrounds are not protected properly.

Monitor Environment – The city center, the town parks and other public areas are not monitored by camera system. Policemen get informed from public announcements.

Maintain Benches – The benches are well maintained. They are systematically monitored, repaired and cleaned by Guta Service Company.

Maintain Buildings – Buildings in public areas are maintained. The chapel inside the park area have been just renovated. The renovation has been made up by a cooperation between a civil organization and the local parish. The project was funded from public donation.

Ease Orientation – The orientation in the town and its center is supported by a single information board. The prohibition of alcohol consuming in the park is presented at a small size board inside the park.

Communicate Information – Cooperation between local police and local media does not exist in any way. Local police has no any channel to inform locals, or in certain cases ask their help. Information channels of the town are outdated. Majority of people use online media to gather information. Internet based information channels are very rarely used to inform public.

Educate Residents – Residents are not involved at protecting parks and playgrounds. Their responsibility is not argued. Park life is not organized. Residents rather avoid the park, if it does not fit their needs.

Support Consistency – The maintenance of parks and other public places is well organized.

Eliminate Undesirables – Unproper park use is not defined nor prohibited.

Remove Waste – Waste is collected by the commissioned company on a daily basis. Trash cans are emptied regularly. The sufficient amount of trash cans and special trash cans for pet waste is placed in the park.

Creative Phase

The following phase after all gave the awaited opportunity for the team members to let their creativity soar. During the previous phases the ideas were continuously collected in the “Ideas List”. Gathering of ideas had been executed in a highly motivating and thought provoking atmosphere. Team members and the VM facilitator chose Brain storming and Delphi method to gather ideas systematically to each function.

Function	<i>Ideas</i>
Establish Guideline	Not accepted activities should have been described and banned in municipal decree. Sanctions must be set up, if someone uses public areas in improper way. Ranks of local police should be increased. Park security service is needed to protect the park and the near playgrounds.
Accomodate Homeless	The problem of marginalized groups should have been solved in cooperation of a civil organization. Social House is needed. Mental hygienic service is needed to help these people manage their life. A place should have been created for homeless outside the town. State social programs should have been taking into consideration when formulating the town's social concept.
Improve Lifestyle	Provide opportunity for people in need to execute their personal hygienic needs. Help people in need staying involved in the society. Provide basic food supplements to the homeless. Help homeless people in clothing.
Improve Appearance	Park life should have been organized. Cultural programs organized during the summer season by government organizations should have been replaced to the park. Decorating elements and architects should be placed in the park. The park should be used more frequently. Residents should have been involved at park life. The cultural maintenance of the park should be executed by a civil organization. Outdoor stage to be placed to the park. Child clogs should be placed to the park.
Protect Property	The park has to be surrounded. Park guard service is needed to protect the peacefulness of the park. Park area has to be locked during the late hours. Playground in the city centre has to be locked. Entrance to the playground should be limited to kids and their accompanists. Park near residents has to be encouraged to announce unaccepted actions immediately.

Figure 3: List of ideas

The aim of the creative phase was collecting as more ideas as possible to serve the functions in alternative ways. During this step the ideas were not evaluated or criticized.

Evaluation Phase

Prior to the evaluation, the team collected a large number of uncensored ideas. The evaluation had been done based on feasibility. The feasible ideas then were classified by team members according to the level of their effect to arranged aims of the project.

During the development of ideas, the team had been searching alternatives for financing the suggested solutions. As the proposal refers to a social issue, there exist some available financial resources that aim to support local governments in solving such an issue. During the evaluation of the ideas the team had taken into consideration the financial practicability of the alternatives.

At the end of the evaluation process the team formulated a number of suggestions which are in logical relation to each other. Selected ideas got a purposeful form.

Development Phase

After exploring and deep understanding of the initial situation, taking into account the legal framework and the cost of possible solutions, as well as good practices of other cities, the team has elaborated the following proposal.

- In order to eliminate littering, and life-like stay in the park, the city administration must get engaged to protect the park and take necessary measures. After defining the proper use of parks, it is necessary to define the range of activities which undermine the order, purity and safety of the park. Thereafter, it is necessary for the city administration to determine in general regulations the conditions for staying in parks or in playgrounds maintained by the city. The team had specified the following activities to ban: littering, pet waste leaving, dog walking off leash, laying on the benches, bathing in the fountain, alcohol and drug consuming, vandalism, public indecency. Adult can enter into the playground area only as a child accompaniment. In order to support the adherence of the rule, penalty and communal work should be determined.
- For the sake of the effective protection of Saint Rozalia Park, it has to be surrounded.
- The team recommends the permanent supervision of the park's order. Park guard service has to be established. St. Rozalia Park has to be closed during the night (from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.)
- It is necessary to display prohibited activities by placing information boards at every entrance of the park and playgrounds. Illustrating by figures instead of text supports clarity and awareness.
- The team proposes the establishment of a community house. The aim of the community house is to provide alternative sojourn, to ensure their basic needs, such as food, clothing, mental health counseling. The social house would be a centrum to provide fundamental social care and run different programs for marginalized groups.
- The establishment of a community house can be achieved by co-operation between the city administration and a local NGO. The local government may open a call for tender or simply open the possibility of applying for co-operation to find a partner among local NGOs.
- Foundation and maintenance of the community house is supported by the state, the available financial resources are handled by the Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family. The amount of the subsidy (provided to maintain the facility) is calculated on the basis of the number of social assistance recipients and the degree of social need. The allowance is paid once a month, based on the number of people receiving social assistance in the given month and the number of days spent in the community house. Support may be requested by city administration.
- European Social Fund also offers financial resources to cover the costs of staffing of the non-governmental organization in such case of maintaining a community house in cooperation with the city administration (European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).
- For the purpose of establishing a community house, the town shall make available a property owned by the municipality or a property purchased for that purpose to the non-governmental organization implementing the program.
- Broaden the staff of the social department of the city office is considered necessary by the team. Currently all of the social services is administered and managed by a single person. The team proposes to solve this burning shortcoming in the form of a staff redeployment within the agency.
- The Social Committee has to develop a social conception of the city, that contains a detailed action plan to solve the situation of socially disadvantaged groups.
- The file of the city police is rather small. The town that is 106 sqm is monitored by two policemen on duty. In order to strengthen public security, the team proposes the following steps: Residents should be informed and encouraged
 - to make announcement - if any disorder is detected
 - to be consistent with each other

Fulfilment of this function requires close and continuous cooperation of the city police and local Tv.

- At the beginning and at the end of every broadcast, the residents of the city should be reminded as if any disruption is detected, how, by what telephone number, etc. to make notification. The invitation should be posted weekly on social network.
- To support public security, the team also recommends the installation of a camera system in and around the park.
- Maintaining the order of the park, and to take care of its atmosphere, it is necessary to actively involve the city community.
- The team recommends organizing family programs to support park life. Making the park attractive and promoting park ambiance by targeted programs does not belong to the responsibility of the local government. The task of the local administration is to provide basic public services. Making park attractive and organizing community life appropriate to the spirit of the place can be ensured by the active involvement of a civil organization.
- The NGO's role in restoring park atmosphere is the following: Organizing family programs, cultural programs, or give opportunity for the local amateur groups to introduce themselves. Placement of smaller children's swings and climbers in the park. Placement of chess table and other architectures. Celebrating Park Day (cleaning of the park by families, and school groups followed by a picnic)

Item	Parametres	Estimated cost	AVAILABLE FUNDS		
			State funds	EU funds	City budget
Surrounding the park	27.919 m2	€100.000			€100.000
Park guard service	wage costs/person	€7800/year			€7800/year
Information Board	2pcs park/1playground	€10.000			€10.000
Social House	Property	€50.000	€50.000		
Maintainance of a social centre	It depends on the number of people supported, number of days and the level of exigency.		Completely funded by state		
Outdoor stage		€25.000		€25.000	

Presentation Phase

After the project documentation has been submitted and accepted by the project owner, the results were presented publicly. Solution of the issue, the project was dealing with belongs to the competence of local municipalities. The project results were presented in form of a news conference. Between the invited attendants were all of the city representatives, the leadership of the public institutions, the members of the project owner civil organizations, and the representatives of local and regional news media. The press conference was also open in front of the public. All of the municipal representatives received the project documentation in paper format.