



Ministry of Environmental
Protection and Regional
Development
Republic of Latvia



Daugavpils
City
Council



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WORKSHOP 2

Hungary – Landscape Development and community programme for a liveable village, Mátraderecske *Local Government of Mátraderecske, Roma Minority Local Government of Mátraderecske, Hungary*

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The village

Mátraderecske, the 1000-year-old Palóc¹ settlement of Hungary in Heves county, on the northern side of the Eastern Mátra, and at the foot of the Mátra Mountains, lies about 35 km from Eger. It abounds in human values and natural treasures.

1. One of the traditional ethnic groups of Hungary

The village has unmatched conditions for medical tourism, coupled with outstanding natural and cultural heritage assets in a beautiful setting and with a view of the Mátra Mountains. Medicinal water and carbon dioxide gas are present in the settlement. It is the only settlement in Hungary with both medical values. This natural potential provides many development opportunities.

The demographic situation of the village has unfortunately shown a downward trend in the last decade, but this process has slowed in recent years.

The purpose and the credo of the programme

The primary purposes of the programme of the settlement are as follows:

- to make the settlement image better;
- to make the village livelier;
- to improve the demographic processes;
- to rehabilitate the formerly diverse landscape;
- to improve the quality of the landscape with its natural and cultural historical values of outstanding importance

These are to be achieved by the active co-operation of the local government and the local community.

The number of inhabitants in 2010 was 2052; in 2015 it was 1893. The goal is to avoid further decrease. In the opinion of the initiators of the programme, work and learning are the way out of extreme poverty.

Settlement and landscape development is a process that does not stop after the completion of a project. All their programmes and investments are tied to the next step that is preparing the next development, building one on another.

This also applied to the local community, as there must be a collaborative partnership driving the common goals, in order to achieve them. At the same time, it also motivates the community to think together about the future. Local NGOs, local entrepreneurs and employers also help the local government greatly.

Brief description of the programme

The economic situation of the settlement is influenced by its natural features and the health tourism of the settlement. In 2010, the settlement struggled with financial problems, lack of resources and significant unemployment. The municipality of Mátraderecske did not want to shut down institutions and dismiss people. In the framework of the programme, the local government has chosen the path towards self-sufficiency.

As a result of the programme, the local government was able to provide value-creating work for people in extreme poverty, instead of aid. The primary goal was to produce food locally for kindergartens, schools and the wider population.

Beyond the production of food, the production and preparation of winter firewood is the most important task against rural poverty, because paying the gas bill is very difficult for some inhabitants.

The aim was also to maximise employment in the settlement: the value-creating work should be done by the inhabitants.

Achievements

The project has had many good results:

- traditional landscape management (in grasslands mowing, livestock-grazing, and cultivation of traditional, regional crops on arable land);
- restoration of the traditional landscape structure;
- availability of value-creating jobs in order to increase the population's independence, to retain the population and to reduce population decline;
- considering local conditions; seeking self-sufficiency, launching vegetable production and mushroom-growing;
- creating a wood briquette plant;
- job creation and reduction of unemployment rates from 21% to 7%, by employment of unskilled roma workers locally.
- using locally-produced vegetables and mushrooms for meals for children and elderly;
- with the help of significant subsidies, the implementation of several settlement development projects as follows:
 - the construction of the mofetta, Hungary's only carbon dioxide gas bath utilising the only gas source of the country (Országos Széchenyi Terv 2004);
 - renovation of a civilian house that has become a community space where culture and traditions meet in one place (Darányi Ignác Terv 2015);
 - renewal of the medical office fitted into the landscape (European Union call for proposals 2015);
 - arranging the environment of *Almásút Spring* (ÉMOP 2012);
 - establishment of a public park (leader 2014).
- arrangement of the marketplace and its environment with the co-operation of the community;
- assessment of natural and built heritage;
- establishment of the committee for local repository of values in 2015;
- recovery and composting of green waste generally;
- transformation of an old building into folk-art house and Palóc Route Information Center in order to preserve cultural heritage and palóc traditions;
- organisation of traditional events in the folk-art house (e.g. Palóc Pillow Festival);
- organisation of occasional cultural events (classical and folk-art performances) in the mofetta building.

Information and participation

The Municipality of Mátraderecske, together with the local population and non-governmental organisations, emphasises the preservation of traditions as the most important driver of community cohesion. The preservation and revival of local traditions could not be realised without the local people, and without civil organisations. The local government supports local initiatives, supports and organises traditional programmes and community-building events.

The Bükk National Park Directorate supports the work of the local government with professional advice on nature conservation and landscape protection.

The Bükk National Park Directorate has provided information on the landscape values of the settlement and its surroundings during the preparation of settlement planning, and has commented on development concepts and settlement master plans. Assistance was provided in the preparation of the application for the Hungarian Landscape Award.

The information on the project is regularly displayed in the Mátraderecske Newspaper quarterly release. The population was informed at the village meetings about news important to solving their problems.

Mátraderecske made the achieved results available through information boards, on the Internet, through the media, in press releases, in regular newspaper articles and at village meetings with stakeholders. A documentary film was produced on the project.

www.matraderecske.hu

www.facebook.com/matraderecske.kozseg

Plans for the continuation of the programme

- arrangement of the area surrounding the spring of the *Büdös Víz* well;
- drilling of further wells;
- bottling of medicinal waters;
- institutional development (modernisation) for the realisation of sustainable development, clean energy production, energy-saving, renewable energy utilisation (e.g. by building photovoltaic systems);
- extending selective waste collection;
- building educational trail to *Kanászvár* (ruins of a medieval fortress) and setting information boards to develop green tourism;
- continuation of the assessment of the natural and cultural heritage, based on this, the implementation of community programmes in co-operation with the Bükk National Park Directorate and the local community.

Recognition of the programme in Hungary

The Heves County Assembly awarded the István Telekessy Regional Development Award for Gábor Forgó, Mayor of Mátraderecske in 2013.

In the Hungarian competition session, the jury evaluated:

“(…) The outstanding value of the programme is the management of the landscape, the holistic and complex management of economic and social problems. The result of the programme is the restoration of the traditional landscape structure, preserving the economic and aesthetic value of the landscape, creating the possibility of traditional landscape management, grassland, livestock-grazing, and arable crops. The visual, aesthetic appearance of the settlement has improved, the well-kept and well-groomed environment is exemplary for the inhabitants, and the programme can serve as a model for other settlements. (…)”

Mátraderecske won the Hungarian Landscape Award in 2017.