

HUNGARY SLOVAKIA

Implementing local development strategies

Location
Letkés

Programming period
2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority
Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure
M421 – Transnational
cooperation

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 167 904
RDP 167 904

Project duration
2014 – 2015

Project promoter
Börzsöny-Duna-Ipoly Rural
Development Association

Contact
Zsuzsanna Neubauerne
Szatmári
borzsony.duna@gmail.com
tel. +36 30/561-0980

Website
www.borzsonyleader.hu

EAFRD support helped to establish a permanent local international market in Letkés, a village at the Slovak border, where the local producers of the partner LAGs can directly sell their products.

Summary

A Hungarian LAG located in the northern part of Hungary and bordering with Slovakia wanted to support local producers and craftsmen by providing them new trading opportunities. To achieve this they aimed to establish a permanent local market where producers from both countries could sell their products.



Project activities included the formation of the market infrastructure, including 20 vendor stands, lavatory and a mobile stage. The EAFRD support was also used to organise a series of lectures and workshops on product processing, marketing, sales strategies, etc. Promotion of local products sales was a significant part of the project by applying informative materials, prospectus, brochures, leaflets and other marketing tools, such as creating a new website. In addition professional forums were organised with the aim of setting up an advisory system platform.

Results

The creation of the permanent local market gives an opportunity to the local farmers, producers and craftsmen from both countries to sale their products to a wider public while also creating the potential of tourist attraction in the future.

The formation of the training centre and the organization of the lectures and workshops fosters the market access of the local goods as well as knowledge sharing for the younger generation.

Organising traditional programmes in the market helps the cultures of the two countries to interact and exchange while strengthening their local identity.

Lessons & Recommendations

National legislation can create barriers since despite of the European directives and regulations on free movement of goods, Hungarian regulations did not allow Slovak farmers to sell their products on the market of Letkés, only in the framework of a fair. To address this a modification of the concerning regulation was developed.

At the beginning and until the event became well known, the value of lectures and workshops was not acknowledged by local farmers and producers didn't recognize it at the beginning.

To exploit the full potential of the local market established it would be necessary to cover part of it, in order to able to hold the market even in bad weather conditions.

The most important result and learning of the project is raising awareness in the region about the importance of local goods, and changing the preference of inhabitants from the supermarket products to local, organic, and healthier food, even if it is a bit more expensive.

Context

Börzsöny-Duna-Ipoly LAG is located in the northern part of Hungary and bordering with Slovakia. The support and the empowerment of the local producers and craftsmen was always a priority for Börzsöny-Duna-Ipoly Rural Development Association. Formerly the sales opportunities were limited in the region; there was only one farmers market in the southern part of the LAG, in Nagymaros. Furthermore based on the Association’s professional experience, the interviews and surveys made with the local producers it was clear that there is a massive need for training of the farmers. It was therefore important to integrate lectures and workshops into the project on different subjects such as marketing, communication and sales.

Objectives

Börzsöny-Duna-Ipoly Rural Development Association for the purpose of local products’ promotion implemented a transnational cooperation project with Alsó-garam menti Development Partnership (Slovakia).

The objective of the development was to create a permanent local international market in Letkés, a village at the Slovak border, where the local producers of the partner LAGs can directly sell their products, therefore connect the production with the consumption.

The market was important for not only the producers, but it could also represent a tourist attraction in the region. In the project there was a great emphasis on strengthening the international relations, namely the cognition of one another’s culture, reanimation of cousinship and nurturing cultural roots.

The strengthening of the local economy by connecting the production with the consumption; increasing the local employment; launching new services; and also reinforcing the Slovak-Hungarian relations was an additional target.

Activities

Project activities included the formation of the market infrastructure, including 20 vendor stands, lavatory and a mobile stage.

An international conference studio was set up in the building of the Mayor’s office of Letkés including the creation of the related technical rooms (lavatory storage room).



A series of lectures and workshops were organised (in the renovated conference studio), with local and regional organizations about product processing, marketing, sales strategies. The lecture and workshop series (58 lectures/workshops, 1 international conference and 1 international field trip) were organized mainly for local producers and farmers with the purpose of awareness rising and familiarization of new innovative technologies from processing to sale, covering the local market’s whole product range.

The project supported the development of sale networks by involving national and international partners and as its result an international network was created with 55 partners.

International promotion of the common sales of local products was a significant part of the project by applying informative materials, prospectus, brochures, leaflets and other marketing tools. A new website was also created: www.foldikincsekvasara.hu

Professional forums were organised as an opportunity towards setting up an advisory system platform. Many partners were involved in this project action in order to be able to create an adequate and well-functioning professional advisory system.

The project also funded the organization of a Slovak-Hungarian meeting four times in a year (2 times both in the Hungarian and Slovak partner territory). In the framework of the meetings in addition to the local market, lectures, workshops were given as well as some traditional performances by local groups.

Main Results

This type of local business development concept is both traditional and innovative for the region. Traditional since they try to support the small local producers and farmers against the big ones, but innovative since these traditional markets have to be reinvented and completed by new techniques and tools. In many countries these kinds of projects and support of local markets and producers already exist and proved its sustainability. In Hungary they also started to recognize this alternative reinvented answer to the consumer society as a tool for the development of disadvantaged areas.

With the creation of the international local market in Letkés, and with the cooperation between the two neighbourhood nations it is expected to realize the objectives drafted in the Local Development Strategy.

- The creation of the market gives an opportunity to the local farmers, producers and craftsmen to sale their products to a wider public.
- The formation of the training centre and the organization of the lectures and workshops fosters the market access of the local goods as well as knowledge sharing for the younger generation.
- The traditional programmes help to meet one another’s culture and the strengthening of local identity.
- The market can serve as a tourist attraction in the future.

The project beside its economy boosting and employment creation impacts has numerous additional advantages, for instance mobilises the local public, broadens the cooperation network and strengthens the local identity. These criteria constitute the significance of the regional and rural development.

Key Lessons

- During the project implementation it turned out that despite of the European directives and regulations on free movement of goods, the Hungarian regulations do not allow the Slovak farmers to sell their products on the market of Letkés, only in the framework of a fair. This problem made a start in collaborative common thinking and we already proposed the modification of the concerning regulation.
- Despite the organized lectures and workshops were very useful and gave valuable information about the new innovative techniques, as well as they were a great platform for networking and developing professional relations, the local farmers and producers didn’t recognize it at the beginning. Later the events became more well-known and acknowledged, but the project and the programme series had to be finished since the project arrived to its closure. For the time being we have no financial resources to continue with the workshops and lectures, but hopefully soon a solution will be found for it.
- In relation to infrastructure, it would be necessary to cover part of the market, in order to able to hold the market in bad weather conditions. Furthermore, it seems that there is great potential in developing a buffet with local food made of local products.
- The most important result and learning of the project is raising awareness in the region about the importance of local goods, and changing the preference of inhabitants from the products of the supermarkets to the local, organic, and healthier food, even if it is a bit more expensive.

Additional sources of information

www.foldikincsekvasara.hu