



EAFRD-funded projects

Krásne Sady

Developing a traditional forest education facility in Slovakia

The traditional forest education facility of Krásne Sady aims to raise awareness and connection with the natural environment in Slovakia through experiential learning.

The project created a forest education facility in Slovakia's Tatra Mountains to give children and members of the general public the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge about the forest, nature, flora and fauna through hands-on experience as a part of the teaching process. Activities offered by the forest education facility included forest walks led by experienced forest educators, natural science competitions, educational seminars, club activities, waste collection and cleaning up the forest environment, cooking courses and other activities. It emphasised the development of craft, creative and technical skills and working with natural materials as well as gardens for children to learn how to grow their own vegetables, herbs and fruits. Members of the general public were also the focus of engagement activities, including workshops drawing on seniors' traditional knowledge to foster transfer of cultural heritage through recipes using local fruits and vegetables.



Location

Spišská Nová Ves (Slovakia)

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M06 - Farm and business development

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 835 515
EAFRD 745 634
National/regional 248 545
Private 841 336

Project duration

2016 - 2020

Project promoter

Krásne Sady Mlynica –
servisná a prevádzková, a.s.

Contact

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Website

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Results

- A new facility was constructed and delivered educational programmes to all age groups to promote sustainable development and increase awareness about the forest.
- 55 children attended preschool and primary school during the last school year, expanding to 60 children in preschool and 25 children in primary school this school year.
- Up to 14 jobs were created or safeguarded.
- Three workshops were organised with around 80 attendees.
- Summer camps last year hosted 114 children and 18 camps this year hosted 249 attendees.
- New sociocultural educational activities and skills were created.
- Rural income opportunities expanded from increased visitor numbers.
- Workshop attendees were able to present their products and creations at markets.
- Six wood and wood-fibre buildings with recyclable reed roofing were built and facilitate different functions: movement and dance, speech and music, visual arts, natural sciences, craft, and mathematics.

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Context

Located in a meadow by a stream in close proximity to the forest, the Krásne Sady forest education facility is located near the villages of Nová Lesná, Mlynica, Veľký Slavkov and is 5 km from the city of Poprad. The project created a forest education facility in Slovakia's Tatra Mountains with the intention of giving children and young people (<18 years old), accompanied by their parents and grandparents on some occasions, the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge about the forest, nature, flora and fauna through experiential learning.

Theoretical knowledge, which is acquired during the normal teaching/studying process, does not provide the individual with the same effect as when it is combined with practical experience. The knowledge gained through such direct experience will be etched more deeply into the child's psyche and will become a permanent value during his or her life path. Education techniques promoted by the project would help preserve rural economic skills and cultural traditions regarding managing the natural environment.

Objectives

The aims of the forest education facility project included:

- To build and equip a facility for forest education.
- Raising awareness about the forest ecosystem and building a positive approach towards nature.
- Increasing employment in a region of high unemployment.
- Offering a new kind of rural development service that is in demand in the region.

The initiative was prompted by a desire to counter the dominance of technology in people's lives by providing regular opportunities to connect and interact with the natural environment. The creators of the forest education facility wanted to introduce the forest to children from several perspectives – the forest as a space for education, the forest as a home for many animals and birds, the forest as a space where animals and humans find food supplies. Additionally, the project was designed to bridge intergenerational barriers and promote sustainable development principles, environmentally sensitive traditional skills, rural culture and indigenous biodiversity.

Activities

Construction and purchase of equipment for the forest education facility, including catering and ICT equipment for the kitchen, were primary activities. Additionally, the creators set up the green infrastructure, such as planting native Slovak trees and shrubs in the grounds of the facility and preparing a raised-bed vegetable garden.

Activities offered by the forest education facility included forest walks led by experienced forest educators, natural science competitions, educational seminars, club activities, waste collection and cleaning up the forest environment, cooking courses and other activities. Students had the opportunity to observe the night sky in the forest and thus connect knowledge about the forest with other fields, such as astronomy, physics or mathematics. The forest education facility also greatly emphasised the development of craft, creative and technical skills and working with natural materials.

The facility also focused on education in the field of agriculture and horticulture. Students built their relationship with the soil by growing their own vegetables, herbs and fruits as they were given space to create and maintain their own gardens.

Members of the general public were also the focus of engagement activities, including involvement in open days, exchange stays with facilities of a similar type, competitive events, and eco-markets. The project used the experience and knowledge of elderly volunteers and organised creative workshops for children and the general public to learn how to use the fruits of the forest and garden in the kitchen through traditional recipes. Finally, a preschool and kindergarten were established as part of the broader Krásne Sady educational service to make full use of the complex.

Main results

The project resulted in the following benefits:

- A new facility was constructed and became fully operational, delivering educational programmes to all age groups to promote sustainable development and increase awareness about the forest through the development of learners' artistic and technical skills.
- 55 children attended preschool and primary school during the last school year, which has expanded to 60 children attending preschool and 25 children attending primary school starting in September 2022.
- Up to 14 jobs were created or safeguarded. Twelve employees were employed by the facility, and another two new jobs are anticipated for the 2022–23 academic year.
- Three workshops were organised with around 80 attendees.
- Summer camps are organised annually by the project, with 114 children welcomed last year, and this year 18 camps for children between 4-14 years of age hosted 249 attendees.
- New sociocultural educational activities and skills were created.
- Increased visibility, recognition and economic benefits for the High Tatras region from expanding programmes and school attendance.
- Workshop attendees of the forest education facility were able to present their products and creations at markets.
- Six wood and wood-fibre buildings with recyclable reed roofing were built in a circular plan around one central building. Each was named after flowers and trees and serves a particular function: movement and dance, speech and music, visual arts, natural sciences, craft, and mathematics.

Additional sources of information

[Facebook](#) - [Youtube](#) - nsrv.sk/databaza

enrd.ec.europa.eu/project-practice

[Video 1 Krásne Sady - Presentation of the project](#)

[Video 2 Krásne Sady - Through the eyes of architects](#)

This project has been categorised under 'Green futures' by the nominating National Rural Network