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SOŁECTWO FUND IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION
AND COOPERATION IN RURAL AREAS. SŁAWA
MUNICIPALITY CASE

Introduction

The principle of subsidiarity stated in the constitution pertains to a number of aspects of social and economic life. It may and should be applied regarding cooperation on the lowest level of citizens' activities in a municipality, in particular in its subsidiary bodies. Through the provisions of the Local Government Act (Art. 5), the legislator enables the local government community to establish subsidiary bodies. It lists, among others, the following entities: sołectwo (a village administration unit), districts and housing estates. However, a village administration unit is of particular interest regarding allocating specific financial resources. This is why the legislator emphasised in the explanation of the project of the Village Administration Fund Act that "*this choice (sołectwo in rural areas) is justified by the fact that sołectwo – differently from districts/housing estates – overlaps with the local settlement networks (villages) and therefore represents the common interests of their inhabitants that result from common historical tradition. Next, the legislator adds that these interests – considering their scale – may often be satisfied on a level lower than the municipality level*" (Uzasadnienie do projektu. . . 2008).

The tasks of subsidiary bodies are specified in their statutes. What is common for all village administration offices are the general provisions concerning ensuring the possibility for all citizens to participate in matters regarding their residence, meeting the needs of the citizens of a village and playing the organisational function for the village community. Only when the range of responsibilities of a village administration office is specified in this way, it is required that they are at least in part self-financed. Without the village administration fund, the management of financial resources by

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the village administration office depended on the good will of the municipality authorities. In some cases, it led to situations when citizens of particular villages were “bought” when it was necessary to obtain electoral support. It seems that allocating a specific amount for the purpose of fulfilling the tasks assigned to a village administration office will increase their social activity and lead to citizens’ initiative without the necessity to adjust to the local political conditions. As noted by the authors of the guide on the village administration fund, *the village administration fund is certainly not going to solve all of the village administration issues but it constitutes a chance for each of the villages and is a good starting point for joint discussion and organisation revolving around relevant issues* (Fundusz sołecki... 2012). It is also expected that thanks to the fact that citizens of a given village will have a real possibility to influence the way the funds allocated within the village administration fund are spent, the spending will be more economical and rational and that pro-developmental actions aimed at improving the living standards in a given village will appear. Given this thesis, the following research questions were asked: *Does the nature of expenditure evolve over the years from consumption-oriented into development-oriented as the village administration fund is being implemented?* and *Do we observe a growing integration in rural areas regarding the distribution of resources within the village administration fund?* Based on the analysis of the functioning of the village administration fund in the Sława municipality as well as the analysis of the expenditure trends, there was an attempt to answer the research questions and to verify the previously formulated thesis.

The village administration fund in the Sława municipality

The initiative to establish the village administration fund in the Sława municipality began in 2010. At that time, at the initiative of Lubuskie Voivodeship Governor, some of the village administrators of the Sława municipality participated in a conference titled “Village administration fund after one year”. The Village Administration Fund Act adopted by Polish Sejm in 2009 (Dziennik Ustaw 2014)¹ established real possibilities of managing a specified share of the financial resources of a municipality. The Act (Art. 2, section 6) states that *the resources of the fund are allocated to finance the plans which (...) are a responsibility of a municipality and which contribute*

¹The first Act that applied was the Village Administration Fund Act of 20 February 2009 (Journal of Laws 2009, No. 52, item 420, in Polish: Dz. U. z 2009, poz. 52) and it was replaced with the Village Administration Fund Act of 21 February 2014 (Journal of Laws 2014, item 301, in Polish: Dz. U. z 2014, poz. 301) – the references found hereinafter shall refer to the current version of the Act.

to improving living standards of the citizens and comply with the development strategy of the municipality. Such a catalogue of admissible spending of public resources has led to an increased interest of village administration offices in the possibility of acquiring resources for their own needs. On the other hand, the specified limitations may pose a number of interpretation issues as far as allocating resources to the village administration unit's own needs is concerned. This issue was observed as early as in the first year after the Act entered into force. According to Mirosław Paczocha (2009, p. 5), the solutions envisaged by the village administration fund are *too complicated*, the procedure too formalised and the requirements for plans irrational, moreover, *certain vital issues are not covered by the regulation*. Despite these doubts, all of village administration offices have expressed their deep interest in such a solution. While with earlier practices applied in the municipality, specific financial resources used to be previously allocated to each village administration office, it was more of a 'gentleman's agreement' than a systematic solution. The passing of the Village Administration Fund Act by the City Council of Sława² has started a new chapter of active citizenship and increased the interest the citizens take in their community.

There are 21 village administration offices in the Sława municipality with the population including 70% of the municipality's whole population. This is why it is of great significance that such a large part of the municipality's population should have real and direct right to make decisions regarding their own territory. However, it remains to be confirmed by a deeper analysis of the functioning of the village administration fund in 2011-2015 whether it was really the case. Table 1 presents resources allocated to particular village administration offices within the village administration fund of the Sława municipality in the years 2011-2015. Significant differences between village administration offices are clearly noticeable. It results from the algorithm specified in the Act (Art. 3) that provides specific amounts based mainly on the population of a given village administration unit. Moreover, it is clear that in general, the value increases in each year. It is related to the so-called K_b notional amount for each municipality (Art.3, section 1). Notional amount K_b is generally calculated as a quotient of current actual revenues of a given municipality (...) and the number of citizens of the municipality (...).

²The Act in question is the Act permitting to establish a village administration fund for the year 2001 of 25 March 2010.

Table 1

Financial resources allocated within the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2011-2015

Village administration office	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bagno	11 803.30	11 653.88	12 085.02	12 381.07	13 098.37
Ciosaniec	24 227.83	23 868.04	25 525.92	26 636.20	28 271.73
Droniki	10 419.66	10 337.21	10 817.57	11 490.12	11 866.34
Gola	12 706.91	12 634.37	13 381.95	14 040.07	14 913.98
Krażkowo	19 512.16	19 217.69	20 456.11	21 536.30	22 662.77
Krzepielów	26 458.60	26 277.26	27 677.65	28 848.20	30 411.56
Krzydlowiczki	6 014.60	9 272.68	9 785.92	9 923.29	10 472.21
Kuźnica Głogowska	12 735.14	12 662.29	13 529.33	14 623.79	15 400.31
Lipinki	24 199.59	23 924.07	24 847.98	25 775.97	27 720.56
Lubiatów	8 810.12	8 768.42	9 137.46	9 708.23	10 245.26
Lubogoszcz	21 404.08	22 635.42	24 405.85	26 298.25	14 978.83
Łupice	28 237.57	28 042.15	29 534.61	30 722.30	32 356.86
Nowe Strącze	8 555.98	8 488.28	8 960.60	9 278.12	9 953.46
Przybyszów	18 100.28	17 760.96	18 540.19	19 385.74	20 231.14
Radzyń	17 563.77	17 845.00	19 041.28	20 153.80	21 560.43
Spokojna	10 222.00	10 113.10	10 611.24	11 090,74	11 833.92
Stare Strącze	41 848.07	41 741.06	44 419.82	30 722,30	32 421.70
Śmieszkowo	17 987.33	18 013.09	19 070.75	20 215,25	21 625.28
Szreniawa	10 843.23	10 813.46	11 259.70	11 582,29	12 060.87
Tarnów Jezierny	9 346.63	9 188.64	9 785.92	10 291.96	10 893.69
Wróblów	12 537.48	12 522.32	13 057.72	14 101.52	14 687.03
Total	353 534.34	355 779.48	375 932.61	378 805.52	387 666.31

Source: author's own work.

Citizens' participation in the distribution of resources within the village administration fund

The citizens themselves decide on the distribution of the resources within the village administration fund at a village meeting. During the same meeting, those citizens may also reach a compromise on the purpose to which

the resources provided from the municipal budget should be allocated. The village meeting is announced in advance by a message from the head of the commune/mayor regarding the amount that is at the disposal of a given village administration unit in a following financial budget year. In other words, the purpose of a village meeting is to reach a common position regarding the distribution of the resources within the fund. Initially, it seemed that it would take prolonged discussion and arguments among the citizens about the way the public resources should be spent, however, it has not been confirmed in the experience of the Sława municipality. In most cases, the application submitted to the Mayor was signed by a small number of citizens participating in a village meeting.

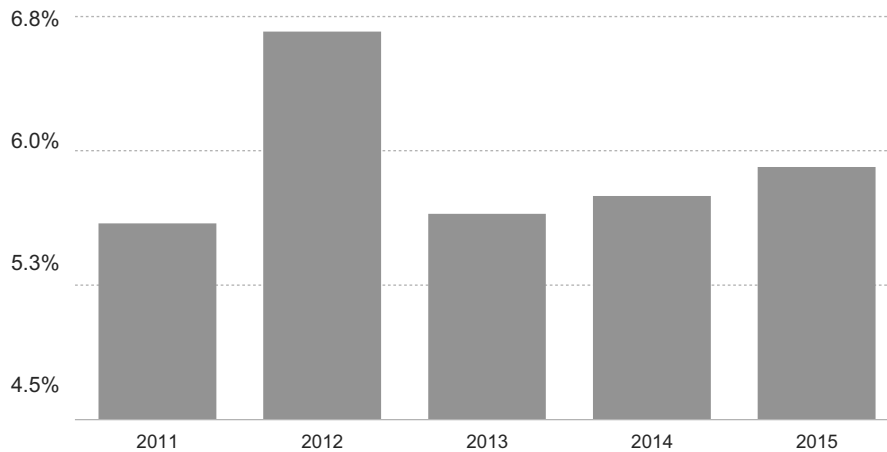


Figure 1. The percentage of citizens participating in the distribution of the resources within the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2011-2015 – the average number for all village administration units.

Source: author's own work.

The diagram above shows the share of the village community that participated in the village meeting devoted to allocating the resources of the village administration fund. It can be seen that the percentage of citizens participating in village meetings devoted to the preparation of an application for the distribution of resources within the village administration fund is low. It was the lowest in the first year (5.6%). In the following year, due to the enthusiasm resulting from the possibility to make decisions regarding own village administration unit, active citizenship increased significantly (to 6.7%) and then returned to the previous level. Next, it is important to

have a closer look at active citizenship in particular village administration units. Percentage of citizens participating in village meetings devoted to the distribution of resources within village administration fund in each village administration unit in 2011-2015 varied.

The highest turnout was observed in 2014 in the Bagno village administration unit (15.1% of citizens participated in the village meeting). Bagno is a relatively small village administration unit (201 citizens), however, citizens' awareness is relatively high there. Average turnout at village meetings in Bagno was 11.4% in 2011-2015. A relatively high turnout in the five years was observed in the Lubiaków village administration unit (10.9%). Lubiaków is one of the smallest villages (124 citizens), however, active citizenship generally remains at a steady level there. The turnout in the biggest villages may seem surprising: Stare Strącze (1320 citizens), Łupice (817 citizens) and Krzepielów (747 citizens). In these villages, the lowest turnout was observed (respectively: 1.1% in 2014; 1.1% in 2011; 1.3 % in 2015). The highest increase in the number of citizens participating in meetings (between the first meeting in 2011 and the meeting in 2015) was observed in Nowe Strącze (in 2011, the village administrator was the only person who participated in the meeting and in 2015, 14 people participated which constitutes 13% of citizens). Nowe Strącze is the smallest village administration unit in the Sława municipality (108 citizens). An opposite situation occurred in the Przybyszów village with 10.2% turnout in 2011 and merely 4.5% in 2015. Przybyszów is a relatively big village administration unit (440 citizens). The high turnout in the first year can be explained by the interest the citizens took in this form of citizens' participation. The most changeable village meeting turnout was observed in Lipinki where turnout was 3.9% in 2011, 5.5% in 2012, 2.7% in 2013, 6.3% in 2014 and 3.5% in 2015. Lipinki is one of the bigger villages (663 citizens). High turnout in 2014 can be explained by the fact that it was a period preceding elections (local government and village administrator elections) and the higher turnout may have been an element of the election campaign.

All in all, the following patterns have been noticed regarding the turnout in village meetings devoted to the distribution of resources within the village administration fund in particular village administration units:

1. in general, smaller villages are better organised and the citizens are more inclined to participate in village meetings,
2. in smaller villages, the awareness concerning the participation in meetings grew with each financial year,

3. bigger villages display lower interest in the participation in the distribution of resources within the village administration fund,
4. however, bigger villages are able to organise themselves when facing specific challenges and situations (see Lipinki, Łupice).

Spending of resources within the village administration fund

This section of this work specifies spending of resources within the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2011-2015. Expenditure items shall be specified in accordance with the budget classification, with the degree of detail of the paragraphs of the budget classification. Current and capital expenses shall be considered with particular attention to detail. It is commonly agreed that capital expenses are development-oriented expenses which increase the citizens' standards of living. It needs to be noted, however, that with the development of Polish democracy, the integration of rural communities, for instance, through organising a village festival, can have a bigger civic potential than one-off infrastructure expenses, such as the renovation of a village hall. This is why an assessment based on the share of capital expenses in total expenses does not have to equal higher cost-effectiveness. Notwithstanding these doubts, the analysis of spending of resources within the village administration fund shall focus on the composition of expenditure and the change in the nature of expenditure. It may be safely assumed that spending decisions where resources are allocated to soft (current) expenses are taken with a higher turnout. On the other hand, investment plans are realised with a low number of participants.

The cooperation of village administrators has been exemplary in the Sława municipality. Sława Village Administrators' Association (Sławskie Stowarzyszenie Sołtysów) registered in 2008 periodically organises meetings of village administrators where problems of village communities are discussed. The cooperation within the association started 3 years before the village administration fund was implemented in the Sława municipality. The association established the principles of cooperation, a visible sign of which was the ability to obtain financial resources from the municipality budget for the purpose of organising the community harvest festival (the amount of 30 thousand Polish złoty). The order of particular villages was agreed on and adhered to. Certain principles remained after the decision of allocating resources from the municipal budget was made by the Sława City Council. One of them is the issue of reserving financial resources by each village administration office for the purpose of holding a harvest festival. Therefore, from the amount available to each village administration office, an appropriate

amount is allocated to a common festival for all villages in the Sława municipality. In the 5 year period, this rule was upheld and most of the village administration units made a decision in village meetings to reserve a specific amount for the organisation of a common festival. It is a percentage agreed annually (in 2015 – 7.6% of allocated resources) (Table 2.).

The joint fund and the reserve fund are specific values that are secured in village meetings (the former covers municipal harvest festivals, the latter – the means for maintaining village halls and for unspecified purposes). In compliance with previous agreements between the Mayor of Sława and the Sława Village Administrator Association, an investment plan was developed. The plan includes building, modernisation or renovation of village halls in each village administration unit.

Table 2

Resources of the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2015

No.	Village administration unit	Number of citizens	Amount of calculated fund	Joint fund*	Village administration fund	Reserve fund*	Available fund
1.	Bagno	205	13 130.79	1 000.91	12 129.88	1 212.99	10 916.90
2.	Ciosaniec	684	28 660.79	2 184.69	26 476.09	2 647.61	23 828.48
3.	Droniki	176	12 190.56	929.24	11 261.32	1 126.13	10 135.19
4.	Gola	258	14 849.14	1 131.89	13 717.25	1 371.73	12 345.53
5.	Krażkowo	511	23 051.83	1 757.15	21 294.69	2 129.47	19 165.22
6.	Krzepielów	750	30 800.62	2 347.80	28 452.81	2 845.28	25 607.53
7.	Krzydłowiczki	120	10 374.95	790.84	9 584.11	958.41	8 625.70
8.	Kuźnica Głogowska	290	15 886.63	1 210.97	14 675.66	1 467.57	13 208.10
9.	Lipinki	661	27 915.09	2 127.85	25 787.23	2 578.72	23 208.51
10.	Lubiatów	126	10 569.48	805.67	9 763.81	976.38	8 787.43
11.	Lubogoszcz	295	16 048.74	1 223.33	14 825.41	1 482.54	13 342.87
12.	Łupice	797	32 324.44	2 463.96	29 860.48	2 986.05	26 874.43
13.	Nowe Strącze	109	10 018.31	763.65	9 254.65	925.47	8 329.19
14.	Przybyszów	424	20 231.14	1 542.14	18 689.01	1 868.90	16 820.11
15.	Radzyń	486	22 241.29	1 695.36	20 545.93	2 054.59	18 491.33
16.	Spokojna	166	11 866.34	904.52	10 961.82	1 096.18	9 865.64
17.	Stare Strącze	1 324	32 421.70	2 471.37	29 950.33	2 995.03	26 955.30
18.	Śmieszkowo	484	22 176.45	1 690.42	20 486.03	2 048.60	18 437.42
19.	Szreniawa	172	12 060.87	919.35	11 141.52	1 114.15	10 027.37
20.	Tarnów Jezierny	154	11 477.28	874.87	10 602.42	1 060.24	9 542.18
21.	Wróblów	271	15 270.62	1 164.02	14 106.61	1 410.66	12 695.95
TOTAL		8 463	393 567.06	30 000.00	363 567.06	36 356.71	327 210.36

Source: author's own work.

In the Sława municipality, nearly all village administration units have a village hall or a culture centre. In addition to culture centres, village halls are maintained by a village administrator and the village council. This is

why the position of association states that it is only reasonable that financial resources be reserved for the entities maintaining village halls in order to carry out clean-up works around village halls and for other maintenance costs. This is one of the objectives of the reserve fund. The remaining types of expenditure within the village administration fund are clearly stated in village meetings and the spending limit for those purposes is agreed on.

In compliance with Article 5 of the Village Administration Fund Act *The condition for allocating resources within the fund in a given financial year is submitting an application by a village administration office to the Head of the Commune/Mayor.* Section 3 states that *an application should provide a plan that is to be realised on the territory of a village administration unit within the resources allocated to a given village administration unit (...) as well as an estimation of the costs and an explanation.* Regarding the available fund, the citizens decide on the actual spending. Table 3. shows what the village administrator offices generally allocate the resources to.

Table 3

Expenditure items within the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2011-2015

Expenditure	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Salaries	3 000.00	17 107.00	17 470.65	22 340.20	21 822.84	81 740.69
Materials and equipment	88 331.35	82 406.00	202 760.98	240 352.46	200 243.80	814 094.59
Other services	84 764.23	32 318.00	37 196.87	27 400.42	37 090.21	218 769.73
Investments and renovations	183 622.78	223 946.00	118 404.09	88 712.44	113 532.51	728 217.82
Total	359 718.36	355 777.00	375 832.59	378 805.52	372 689.36	

Source: author's own work.

The expenses from the category "Salaries" refer to salaries paid to village hall managers. 16 out of 21 village administration offices have this category of expenses. The role of a village hall manager is to take care of its surroundings, equipment and providing access to a village hall. The expense category "Materials and equipment" is the most costly category in the village administration fund. Village administration units spend over 43% of resources on this category. The purchase of materials and equipment include the purchase of food for the purpose of organising village festivals (such as Women's Day, Children's Day, Santa Claus event) as well as the purchase of equipment for the needs of a village hall (such as chairs, tables, cutlery, kitchen equipment) and the purchase of decorative materials for the village (planting of trees, illuminations, information boards). It has to be added

that “The purchase of materials” is a very broad category. The experience of village administration offices shows that this category may also include spending for the purpose of improving a village’s infrastructure, for example on granite paving bricks for the meeting area or renovation materials that can be used for completing a task. Voluntary community involvement is still popular in rural areas and citizens with specific qualifications are willing to become engaged in such activities. The next category – “Services” – includes development-oriented tasks. The work of village administrators and citizens’ care for their environment often leads to offerings made for the local community. The cooperation with the Sława Forestry Management results in the provision of wood, for instance, for the purpose of the construction of shelters in meeting areas or a fence in playgrounds. Due to the fact that there are major meat factories (Balcerzak i s-ka, Biodama, TG Nowa, Tarczyński) and champignons growing facilities (Hajduk company) located in the Sława municipality, the social responsibility of those plants is also reflected in their sponsoring various events in village administration units as well as providing necessary equipment, for instance, for a village hall. The category “Services” is a range of tasks assigned to external entities, such as festival management, preparation of an inflated playground, transport related services, the completion of specific tasks etc. Annually, circa 10% of all expenses of village administration offices fall into the “Services” category.

Table 4

Percentage share of expenses within the village administration fund in the Sława municipality in 2011-2015

Expenditure	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Other services	23.6%	9.1%	9.9%	7.2%	10.0%	11.9%
Materials and equipment	24.6%	23.2%	53.9%	63.5%	53.7%	43.8%
Salaries	0.8%	4.8%	4.6%	5.9%	5.9%	4.4%
Investments and renovations	51.0%	62.9%	31.5%	23.4%	30.5%	39.9%

Source: author’s own work.

“Investments and renovations” is one of the most important categories. Village administration offices are well aware of the fact that expenditure determines the development of the municipality and village administration units. As can be seen in Table 4, the first years of the village administration fund show significantly higher spending on renovations and investments. In 2012, when the most was spent on investments, only 1 village administration

office did not allocate any resources to investments while other units (20 village administration units) allocated 35% to 95% of their resources to capital expenses. The biggest share of investment expenses was observed in Ciosaniec – 94.6% of expenses (developing of a plot into a meeting area) and in Droniki – 94.65% of expenses (replacing the floor in the village hall).

In the analysis of capital expenses of village administration units, certain patterns become noticeable, namely, the resources are allocated mainly to the purposes concerning all citizens (most frequently: renovation of village halls, preparation of meeting areas, modernisation of sports fields as well as renovation of fire stations). Investments such as laying a pavement or other tasks in a selected part of a village, where they do not benefit the whole community, are less frequent. Those patterns confirm the existence of the idea of participation on the level of village administration units. As noted by the authors of the guide “Municipal budget explained” (in Polish: “*Budżet gminy bez tajemnic*”) (Skrzypiec, Długosz 2007, p. 12): *the specific character of participation on the self-government level can be seen in:*

- *relatively close relationship between a citizen and public authorities, (...);*
- *the range of tasks of self-government bodies which concern basic public services that are highly relevant to the daily life of a citizen;*
- *high number of entities (of different status) participating in the decision-making process and debates regarding resources on the local level (such as those related to space).*

Such behaviour is noticeable on the level of subsidiary bodies in the municipality. Ties between citizens of a given village administration unit dominate over anonymity. The common interest is above individual needs. The investments, such as a meeting area or a village hall clearly benefit the whole community of a village. On other hand, tasks such as a sports field or a fire station constitute an important aspect that differentiates a given community from others. Consequently, village administration units seek investments that will raise their social status through creating better infrastructure and improve their sense of security that a fire station offers.

To sum up the discussion on the functioning of the village administration fund and related experience of the Sława municipality, the following facts need to be emphasised:

- the 2010 decision to establish the village administration fund within the Sława municipality’s budget was a sound and correct decision;

- the involvement of the rural community in the distribution of the resources within the village administration fund is low but the effects of the expenditure are clearly visible;
- a number of rational patterns are observed as far as the allocation of resources within the village administration fund is concerned – nearly 40% of all resources is spent on investments and out of the 55% of spending on materials and services, 80% is allocated to the purpose of renovation and modernisation;
- the tradition of organising (common) harvest festivals is maintained and is financed by all village administration offices;
- there is a high sense of responsibility and care for good maintenance of the village infrastructure which can be seen in the fact that financial resources are spent on salaries for village halls' managers.

The above-mentioned facts, however, do not provide a clear answer to the research questions asked at the beginning. Is the character of expenditure changing as new budgets are established? It is not clearly noticeable. At the same time, a counter-question might be asked: *why would this character change?* The differentiation between consumption-oriented and development-oriented expenses has not been demonstrated in the work. However, after the analysis of expenditure within the village administration fund, it becomes clear that the issue cannot be approached in the classic way. It is commonly believed that current expenses are consumption-oriented and capital expenses are development-oriented. Regarding the use of the village administration fund, it is not rare that current expenses contribute to improving the standard of living of citizens and result in an improvement of the technical infrastructure of a village administration unit and most of all, they help integrate the rural community around certain objects, such as a village hall, meeting area, sports field or a fire station. That is why it seems that most expenses are of development-oriented character and a higher share of infrastructure expenses in the first years after the establishing of the village administration fund was caused by existing deficiencies. Only when the situation regarding the condition of village halls, squares and meeting areas, sports fields and fire stations became normalised, was it possible to allocate resources to the “soft integration” (organisation of meetings, festival and sports events).

The objective of the analyses was also to learn about the character of the integration in rural communities. As the conducted analysis of the turnout at village meetings shows, there is no visible trend. It seems that an

interest in meetings where decisions regarding allocating funds to a given village administration office are made remains low. However, is this really the most significant matter? As the authors of the above-mentioned handbook "Municipality budget explained" (ibid. 2007, p. 12) state: *in Polish studies, there are also justified statements saying that civic participation may be less significant to the development of self-government since it is in a way replaced by a strong and effective leader of a local community who surrounds themselves with a team of competent and motivated local managers (...)*. If a village administrator, supported by the village council, assumes this role and if there are meetings organised at their initiative where decisions on the distribution of resources are made, no counter-initiative is present and the local community actively benefits from the results of the distribution, a particular high turnout at village meetings is not necessary. This also confirms the thesis proposed earlier which states that rural communities represent a well-defined common interest resulting from common historical tradition. This also supports the statement that not all actions and relations existing in social relations may be generalised. The specific features of village administration units show that human relations have a significant influence on the citizens' standard of living.

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Keywords: the principle of subsidiarity, the budget of the municipality, sołectwo fund, active citizenship.

Article refers to the constitutional principle of subsidiarity. The author assumes that this principle should be applied already at the lowest level of civic activity, in the municipality and its auxiliary units. Sołectwo it is the basic case of the auxiliary unit in Poland.

The article is a case study of the Sława municipality, located in the western part of Poland. The sołectwo fund as an important form of implementation of the principle of subsidiarity has been developed for a few years in the community. The author focuses on the socio – economic aspects of the initiative. The official data that illustrate the conditions, course and consequences of the development budget of the sołectwo fund are analyzed and presented in the text.

The presented data indicate that allocating a certain amount of financial resources to fulfill the tasks entrusted to sołectwo can increase their social activity and trigger civil initiatives as well. It can also give a chance that the inhabitants of a village can be interested in influencing the councils and in shaping directions of spending a commune's money. In this way they can contribute to an increase in economic efficiency and rationality of these expenditures. The process of liberating pro-growth measures can help to improve the quality of life of inhabitants of the village.