

ROMANIA

Local development

Location
Biertan

Programming period
2014 – 2020

Priority
P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure
19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 29 947.15
EAFRD 26 748.79
National/Regional 3 198.36

Project duration
2018 – 2020

Project promoter
Biertan Commune

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Using support from the LEADER measure supported the provision of basic healthcare services to a deprived rural community.

Summary

In 2011, Biertan commune in Sibiu County had a population of 2 590. While primarily comprised of Romanians (72%), there are also minority Roma (17%), German (4%), and Hungarian (4%) groups within the community. The population is ageing, overall, and has limited financial resources. Medical care and basic services in the area have been in continuous decline since the 1990s because of a lack of equipment, utilities, and investment in infrastructure. This project aimed to restore this essential support to the local community and its most deprived and vulnerable groups. It also sought to establish trust and dialogue between the residents and the Local Authorities.



A multi-functional healthcare centre was established to provide live-in healthcare services to 40 elderly people with disabilities, and also to assist another 65 people in their own homes. The LEADER measure covered the cost of purchasing most of the necessary equipment including washing machines, medical equipment and an electric bicycle.

Results

Essential care services are being provided to 65 people in the three villages of the commune (Biertan, Richis, and Copsa Mare), in addition to the 40 people who reside in the Biertan care centre.

The professional skills of employees in the local administration and social sector have increased.

The quality of local health care services for the elderly has improved significantly.

Three permanent jobs were created, one full-time and two part-time.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The key lesson of this project is the importance of establishing dialogue between the community and the Local Authorities; enabling collaboration which is built on trust.
- ❑ It is important to understand the community context within which the initiative/project hopes to improve local living conditions.
- ❑ Participatory planning pays off as it triggers action within the community, which has both short- and long-term benefits.
- ❑ It is vital to understand and address any opposition and resistance, especially from vulnerable groups.

Context

According to the last census in 2011, the population of Biertan commune in Sibiu County, Romania was 2 590 inhabitants. This represented a decrease of almost 400 people compared to the previous census in 2002. Most of the inhabitants are Romanian (73%) and there are also Roma (17%), German (4%), and Hungarian (4%) minorities. Overall, the population is ageing, the economy is weak, and the quality of local services - especially for vulnerable groups - was very poor. Many elderly inhabitants were living alone without the means to ensure their own to basic hygiene and self-care i.e. no running water, washing machines etc.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

- Combat isolation and social exclusion amongst disadvantaged groups - especially the elderly and Roma population who live without easy access to basic utilities;
- Reduce school dropout in families living in poverty;
- Improve levels of health literacy, self-care and hygiene amongst the general population;
- Establish an integrated social and medical centre for minority groups and disadvantaged people, who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, social exclusion.

Activities

The main stakeholders involved in this project were the townhall of Biertan commune, its partner, Asociația “Îngrijire acasă” (The Homecare Association) a social NGO, and the community itself. The project contract was signed in June 2018, and it was completed in June 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A multi-functional healthcare centre in Biertan was established to provide basic, live-in care services for 40 beneficiaries, who are elderly people living with mobility difficulties. The building is located in the commune’s centre, in a 200-year-old ensemble of three buildings. From here, it provides home care visits to an additional 65 people who live locally.

The centre was designed to provide accommodation (20 bedrooms, each with two beds and a private bathroom), medical rooms, administrative offices, a kitchen and dining room, a laundry room, warehouses, a chapel and a boiler room. This investment was partly covered by the Local Administration, which also provides the salaries of care workers and all consumables, materials, etc.

The LEADER measure support covered the cost of purchasing:

- two industrial washing machines (18 kg and 11 kg);
- two industrial dryers (16-18 kg and 11-12 kg);
- an industrial steam iron;
- a blood pressure monitor;
- an electrocardiograph;
- a pulse oximeter;
- an INR tester (monitoring of anticoagulant therapy);
- a triglyceride, cholesterol and blood glucose analyser;
- a vacuum cleaner; and
- an electric bike to be used by care workers for home visits.

Beneficiaries of the homecare program receive the following services:

- measurement of physiological parameters: pulse and blood pressure;
- blood glucose measurement;
- medical massage;
- administration of drug treatment prescribed by a family doctor;
- sanitary products, wet wipes and medicinal creams, and
- household help.

In addition, care workers received healthcare training for providing these services.

Main Results

Currently, the services are being provided across all three villages which make up the commune (Biertan, Richis, and Copsa Mare) to 65 people, who now benefit from improved living conditions (laundry, ironing, housekeeping), and health monitoring (blood pressure, glucose), and who also receive their medication and food via the service. A live in care centre in Biertan hosts 40 people.

The target group is mainly elderly people living alone in the Biertan commune, who have mobility difficulties and who do not have access to running water. Access to running water would enable them to cook, wash and keep their homes clean.

To date, the most visible outcomes are:

- new knowledge has been acquired in the field of homecare for the elderly;
- the professional skills of employees in the Local Administration and social sector have increased;
- social inclusion and care services are offered to people from vulnerable and minority groups;
- the quality of health care services for the elderly has improved; and
- three permanent jobs have been created (one full-time and two part-time).

At the time of initiating the project, the Mayor's office did not hold a certification for providing social services, thus a partnership with 'The Homecare Association' was undertaken. In the future, the Mayor's office will apply for certification in order to ensure ongoing provision of social services.

From an environmental perspective, the use of the electrical bicycle for picking up and delivering clean linen and clothing represents a green and sustainable choice for the project, although it is necessary to use a car - provided by the mayor's office - during the winter months.



Key lessons

A key lesson of the project is that effective involvement of, and collaboration between, Local Authorities and the community builds essential trust and enables cooperation and dialogue.

It is important to understand the community context within which the initiative/project hopes to improve local living conditions;

Community participatory planning pays off as it triggers action within the community, which has both short- and long-term benefits;

It is vital to understand and address any opposition and resistance, especially from vulnerable groups.

Additional sources of information

www.tarnava-mare.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ANEXA-4-v05_Biertan.pdf

www.cjsibiu.ro/socialce/centrul-de-ingrijire-si-asistenta-biertan-a-fost-finalizat/

www.facebook.com/galdeauriletarnavelor/

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjKkFTiuP4A&t=2s