BEST PRACTICES FROM THE GRUNDTVIG “LOCAL HERITAGES IN THE MIRROR OF EUROPE” PROJECT PARTNER’S COUNTRIES
(ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, ITALY)

– Slovakia: Centrum environmentalnych aktivit
– Romania: Green Agora– Working Group for Sustainable Development
– Hungary: Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development
– Italy: CONZORZIUM EUREK@ Societa cooperativa sociale
Best Practices in Romania

1. ASAT (Asociația pentru Susținerea Agriculturii Țărănești) – Community Supported Agriculture in Romania

Key words: local economy, healthy food, solidarity, partnerships, ecological farming, biodiversity
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E-mail: asat@cries.ro, info@asatromania.ro
Legal status: non-formal movement
Territorial focus: surroundings of Arad, București, Cluj-Napoca, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Oradea and Timișoara

ASAT is a direct cooperative partnership between producer (preferably small-scale organic farmers from the local area) and consumers who are citizens of an urban area (responsible consumers of agricultural products). The ASAT partnership provides an equitable solution to shared risks and benefits associated with locally produced healthy food.

The ASAT is inspired by the French AMAP model (AMAP - Associations pour le maintien d’une agriculture paysanne in France, or Association for the Preservation of Peasantry Agriculture) and it nourishes a critical movement which supports local small-scale food producers, through building an economic alternative to the market. This is based on the desire to preserve social and environmental capital to guarantee healthy and independent living.

ASAT aims to increase opportunities for small food producers to sell their products at a fair price, which ensures for the farmer a decent living.

Often Romanian smallholders involved in small-scale farming (subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture, with an average of 2 hectares) are living on the poverty line, sometimes below it. However, they are not recognized in official statistics of disadvantaged people. The rise of poverty in rural areas is evident, with many consequences at, including migration of workers, increasing school dropout, decreasing of social insured persons, and poor access to public services.

Therefore, support for these smallholders engaged in income generation may represent the transition from a precarious situation to a decent life.

ASAT partnerships:
- provides guaranteed product market for the food producers and a contract with the consumer for all the crops at the beginning of the agricultural season;
- reduce the time of the products selling by the weekly distribution (approx. 2-3 hours/week);
- ensure that the producer receives a fair price which covers all costs of production and allow a secure and steady income,
- support local organic small-scale agriculture
- promote environmentally friendly practices (use of manure and ecological farming instead of industrial fertilizers, treatments and synthetic pesticides), local biodiversity, and healthy products obtained in partnership with nature;
- support the development of employment in agriculture sector (each partnership is designed to fit the production capacity of the smallholder, providing also the opportunity to develop and to contract other workers).

A medium-term impact on consumers can be represented by changing consumer habits and lifestyle. They also improve their gastronomic habits, incorporating more seasonal and local ingredients, with high quality nutritional impact. In long-term, the general consumption behavior of the ASAT members changes, as they become increasingly aware of the role of responsible consumption to support the local economy and small-scale farming.
The main reasons why ASAT was developed:
– reduced ability of smallholders to cope with the general impact of agro-industrialization (changing patterns of food consumption, the massive increase of food imports for domestic consumption, international distribution chains which promote intensive agricultural products etc.);
– the continuing decrease of smallholders as a result of lack of ability to access the local food products market;
- the low level of income of the small farmers, which leads to a precarious living condition, which has impact on the future opportunities of the rural population, migration;
– the poor access to health, education and social protection for smallholders and seasonal workers;
– the lack of information among consumers about the quality of products from the “agro-business” and the benefits of the local organic food;
– the low level of awareness of the impact of everyday choices: what we eat, how can we support the local economy etc.

Evolution of ASAT partnerships
Between 2008 and 2011 ASAT’s pilot phase was developed in Timisoara, western Romania. During the pilot phase it supported one vegetable grower in Timis county whose consumer group grew from 20 to 180 families with a crop area of 6 ha.

From 2012, ASAT expanded in to different regions. In 2013 the number of ASAT partnerships grew to 13 main ASATs (with weekly vegetable baskets), and more than 20 ASATs of other foods (milk and cheese, honey, eggs, meat, bread and cakes, jams, fresh fruits grown in traditional orchards, and forest fruits etc.).

In 2013 ASATs are now present in Arad, Bucharest, Cluj, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Oradea and Timișoara.

Some of the recent main activities include:
- information, dissemination and awareness campaigns on the importance of the healthy local food, and the importance of supporting sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation;
- over 40 public meetings to present ASAT, and over 100 media appearances;
- advice and support to over 300 consumers on how to develop their own ASAT partnerships
- support to 13 vegetable growers to initiate ASAT partnership and to manage annual cropping plans and collective budget different cities;
- training exchanges for small producers on communication skills, financial planning, and natural farming practices;
- development of experimental groups to grow and develop the traditional seed availability;
- stimulate healthy local food production with respect for the environment and local biodiversity.

2. Community Card

Key words: local economy, community projects, discount, philanthropy, local resources, participation
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Legal status: initiative of non-governmental organizations
Territorial focus: Odorheiu Secuiesc, Miercurea Ciuc, Sfantu Gheorghe, Targu Mures

Founded in 2007 by a group of local business and NGO leaders, the Odorheiu Secuiesc Community Foundation (or Székelyudvarhelyi Közösségi Alapítvány – SzKA) seeks to build a strong future for the
town and region by catalyzing the community’s best ideas while providing ongoing support to quality programs.

Based on the region’s proud tradition of Kalaka, wherein individuals come together on community building projects, SzKA programs work towards a stronger future, through facilitating intelligent, apolitical, philanthropic partnerships and investments.

SzKA programs support collaborative, long-term growth, and encourage NGOs, individuals and municipalities to reach their highest levels of service.

A success story of SzKa is the initiative of Community Card program. The Community Card is a loyalty card, that offers to customers discounts of 1% in some local stores, and the stores are supporting the foundation with the same sum. Currently, Odorheiu Secuiesc has thousands of such cards. Monthly income is an average 800 euro supporting four community projects annually. Afterwards, the program was implemented in Miercurea Ciuc, Sfantu Gheorghe and Targu Mures.

The aim of the community card was to involve the local citizens in the solution of local problems. The Community Card is a loyalty card which implies a donation with each usage. The card is small and simple with a barcode which the customers can get in the partner markets or shops by filling a form. The program was started in 2009 in Odorhei, it was extended in Miercurea Ciuc and Sfantu Gheorghe in 2011 and it was introduced in Targu Mures in 2013. Odorheiu Secuiesc Community Foundation uses community cards with the local network of supermarkets and other local stores. While shopping, the customer receives a 1 percent discount and a further 1 percent is used to support community projects. Everyone wins from such a partnership between local people, shops and a projects implemented by non-governmental organizations.

How does the community card work?

- Customer use the card, and receive 1% discount
- Company matches 1% in donation
- Foundation solicits proposals and provides short list
- Customers vote on grant recipient
- Projects financed, completed, communicated

In Odorhei 4 projects are financed each year from the community found.

Benefits to parties:

- Citizens
  - Opportunity to give while receiving discount
  - Ability to exercise philanthropy
- Business
  - Customer loyalty
  - Market testing and research tool
  - An authentic marketing
- Civil Society
  - Grant opportunity
  - Communication and community relations
- Managing NGOs
  - Social Business model
  - 25% for management and marketing fee

Plans for the future:
- Involving more local companies
- Developing a network with new communities/NGOs
- Increasing the visibility of the program by developing a special website for it

3. The Frutrad project

Key words: local economy, community projects, fruit manufacture, local resources, participation

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The Civitas Foundation has initiated a regional, community-based economic development plan in the villages of Odorhei Seat. The purpose of this initiative is to embrace the farmers and small producers, set an example and provide assistance in making their communities more sustainable and provide local livelihood by taking care for the traditional orchards and by making use of fruit based products.

About the region
Odorhei Seat is mainly a hilly region, where livestock breeding and fruit growing has been the predominant source of income for centuries. Fruit growing is a specific activity to the lower hills of Odorhei Seat, the southern and south-western parts of the region. There are several fruit types that are characteristic to different villages. Accordingly, Dealu is renowned for its “pálinka” (plum brandy); Sancraieni, Tibod, Tamasu and Mihaileni for their dried plums; Cireseni, Forteni and Cusmed for the local cherries, while Meresti, Ruganesti, Mihaileni, Firtusu, Tarcesti, Turdeni and Lupeni are known for their apples and pears.

Typical to the higher hills and mountains is the presence of forest fruits, which provide to the farmers raw materials not only for homemade jam, dried fruits and syrups, but are also used for tea as well as for medicine purposes.

Background of the project
In the 1970’s the state has launched an intensive fruit growing program, which caused to have a very harmful effect on the natural diversity of the region and caused almost the complete extinction of the native fruit varieties. Accordingly, it is an imperative to re-launch the traditional based farming activities, which would boost the region’s local spirit of enterprise, and by marketing the local products, the fruit growing will turn into a profitable occupation.

The beginnings of the project is dated to the summer of 2008, when we have made preliminary information recordings in those villages of Odorhei Seat that, due to their favorable geographical locations, are rich in traditional fruit varieties. There are villages where should be find more than 40 different types of apples, pears, cherries, sour cherries etc. Unfortunately the places of cultivation (home gardens and traditional orchards) are in a very neglected conditions now. The people have less opportunity to market the fruits.

Passing on their valuable knowledge and experience is endangered, at the moment. The Fruits of Our Traditions project, launched in 2009 has two main objectives:

- to save and to reveal the value of the old fruit types, and to motivate their cultivation;
- to increase the profitability of traditional agriculture by processing the locally grown fruits; In order to accomplish the above-mentioned objectives, the following activities were performed:

a. Mapping and analyzing the structure of native orchards of Odorhei Seat’s settlements. The emphasis was upon the villages that have the oldest and the most diverse resources. The gathered information constitutes a consistent part of an educational material.

b. A Training Package was compiled for the local farmers. The one year training activity was focused on the next main subjects:

- community-based local development of rural areas;
- knowledge on traditional fruit types, methods for cultivation and propagation;
- economic value and marketing opportunities of native fruit varieties;
- traditional processing according to food hygiene standard.

c. Business Concept Packages have been prepared and continuously updated for every fruit product. This includes the results of market researches, feasibility studies and development proposals as well as the description of marketing strategies. During the trainings, the Packages were presented, and the participants became familiar with its method of practical use.
d. A Resource Center for Rural Development was developed. That is a place to provide consultation and continuous assistance for the concerned fruit growers and processors regarding the following spheres of interests:
- setting up and management of agricultural business;
- preparation of local products (raw materials, technology, tools, packaging etc.);
- revealing agricultural and rural development project funding opportunities and preparation of applications;
- prospecting market opportunities and intermediation.

e. A small processing unit, so called Open Kitchen was created in Odorhei Seat. One of the main obstacles of processing and marketing of traditional products for the sale purposes was the lack of processing units that can provide adequate conditions for food-hygiene requirements. In order to remediate the lack, a local kitchen (small processing facility) had been created where the female farmers can prepare specific and flavored products based on their own traditional recipes, by complying with the required safety conditions. This led to the creation of a diverse range of products, which can be easily correlated with a certain fruit type, settlement and even person. Therefore the consumer should identify the peculiarity of the product, and by this to increase the value of it. The product thus became personalized.

f. Best practices and positive examples were collected and disseminated. During the training inland and foreign examples were presented, mainly about how should be generated and sustained successful economic developments, based on local conditions and communities endowments. By this, there is a contribution to the development of the region’s self-deployment capacity, as well as to the enhancement of the entrepreneurial spirit of rural farmers.

g. Informative and advertising materials were prepared.

h. Exercise Booklets were prepared for the young people and children, to assist them to get information and to be able to reflect on the values of the fruits grown in their natural environment.

i. A Product Promotion Catalogue was prepared in order to present the fruit products, their place of origin, as well as the contact details of the producers.

j. Community events were implemented to connect and encourage all interested stakeholders for fruit growing and processing in order to improve the cooperation among the region’s villages of Odorhei Seat.

k. Every year is organized the Odorhei Seat Fruit Festival, which is an appropriate means for buyers to have an opportunity to get acquainted with and get the taste of the local fruits and products.

Results of the project:
- Recipes, traditional conserving methods, use possibilities
- Accredited formal 1-year training:
  - 28 farmers - future ‘trainers’ in the communities
  - Vocational trainings for processing the fruits
  - 91 female farmers - future users of the Fruit Processing Unit
- Prospecting the market and developing Business Concept Packages
  - Marketing possibilities
  - Market prices
  - Consumers’ behavior
  - Costs, efficiency
  - Technological requirements
  - Supporting financial resources
- Two local processing units were set up: in Lupeni mainly financed by Norwegian Co-operation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Romania and in 2012 in Zetea focused on forest fruits, mainly supported by local Composesorate Association.
- 15 new „Székelygyümölcs - Szekler Fruit” marked local products were entered onto the market.
- The importance of fruit cultivation was disseminated to the public. Community meetings were organized in 35 local communes of Odorhei Region. Leaflets, brochures, informative materials were published.
- The fruit growers have an additional source of income.
- The value of healthy local products is rediscovered.
- An essential contribution will be provided in longer term to the maintenance of traditional landscape management and natural diversity.
- Professional assistance is offered to farmers:
  - establishing and running of small agriculture enterprise
  - assistance for processing and marketing the local raw materials
  - identifying and supporting the use of financial resources
  - assistance to enhance the networking activity among farmers
- Annually is organized a Fruit Festival in autumn where ten communities are represented.
- Products are present at local, national and international fairs.

Agora Working Group for Sustainable Development, Academic Society of Târgu Mureș, MÜTF, Association Norgesvel, Hungarian Farmers' Association in Romania.
Future plans: in the following period they will focus on dried fruit also.

4. "Átalvető" program – Caritas Alba Iulia rural development

Key words: direct selling of agricultural products, family scale farming, healthy food
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www.atalveto.ro
Legal status:
Territorial focus: region of Odorhei

The meaning of „átalvető” is haversack – is a very old bearing asset, it is a double scrip which is carried on the shoulder in such a way that one half is in the front, the other part is hanging on the back. Usually is made of white hessian or colorful, patterned wool. The haversack is used for many purposes: for carrying clothes, food but it is also during the field work, sowing, harvesting wild fruits and other forest gathering purposes.
Caritas Alba Iulia in Romania is an NGO of public utility, founded by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Alba Iulia. The organization is one important pioneer for the development of professional social services in Romania as well as one of the main providers in the Transylvanian region of the country. Meanwhile the main interest was in naming the concrete problems of the local communities, finding
ways to collaborate with governmental and non-governmental institutions on local, regional and national level.

Target groups of Caritas Alba Iulia are:
- small farmers and housewives
- young people, rural local communities, businesses, social organizations
- disadvantaged groups
- elderly, disabled, mental handicapped persons
- unemployed

Caritas Alba Iulia through its rural development program is offering specialized counseling service to help people living in villages and working as farmers, in agriculture. It is very important for them to counsel those who ask for their help in any bureaucratic problems, to offer them professional information, knowledge, to support them in planning their professional agricultural activity and in getting financial resources.

Their goal is to improve the quality of life of the rural population associated with traditional lifestyle, the restoration of man- and society-shaping role of farming in a sustainable and environmental friendly way.

The „Átalvető” is a brand, a direct marketing network which is part of the rural development program of Caritas Alba Iulia and it was developed in Odorhei region.

This initiative offers an opportunity for small farmers in Odorhei regions rural areas to sell their products through a semi-online system. Their goal is to develop a network between rural primary producers and the urban consumer population based on trustfulness relationship. Urban consumers experience the authentic rural flavor of the products produced in a traditional way of farming.

The Átalvető program has started with a multi-module training where 35 small-scale producers were participating. A part of the trainees, nine or ten remained, to join this initiative. After then some more producers has affiliated. Unfortunately not all the applicants can join the network, because they don't have certified workshops.

The products which can be ordered on-line from www.atalveto.ro are herb teas, milk and dairy-products (cheese, cream cheese), gems, syrups, honey, vegetables, home-made bread, herbs, eggs, pastry. For the orders the consumer must be registered on the website. The ordered products can be taken from the Caritas office in Odorheiu Secuiesc every Monday and Friday.

In order to organize better the production and selling of the products they have created a cooperative which main activities are vegetable growing, milk processing and selling.

Caritas Alba Iulia also organizes trainings for adults in different topics:

Accredited training courses (360 hours of instruction)
- Livestock breeding
- Traditional elements using construction worker
- Crop cultivating
- Country inns
- Beekeeping
- Eco-farming
- Development of entrepreneurial skills

Non-formal trainings
- Pruning
- Ripened cheese making training
- Traditional oven building
- Caring for Ornamental Plants

They hope that family farms will be strengthened by the implementation of the initiative, new jobs will be created which will help to develop the rural areas. The manual labor will become a value again.
5. "Sekler Product" Regional brand developed by Harghita County Council

Key words: local brand, local economy, community
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http://szekelytermek.ro/
Legal status: local government
Territorial focus: Harghita, Covasna and Mures counties

Harghita is a county in the center of Romania, in eastern Transylvania. It has a total area of 6,639 km². In 2011 it had a population of 302,432 inhabitants.
The county's main industries: wood industry – up to 30%, foods and beverages industry, textile and leather processing, mechanical components.
Seklerland has also diverse and rich agricultural tradition. Through the official registration of the „Sekler product” brand Harghita county Council wishes to maintain this tradition and to introduce this healthy and good quality products to the European market.
The objectives of the certification are:
- Promoting the specific, good quality products and services from Seklerland in Romania and abroad,
- Configure a conscious consumer society,
- The consumption of the healthy, good quality sekler products made in an ecological way has to become the symbol of healthy lifestyle (bio milk, meat, bread, cheese, mushroom etc.),
- Strengthening and protecting the local identity of the communities.

The owner of the „Sekler product” brand is Harghita county Council. The Council has a coordinating and controlling role in the certification process, the decision maker is the Censor Committee. This Committee has a monthly meeting, when they decide about the applications on the basis of certain criteria. In some cases the Committee applies for the help of independent experts, auditors or laboratories.

For the usage of „Sekler Product” community trade mark can apply every legal entity or certified producer which met the following requirements:

1. It is registered and is working in Seklerland, is a licensed producer.
2. Its objective is cultivation of the traditions.
3. It is offering local product or service, in case of industrial products must prove that it is related to local traditions.
4. It possesses the ownership of the product.
5. Takes direct responsibility for the quality of the product and also for preparation process.
6. Observes the rules for the preparation and for the commerce.
7. The products are made of local raw material, in case of industrial products they prove the origin of the raw material.
The application and usage of the brand is for free.

The right for usage of „Sekler Product” brand expires if:
- expires the duration of the certificate,
- the producer resigns for some reason
- the certifier body cancels the right of usage of the brand for violation of the statement of certification.
The certification can’t be transferred.
The visual elements of the „Sekler Product” can be used on letters, headers, commercials, publicity and on the products.
Sekler products
46 producers got the certification for 464 products:

- Food products: home-made bread, different cakes, honey, gems, palinka (schnapps), syrups, stuffed cabbage, mustard, meat products – 15 producers, 108 products
- Handcraft products: pottery, objects made of cornhusk – 2 producers, 107 products
- Industrial products: pottery, mineral water, dairy-products, onion, wooden toys, traditional style clothes – 7 producers, 107 products

They were refused 3 applications, because they don’t meet the criteria. The products are promoted locally and abroad. The main events for this are the markets organized monthly in the county seat at Miercurea-Ciuc. There are also seasonal fairs for Christmas, Easter etc. In this places only local producers are allowed to sell their products. There are also initiatives to introduce this products to the national and international markets: they were organized Sekler Product weeks in the hypermarkets, and the products were presented also in Brussels at the „open days” organized by Regions Committee. An excellent opportunity for the organized selling of these products will be the participation in funding of a marketing cooperative. The so-called “Ant cooperative” is going to be funded by local governments and businesses from all around the Carpathian basin.

Best Practices in Slovakia

1. Eco-centre SOSNA

Key words: natural garden, eco-housing, education, self-sufficiency, local sustainability
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Legal status: non-governmental organisation
Territorial focus: regions of Košice and Prešov cities
SOSNA Association was established in 1992 in Košice city. In 2009, SOSNA has moved to its demonstration Eco-center with natural garden. Eco-center has been built in accordance with environmental principles and principles of permaculture. Almost all materials used for reconstruction were natural, from local sources: wood, straw, hemp, clay, stone, sand, used lumber, old bricks, and tiles so that it can become a place for promoting sustainable life in practice.

Since the very beginning, SOSNA Eco-center is open to public, providing trainings, workshops, festivals and other events, promoting environmental and social topics. Activities are always carried out with strong participation of volunteers – construction of Eco-center, building of new “Hobbit House”, maintaining of natural garden as well as development of other subjects there: biological waste water treatment pond, green roof, solar heater, garden pond, natural fences, etc. – all of it has been accomplished over weekend courses and with involvement of volunteers. Cooperation with volunteers is aimed to improve their abilities and skills for self-sufficiency and sustainability. In SOSNA there is also long term co-operation with the Unemployment office and with jobless and poor people, including Roma people.

If you visit our Eco Centre you can see: walls and ceilings insulated straw bales with clay plaster, plasters from horse dung, insulation panels from pressed hemp, green roofs, integrated, processor-controlled heating system, rainwater storage, use of recycled construction materials, cordwood walls, composting toilets with bio-filter, roof insulated by paper pulp and sheep wool, “earth-bag” method of wall construction which requires only sturdy sacks, filled with clay, and other, in Slovakia little-known alternatives. Most of these alternatives are based on local sources, including recycled or waste materials, and present examples of low cost, self-made ecological solutions.

Natural garden is a half hectare plot surrounding the Eco Centre. It is gradually transformed to a demonstration natural garden where herbs, flowers and plants are grown without any chemistry. This natural garden provides space for old, traditional and unknown varieties of cultural plants, but it also includes land art, a small fishpond, solar fruit dryer, and other important components of organic gardens. It is also a place for recreation of school children, disadvantaged people, and people with special needs. Natural garden, maintained with help of volunteers, helps us promote and disseminate principles and advances of organic gardening.

2. Alter Nativa

Key words: community farm, disadvantaged people, courses for public, self-sufficiency, local sustainability, permacultura

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Legal status: non-governmental organisation

Territorial focus: Rožňava district in the Košice region (eastern Slovakia)

Civic association Alter Nativa has been found in 2002 with the aim of establishing self-sufficient local community, introduction of principles of alternative economics into life, community reestablishment, respect to each other and natural resources, and mutual assistance of its members. In May 2004, several activists established a small cooperative “Brdárska pospolitost”. Its stakeholders work together on small sustainable project like eco-housing, production of food based on principles of organic farming and permaculture, crafts (pottery, basketry, wool and cloth work, birch rods...). They have bought an old house and reconstruct it with use of local renewable materials in order to establish a community centre. The community is located in southeast Slovakia in "Brdárka" – a small, remote village surrounded by unspoil nature and tradition in fruit growing, currently facing a high level of unemployment.

Basic ideas of this community are based on turning from consumption and overproduction to reasonable modesty, from aggression to tolerance, from competitiveness to co-operation, from obsession by material welfare to development of spiritual values and restoration of community in its true sense towards sustainability and ethic. Community is supporting ideas of decentralisation and
Main focus of Alter Nativa NGO is on:

- Community life - there are 7 families with children which work together
- Community supported agriculture based on principles of permaculture and organic gardening
- Local food self-sufficiency - exchange of surpluses of production and home-made products (cheese, vegetable and fruit preserves, honey etc.)
- Common shopping of basic food like grain, legume, seeds, vegetable oil. etc. in great volumes (minimising waste, saving money)
- Developing of LETS (Local Economic Trade System)
- Community and village development activities
- Weekend training workshops for people who favour alternative way of live
- Permaculture courses
- Crafts – pottery, basketry, canvas bags, wax-batik, hand-made decorated cloth dolls, pouches for herbs, spruce shingles, birches

3. Pro Tornensis Association

Key words: community activities with Roma people, local farming, handicrafts, social business

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Legal status: non-governmental organisation

Territorial focus: south-east Slovakia

Association Pro Tornensis was established in 2000. It is focused on strengthening of cultural, social and economic identity of Turňa nad Bodvou village. Main effort is to take steps towards local sustainability based on inner sources of the village. Association carries out workshops for traditional handicrafts in an own, reconstructed building. Many activities are focused on local young people (summer camps, workshops, student parliaments, etc.).

Pro Tornensis organisation is a good example how to involve Roma people into local farming and handicrafts, and how to increase quality of their life and self-sufficiency. Turňa is a village with strong Roma minority, and part of work of Pro Tornensis organisation is requalification. The association supports and develops new and also traditional skills of Romany people. In practice, they run a small social business, where Roma people work on different types of handicrafts, including willow weaving (for baskets and furniture), but also clay handicrafts, woodcarving, production and processing of medical herbs, etc. This is also a good example for majority of the community on how to start a locally based business which builds on local traditions and local raw materials.

Recent activities are focused mainly on support of:

- local farming
- utilisation of local renewable sources of energy (processing of waste wood, straw and organic waste for pellets used for heating)
- communal composting
- improving of energy efficiency of households.

Further activities are focused on mapping of internal resources of the village and their utilisation, including promotion of:

- local fairs
- local exchange of production
4. SVATOBOR Association

Key words: community farming, Roma people, social enterprise, marginalized groups
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Legal status: non-governmental organisation
Territorial focus: local and regional in the north of Košice

Svatobor association is probably the best initiative in Slovakia which successfully involves Roma people into the farming activities. Organisation Svatobor was established in 2006 when local activists rented an abandoned plot in the rural part of northeast Slovakia to start farming and ecological activities with a strong social aspect. The concept is based on joining of two different marginalized groups which are cooperating and helping each other (marginalized Roma people and people with a health or mental handicap), and through this interaction gain new skills helping them to succeed in the outside society. During the past years, Svatobor succeeded to turn their property to a beautiful small farm (located near Rudlov village), with participation of about 15 part-timers and 150 Roma volunteers who help with gardening work (growing potatoes, vegetables, fruits, medicinal plants, cultivation of seeds in biodynamic way), making compost but also traditional crafts (brooms made of natural materials like wands etc.).

In this way, local Roma population of all ages builds relationships to soil and farming activities what brings them or the local community various benefits: food to eat, gardening skills, improved quality of soil, working experience, positive example to children, involvement in the community life.

On a national scale, farm in Rudlov is an inspiring example of development local sustainability by using available local resources (land, wood) and involvement of Roma population in ecological farming and crafts. The project was awarded the prize “Gypsy Spirit 2012”.

Main activities:
• Craftwork involving handicapped people
• Farming activities - production of vegetables, fruits and healing herbs fulfilling needs of Roma and other farmers working in the fields
• Communal composting
• Production of certified organic seeds
• Forest cultivation and collection of firewood
• Landscape and nature protection, removing of illegal waste dumps
• Collection of rainwater for farming activities
• Training, re-qualification and education – chance for marginalized target groups to improve their employment chance

5. Klub BioPaPa of the Centre of Environmental Activities

Key words: local food community, organic farming, short food chains, regional eco-trademark
Address: Mierové námestie 29, 911 01 Trenčín, Slovakia
Legal status: informal group within non-governmental organisation
Territorial focus: western Slovakia

Klub BIO PaPa was established in 2002 on the grounds of Center of Environmental Activities (CEA) - NGO with a variety of activities in environmental and consumer education. It is an informal network of friends of organic farming which gathers about 50 families from Trenčín and its surroundings (Trenčín is a medium-sized city in the middle river Vah region with 60,000 inhabitants, situated just 20 km from the Czech border, and touching the protected landscape area of White Carpathian mountains).
Klub BIO PaPa is based on philosophy of CSA (community-supported agriculture). The basic idea is to build long term, direct connections between the club members and producers, with the aim to deliver organic/local fresh, high-quality vegetables and fruits from a known source, and on the other hand to support livelihood of the farmers’ families. Orders are made online, bi-monthly. The club offers mostly potatoes, vegetables, fruits, goat-cheese, meat, and home-made vegetable and fruit preserves. From its beginning, the club in a way substitutes the market which is unable to provide fresh organic products.

The long-term goal of the Club is to increase food self-sufficiency of its members, and to help and learn from each other with gardening/farming. However, demand for fresh vegetables and fruits greatly exceeds production of the club members. Therefore, CEA organizes a traditional organic fair, lectures on organic gardening, field trips to organic farms and natural gardens. Regular meetings of the club members are held with mini-exhibitions of the harvest, tasting of home-made products, and exchange of know-how and seeds.

In order to promote small regional producers to make traditional products from the regional sources (growing fruit, drying fruit, sheep and goat cheese, knitting, basketry), CEA runs a project of the regional protected eco-trademark “Tradície Bielych Karpát” (Traditions of the White Carpathians). A product can only be licensed if it is unique and typical for the region (made by traditional technology, from regional sources, with share of handwork), and it supports sustainable way of life.

Summary of activities related to Klub BIO PaPa:
- Bi-monthly delivery of organic and farmers’ products to club members;
- Trenčín’s BIO Fair (last Friday in September);
- Field trips and lectures on organic farming, farm sale and natural gardening;
- Regular meetings of the Club members;
- Regional protected trademark „Tradície Bielych Karpát“
- Mobile photo-exhibition: BIO or Conventional: Which are you going to choose?
- Web pages for organic consumers: www.biospotrebitel.sk

6. AgroKruh (AgroCircle)

Key words: organic/sustainable farming, demonstration farm, circle plots
Address: Hrubý Šur 245, 903 01 Hrubý Šur, Slovakia
E-mail: agrokruh@gmail.com
www.agrokruh.sk
Legal status: family farm (officially SHR)
Territorial focus: region of Senec and Bratislava

AgroCircle is a unique system of production and distribution of organic vegetables which helps to minimize human labor and prevents soil from compression by tractor or other heavy machinery. AgroCircle has been developed especially for small farms with about 2 ha of land with an idea to produce vegetables for about 60 families.

AgroCircle is based on circle plots. A special iron frame is used as a carrier unit for different instruments for soil preparation, planting, watering etc. The frame is fixed in the middle of the circle, from where it takes electricity and water for irrigation. The construction cost of the whole system is about 60 000 €. Technical solution of AgroCircle has been invented by Ing. Ján Šlinský more than 20 years ago.

In 1997, the AgroCircle demonstration farm has been completed. It is situated in the south-western Slovakia by Malý Dunaj river, next to the village Hrubý Šur, and not far from the capital city Bratislava (37 km). The local climate and quality of soil are very convenient for growing vegetables here. During hot and dry summer days, vegetables are watered from a small irrigation lake with the capacity of 280 000 l of water.
The demonstration farm is divided into 15 round parcels (circles), each one 36 m in diameter. Altogether the circles take an area of 1.6 hectares which can be managed by one highly skilled farmer with some help during the season. Among these 15 circles there is “free” land of about 0.5 hectares altogether which is used for growing herbs and flowers which attract many species of pollinating insects and natural predators for pests.

Mr. Šlinský grows 15 different kinds of vegetables and 5 spice herbs. In order to maintain high agro-biodiversity, the crop rotation on the farm is based on 48 different vegetable species and strawberries. Fertility of land is renewed by green fertilizers, vermicompost, and liquid plant feed from nettle. Weeding is done mechanically. Plant protection is based on using resistant varieties, and ensuring good conditions for natural strength of plants. The family also breeds hens and ducks but only for their own needs.

The AgroCircle community: The producer meets regularly with members of the community 2-3 times a year. They can visit the farm anytime (based on the prior agreement). Currently, the demand is six times higher than the farm potential. Orders are made bi-weekly by email. The ordered vegetables are delivered to town in the form of “eco-boxes”. Members pay to the farmer in advance. The prices of AGROKRUH vegetables are the same as the prices of conventional products in a supermarket.


Best Practice in Hungary

1. Symbiosis Foundation

Activity areas: social services for persons with disabilities, employment, training, social farming, environmental management
Address: Augustus 20 str 12, 3527-Miskolc, Hungary
Contact: László Jakubinyi, tel.: 0036-30-681-44-82; e-mail: jakubinyi@szimbiozis.net
Legal status: non-governmental organisation
Territorial focus: Northern-Hungary
Web: http://www.szimbiozis.net; www.barathegy.com

About Symbiosis Foundation:
„You have to have an open and creative mind and to be confident that there will be a solution! The team just have to find it - together! In many cases people with disabilities have a job that does not require any kind of formal education (e.g. park keeper, cleaner).”

Symbiosis Foundation was established on 19th October 1999. It operates in Miskolc and throughout the whole North Hungarian Region where the percentage of people with disabilities and people with a reduced ability to work is higher than in other parts of the country. Consequently there are more clients for each member of staff to support.
The organization provides wide range of services for people with intellectual disabilities as well as those with autism, their parents and persons with reduced employment prospects. The Foundation’s main aim is to help in the everyday life of these people and their families, and to improve the quality of their lives. It supports education, training, employment and social integration of people who are unable to escape from their bad situation or habits without help from others. It has wide spectrum of services for the target group that is unique in Hungary.

The Foundation throughout the years slowly realized that each step that they have done is still not enough for their clients, they developed a diverse employment system that protects their workers and provides the most adequate environment for them. The Foundation has integrated the support services with the following: day-care center, living centers, employment activities, forest school and guesthouse, Barathegy rehabilitation farm.

Diversity of social care:
The Habilitation Center is located in the city of Miskolc. The Center is placed in a renovated and extended old school building and is offering the day-care program for 40 disabled people. There is also residential center for 12 disabled adults. Here they provide special therapies and rehabilitation activities for the groups with different working methodologies: theatre, drama, eurhythm etc.

The Rehabilitation Farm and kitchen has four hectares and it is located in the Barathegy, which is near the Bükk National Park in a beautiful environment. The Residential Center was built in 2008 and provides living facility for 12 disabled and autistic adults. The Foundation provides training sessions for the clients and gives assistance for personal development. The Barathegy Rehabilitation farm on the one hand supplies food and on the other hand the kitchen sells the prepared food in the city by food delivery.

The Farm guesthouse: is operates with autistic employees and they play active role in providing activities: accommodation and catering service, guiding the guests in the farm, keeping traditions. Forest school: children from mainstream schools of the city come to the farm for few days to learn about farm life. During this time the autistic people teach the schoolchildren to different work: goat milking, cheese preparation, gardening, handicraft technics etc.

Main activities
Social service consists:
- Special transport service
- Day-care center
- Living center
- Personal mentor

Employment system:
- Sheltered workshop
- Transit jobs (a permanent workplace where the clients practice to improve their independence and strengthen their everyday-, and employment competencies)
- Supported Employment Service (provides individualized help to prepare the target group for employment. The aim is to help people in need to find a job in the open labor market with a salary, by working 4-7.5 hours a day)

Habilitation and free-time activities:
- Therapies (motor skills and behavior development, art activities, etc.),
- Different vocational trainings,
- Development of social relations (there are already some couples in the center).
Hernádszentandrás is a small village in Hungary with 445 inhabitants. It is situated 35 kilometres from Miskolc, on the halfway between Kosice and Miskolc.

Due to the political changes after 1989, most of the population became unemployed. They hoped through the years, that perhaps somebody will take care of them, too. As, they waited for the external help, it did not came, so the solution - like in other cases - was born on the spot.

In Western Europe, more so in the West part of Hungary, people living in villages are beginning to realize that they are able to do a great deal to make their village more beautiful and to launch serious development towards the local sustainability. The East part of the country is lagging behind and need many years of hard work to accomplish significant changes.

The future results depend on our ability to represent the following motto in our working day: 
"...Leading means actions, not status..." Üveges Gábor, the Mayor of the village.

In Hernádszentandrás the inhabitants permanently seeked tenders and partnership, so the mayor of the village has found a programme in 2009, which has changed 25 people's, the future of 25 families and it changed the whole life of the village indirectly.

They won 28 million Hungarian forints to learn biocultivation and whereupon they could go back to the lifestyle, which meant welfare for the whole territory throughout the centuries.

"...For the people in Abaúj the past grows from the soil, and the future does it, too..."

Under the quality control of the Biokontroll Hungária Ltd., people created a model farm, which was based on the plants grown locally, and later in the same year there was a ribbon cutting ceremony of a BioKitchen.

Anybody could apply for this program from the village who undertook the followings:
- to attend the training every weekend
- to care about their own garden
- to work in the common, model garden of the local government.

As a result of this selection process 25 participants could learn the basics of the theoretical and practical organic farming. During 18 months they work in the common garden and their own garden too.

The programme has finished in May 2012, but the work continued in BioSzentandrás, and has started more intensively.

The bioprogramme has changed not only the life of the community, but also it startet to shape the people's way of thinking. They have realised that their work and activities, the organic food must be a kind of privilege. The "Open Garden and Loyalty" programme of biomodel farm and the bioteam became famous and recognised all over Hungary.

BioSzentandrás became a supplier of the restaurant called Anyukám Mondta (My mother said) in Enccs, which won the best restaurant in the countryside of Hungary award.
People in Hernádszentandrás made a greater stride ahead: they involved the facilities of the public employment in 2013.

They have two and a half hectares of tillage, they grow vegetables in six big greenhouses, and three small ones since spring.

They worked out the environment-friendly system of the heating and they involved more cellars to improve the capacity of storage.

The supply of their products raised, they grow 25 kinds of vegetables, lavender plantation etc.

The bioiculture think moved into the population houses, too: one cannot found any house, where would be a wasteland around.

Women looked for and found their grandmothers' recipes in the draws, so the guests who arrive at the village, people who visit exhibitions, festivals, can try not only the vegetables, but also the traditional tastes of Szentandrás.

The village welcome everybody, who is interested in biolifestyle in the countryside.

In the "Open Garden" programme adults, children, families, who want to learn about biofarming they can get information about it.

The Hernád-walley Special School has been working for four years here with excellent references from all over the country - it works for disadvantaged children and their families - and the "BioSzentandrás Project" became a part of the syllabus of this school: this project brings up closer everything to children, which are natural and healthy.

Further activities: for the self-sufficiency of the locals and for independency from different grants, found, the aim is to make the a brand, to cultivate the biological vegetables and to process as much as possible vegetables and also fruits. So, the processed food can be sell on the markets and also via web-shop.

It is planned to organize a summer lifestyle camp, where children from Hungary and abroad get acquainted with life in the countryside and its unusual magic.

As a recognition of their efforts they already won in 2013 the Terra Europe Innovation Award in Paris.

3. The Living Tisza Trademark – The Alliance for the Living Tisza

Key words: biodiversity, self-sufficiency, local sustainability, community, trade mark, farmers market, short-chain supply, small-scale farmers, local breed, legal assistance

Address: Alliance for the Living Tisza: 2100 Gödöllő, Szabadka u. 8/a.; http://www.elotisz.hu/

Contact: Szabadkai Andrea; Tel.:06-30-768-8718

Legal status: non-governmental organisation

Focus area: Eastern and Northern Hungary

The Alliance for the Living Tisza registered the Living Tisza trademark as the symbol of organic, integrated Tisza Region. The aim of the trademark is to help farmers, rural accommodation providers, local processors and service providers living in the watershed reaching markets.

The Alliance for the Living Tisza Association (ALT)
The Alliance for the Living Tisza Association aims to improve the living conditions of those living on the watershed of the Tisza, to increase their flood security and environmental safety, to preserve and enrich the ecological values of the river and to provide an adequate quality of life for the people of this region.

The River Tisza connects five countries – Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia. The watershed suffers from floods, droughts, inland waters, pollution of the water, loss of biodiversity, economic and social depression. The experience of centuries proves that the harmony of man and nature can be sustained. The basis of long term sustainability of the human society is the cooperation with nature: economic and social systems which do not waste resources but enrich them.

The Alliance is a network of private persons, non-governmental organizations, municipalities, researchers and farmers. The Alliance has seven Action Groups along the rivers Tisza and Körös in Hungary, in the Eastern and Northern regions of the country: Bereg, Bodrogköz, Kesznyéten Nature Protection Area, Borsodi Mezőség, Nagykőrű and environs, Nagy-Sárrét and Kis-Sárrét.

The work of ALT was assisted by the UNDP-GEF-MEW funded Tisza Biodiversity Project until the autumn of 2008. The ALT tries to implement the sustainable floodplain management system along the river. The ALT helps small and medium scale farmers to reach markets and to introduce environmentally friendly farming systems.

The Trademark

The regions on the watershed of the River Tisza are very diverse from cultural, ecological, economic and social aspects, though they have a lot of commonalities.

Traditional products, the good old flavors, agricultural landraces have a growing market. The trademark helps the producer and the customer to find each other. The trademark offers a new marketing opportunity for fresh food (fruits, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt etc.); preserved products (sausage, jam, canned fruit etc.); alcoholic drinks (wine, pálinka etc); handcraft products (wood, leather, reed,…); and a lot of other products from the Tisza region.

It offers a great opportunity to link the retail of local products with touristic services and cultural programs (e.g. rural, incentive or eco-tourism). Rural accommodation providers, restaurants, bike rentals, cultural program organizers, bakers, fishermen and other local producers may cooperate and join the trade mark system together. So, the tourists visiting the region can eat and drink local products, the service providers and producers all can benefit. It is easier to access consumers with standard, high-quality design, common organizing, than trying it separately with simple, photocopied leaflets.

How does the trademark system work?

The ALT and the trademark user sign a contract. The user gets the license for using the trademark on its products / services for one year. The parties may re-enter into contract at once after expiring. The ALT may control the quality of products and services, which bear the trademark to ensure that the user meets the self-imposed conditions recorded in the contract.

ALT provides the following services for the trademark users:
Marketing, advertisement services for trademark users financed by the trademark license fees.
Preparing cheap advertisement material (leaflets, stickers, bulletin boards etc.) on demand for trademark users with a standard design.
Each trademark user gets an own subpage on the homepage of the trade mark system (www.savanyusag.hu).
Opportunities to exhibit and sell products at festivals, exhibitions at the Living Tisza stands.
Opportunities to sell products in shops, markets in contract with Living Tisza (in ‘local product corners’).

What criteria must be met?

The trade mark offers a special quality for customers. Therefore, trademark users oblige themselves in the contract that their products comply with the following:

Mandatory conditions:
1. The product or service was made in the catchment area of the Tisza, in Hungary.
2. Hungarian products or service.
3. Local products or service.
4. Corresponds to the standards for the production in effect (Hungarian, EU regulation).
5. Method of production may be:
   a) Conventional farming switching to environmentally friendly farming or
   b) Environmentally friendly farming or
   c) Certified organic farming or
   d) Landscape Management.

Voluntary conditions:
There are a number of characteristics that the product or service is not required to fulfill, but may be voluntarily undertaken in the contract. The following advantageous features may be indicated on the product and may help the sale.
8. GMO-free
9. Soy-free
10. Free from chemical residues
11. Made from natural raw materials
12. Flavored with honey
13. Added sugar and sweetener-free
14. Preservative-free
15. Free from artificial additives
16. Free of artificial coloring
17. Free from artificial flavoring
18. Hormone and antibiotic free breeding / cultivation
19. Natural growth, yield
20. Natural ripening (no ripening or drying agent)
21. Rich in nutrients
22. Landrace or regional variety
23. Hungarian breed
24. Without fertilizer
25. Without chemical pest control
26. Other

The majority of farmers use the conventional (intensive) methods in Hungary. However, the Living Tisza trademark system does not exclude them from the possibility to use the trade ark, but gives them an incentive to change to environmentally friendly methods. The contracting farmers using conventional methods are obliged to lower their environmental load according to a management plan agreed by an expert of ALT (see criterion 5 above).

Further activities: The National Union for Representing the Interests of Small-scale Farmers
During the work with Tisza trademark and the members the necessity of such union was raising up slowly as „the creation of an NGO for sustainable local economic initiatives and analyses of their market viability” (supported by the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Program and the Swiss-Hungarian NGO and Scholarship Funds)
The Hungarian Union, which represents the interests of small-scale farmers provides the possibility for formal functioning of the civil and professional partnerships that have been working informally up to now.
The objective is the amelioration of the legal and economic conditions for small-scale, local initiatives that can strengthen the local economy. The union assumes the promotion of food production and processing with low burden on the environment, handicraft production, as well as their markets’ access, through its advocacy of protection of the environment, and its international relations.
Topics and activities:
– Facilitating the conditions of production and promotion of small-scale producers of food and handicrafts;
– Creation of a flexible regulatory framework for the production of foodstuffs in private dwelling houses;
– Stimulation of non-profit trade and short food supply chains;
– Assistance for self-employment;
– Assessment and support of producers, expansion of their knowledge;
– Creation of a union for representing interests;
The first results of the union: favorable answer from the EU Commission (Directorate-General for Health and Consumers) in the case traditional medicinal products.

4. Polyán Association in Mikóháza

Key words: biodiversity, self-sufficiency, local sustainability, community, short-chain supply, sustainable tourism, local breed, festival, local products
Address: Mikóháza 3989, Petofi Sandor u. 32; website: www.polyan.hu
Contact: Tel: +36 30 421-7728 (Miklós Rudolf) E-mail: polyan.egyesulet@gmail.com
Legal status: non-governmental organisation
Focus area: Eastern and Northern Hungary

Mikóháza village is located in the North-Eastern part of Hungary, near the border of Slovakia. The village is surrounded by hills and the brook “Bózsva”, which supplied four water mills with enough water during the last centuries.

This remote village has become a popular for tourist attraction with its wonderful location, beautiful sights and fresh air. Mikóháza is involved in several important project on regional tourism development. The local governments of Mikóháza, Sátoraljaújhely and Kistoronya municipalities have applied for a tender within the Hungary – Slovakia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 with the title of ”The development of wine and brandy tourism in the historical Tokaj-Hegyalja”. The tender focuses on the sustainable development of the area, the development of tourism and human resources and the cross-border cultural and innovative cooperation.

Taking this fact into consideration the co-operative partners have created an agreement to describe the members of the cooperation and the general and concrete aims:

· Creation of a high quality tourism with a Slovakian – Hungarian cooperation to facilitate the prosperity of the cross-border wine tourism;

· Exploitation of the outstanding potential of wine tourism even in the peripheral areas of Tokaj – Hegyalja;

· Creation of new workplaces, the increase of employment and reduction of unemployment rate by the multiplier effect of tourism.

Concrete project aims:

· Creation of new wine tourism centers in the partner villages and towns included a joint Hungarian-Slovakian tourist center.

· Increase of tourism and the number of guests in the partner villages and towns.

· 50 % of the guests should get to the cross-border partner too, as a result of the cross-border
cooperation.

One of the main strengths of the village is presence of several civic organizations, where Pólyán association is the most important for local sustainable development of village and its environment. Good co-operation between this two sectors brings mutual benefits for them.

Working example of mutual co-operation between the self government and the Pólyán association is the traditional Fest of local products, which is very popular among the tourists.

The Polyán society was founded in 2008. The initiative persons were 2 inhabitants from Mikóháza and two non-governmental organizations: „In this mission of Nature and Environment Association” and the INSP-Ráció Association. The Nyíregyháza NGO members agreed to help with resources (primarily by applications) and application programs and Rudolf Miklós- local farmer is agreed to help in the farm development, operation and controls. The members of the Polyán Association were committed to start an economical developing program called Polyán program.

Polyán program means a local economic development program, which is complex, based on local resources, collaborate with nature in order to build a system between production and consumption.

The economic development is based on the principles of a land management system developed by association. Main objective of the program is to create a model farm, which can show a working sample for the inhabitants of Mikóháza, and can positively affect environment and the landscape. Long term goal is focused on complex landscape restoration to the form, as it has existed in XVI – XVII century, so called mosaic structure of landscape consisting of forests, pastures, small arable lands, orchards, and mountain meadows, which are maintained in natural, traditional way. This sample model farm is acting also as one of most important attractions for development of rural tourism.

The Polyán Program is divided into three parts:

1. Building a model farm which can provide a self-maintaining affect in cooperation with the nature
2. Sustainable village development and expansion program (Local Economic Development)
3. The Kárpáti Borzderes carpathian cattle breed research program for preservation

Main activities of the association includes:

• environmental protection, animal welfare and environmental protection,
• environmental education,
• education and training, skill development, dissemination,
• restoration of natural landscape systems,
• heritage protection,
• cultural activities,
• tourism development and implementation of the operation of tourism services,
• social activities,
• health promotion, rehabilitative health activities, development of hipoterapy.

Since 2010 each year the Association organize the Festival of Local Products of Hegyközi (in Mikóháza) for and with the locals.

The Association is member of the Living Tisza Trademark.
Best practices in Italy

1. LiberaTerra Consortium

Key words: Sustainable agriculture, social entrepreneur, education, local farming, legality, and sustainable tourism
Address: Via Porta Palermo, 13 -290048 -San Giuseppe Jato (PA) – IT; http://www.liberaterra.it
Contacts: info@liberaterramediterraneo.it Tel +39 091 8577655; Fax +39 0918579541; Legal Status: social cooperative
Territorial focus: Southern Italy

"Libera. Associations, names and numbers against mafias" was born on 1995 with the purpose of involving and supporting all those who are interested in the fight against mafias and organized crime, led by Don Luigi Ciotti, a priest who has dedicated his life to the fight against organized crime in southern Italy.
Libera is presently a network of more than 1,600 associations, groups and schools, committed to build up organizational synergies between the political and cultural local realities capable of promoting a culture of lawfulness.

Concrete commitments of the Libera:
- The law on the social use of the real estate confiscated from organized crime,
- The education on democratic lawfulness, the fight against corruption,
- The camps for anti-mafia education,
- The projects on work, development and anti-usury activities.

Libera Land, Confiscated Properties  Law n. 109/96 provides for the granting to third parties—private organizations; cooperatives; municipal, provincial and regional administrations—of all property acquired through illegal activities. The third parties then return them to the community by converting the properties to socially beneficial uses. During the 13 years since its passing, the law has converted to use for the community more than 4500 real estate properties (apartments, villas and lands). The confiscated lands in Sicily, Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Lazio have been taken over by cooperatives of students and have produced oil, wine, pasta, taralli, legumes, preserves and other organic goods. All of our products are marked with the Libera Terra quality and civic responsibility assurance. Every year on these lands we run international community service work camps.

Recently, it was created a new entrepreneurial venture: the Consorzio Libera Terra Mediterraneo. The company, a joint project between the Libera Terra cooperatives and other parties, creates alliances and collaborations in leadership and production all over Italy to widen the network of the cooperatives.
Cooperating with Libera Terra - Agency for the Promotion of Cooperatives and of a Culture of Respect for the Law was created in May 2006. (See for more: http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/italy/091027/libera-terra-food?page=0,0 )
2. Nomadelfia

Key words: sustainable agriculture, community farm, Christian community, social inclusion, and protection of minors

Address: C. P. 103 - 58100 Grosseto GR – Italy; http://www.nomadelfia.it/
Contacts: Tel. +39-0564-338243 - Fax +39-0564-338233 info@nomadelfia.it
Legal status: non-governmental organisation
Territorial focus: Tuscany – Grosseto District

History and aim
Founded by Fr. Zeno Saltini (1900-1981). After his ordination into priesthood in 1931, he adopted a young man who had been released from prison. Since then, the families of Nomadelfia have taken in more than 5,000 young people. A group of catholic volunteers that wishes to construct a new civilization based on the Gospel.

A life on the style of the first christian communities where lives 270 people - 50 families

Guidelines:

- All goods are shared;
- There is no private property and no money;
- One works only within Nomadelfia and there is no compensation;
- The families are willing to adopt children;
- 4 or 5 families make up a "family group";
- Schooling is mandatory until the age of 18 and schools are located within the community.

Inside the community a large number of agricultural activities are performed, like vegetable gardening, livestock holdings, oil producing. The community mainly consumes all the products.

3. Le Mat

Key words: sustainable tourism, social inclusion, social tourism, brand, and social entrepreneurs

Address: Via G. Giulietti 11 I - 00154 Roma - Italy
Contacts: Tel. (0039) 335 7780682, info@lemat.it www.lemat.it
Legal status: non-governmental organization
Territorial focus: Italy

The story of the LE MAT brand and social franchising system explains quite well that in Italy it was and it is still a really collective development process.

Le Mat is a social co-operative (Corsortium) of social co-operatives. Up from local practices all over Italy creating jobs in many different branches and working for a more sustainable and inclusive community. They developed all together a brand standing for responsible, inclusive and community tourism. LE MAT - SPECIAL PLACES, SPECIAL PEOPLE, SPECIAL VALUES. 15 social co-operatives are the owners of the brand and spread the practice throughout social franchising. In the Le Mat places the visitor can touch the co-operative work and stay with them some day, discover practices, the landscape and the local communities.

The “social” travellers give their know-how and experience creating the value of the brand and sharing the ownership.
Many experts started to speak about social franchising ING and LE MAT became a member of the European Network of Social Franchising ESFN.

Le Mat is a brand and a social franchise system of social entrepreneurs in tourism. Le Mat stands for sustainable and inclusive small-scale local tourism, and for a special method of managing hospitality, welcoming, support, and care of our travellers, who we would like to be an active part of our community of entrepreneurs working inclusively.

The Le Mat hospitality system, and the Le Mat cooperatives act in the general interest of the human community for more sustainable and inclusive development, endeavoring to enhance all the human and environment resources of the local community.

Le Mat welcomes all travellers and guests. With their help, Le Mat want to learn how to be more welcoming, and how to deliver a better service: how to surmount all barriers - physical, psychological, sensorial, and cultural - which all too often impede communication and cultural exchange.

Le Mat’s enterprises are managed in a collective and democratic way. Workers are also members and owners who co-operate to achieve the best results in their social business. Among the workers and members there are many persons who have experienced social exclusion, unemployment, mental illness, drug addiction, and disabilities. Le Mat appreciates particularly their experiences and competencies. Le Mat’s entrepreneurs and enterprises share planning processes and like democratic decision making: one special person, one special idea, a different point of view, a right, a word, an opinion, a vote to build something richer and more precious through wider participation. Le Mat doesn’t prefer those that have more money. Rather, we appreciate good ideas and the assumption of responsibility: all the good things you may see and take in upon entering a Le Mat venue.

Every Le Mat is an active part of a local system for sustainable, responsible and inclusive tourism - a community of social entrepreneurs. Every Le Mat undertakes in its local community the sharing of its values of quality and inclusive practices with the local infrastructure.

Le Mat systems and structures may have different names, but their qualities are universal. At every reception of a Le Mat establishment one will find the products and presentations of the local partners, and all the information about.

Philosophy

Le Mat social entrepreneurs work in the general interest of local people and places. They invest their abilities, ideas and resources to build more inclusive, socially responsible communities, landscapes, hamlets, towns and cities - resulting in more interesting environments for travellers to explore. Sometimes they fight against exclusion and discrimination; frequently they innovate, creating employment and new opportunities in the social economy. They work with renewable energy sources, and network with other small enterprises and cultural associations in their surroundings, sharing and debating values, ideas and sustainable practice.


Key words: social farming, social agriculture, Horticulture, Economy, Technique, Innovative, social inclusion, GAS, GAS networks

The project is very good also as Best Practice presentation because of it’s complexity and association of different stakeholders and services (social agriculture, GAS).

The Focus of the project:
The project is based mainly on the social farming (social farming: it is a traditional as well as an innovative activity for farmers. It regards the use of resources from agriculture for rehabilitation and
social inclusion) and it is the result of an agreement and a co-operation among different stakeholders, institutions:

- University of Pisa – Biology of the Agrarian Plants Department
- BioColombini is Ponte Verde the joint enterprises, and each partner takes part in this project with their own competences, pursuing specific objectives

Ponte Verde is a B tip of cooperative, and works with social educative recuperation of disadvantage people (prisoners, disabled people, drug-addicted people, alcoholics, etc.) who come from programs of social/occupational inclusion. Within the project they bring the social competence and labor force for the agriculture work of the field that is provided by the University.

Bio Colombini gives it's own professionalism in agriculture and it's own network of commercial and solidary distribution ((Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale).

The project aims to associate the production of the agriculture and the social inclusion, with the research, innovation, increasing the value of the people, high quality of the production, and social and occupational inclusion, social dialogue (distribution network, short food chain).

The purchasing groups are from around Pisa, and they are conscious about the social and ethical aspect of the buying products. In this way the producers will get back their self-confidence in there own working capacity, and role in the society.

Throughout the years the project included different number of people with different role (trainings, socio-therapy etc.) or services (social assistance of the Minors Court or from the region).

What is a G.A.S.?

G.A.S. is an acronym for the Italian expression "gruppi di acquisto solidale" (solidarity purchasing groups). Usually, a purchasing group is set up by a number of consumers who cooperate in order to buy food and other commonly used goods directly from the producers or from big retailers at a discounted rate, in a short food chain.

The aims of the Solidarity Purchasing Groups are to promote consumer’s awareness of their role and power; to support the diffusion of local products (or, if not local, the fair trade ones) coming from farms and enterprises that operate legally, respecting workers and environment. Often they sustain organic food producers. Last but not least, they encourage the relationship between producers and GAS members, and the solidarity and fraternity among them.

The first considered G.A.S. was born in Fidenza in 1994. The following year the association “Libera” was born with the aim to encourage the civil society to act against the Mafia, promoting values such as legality and justice. The “Libera Terra” cooperatives were among the first producers providing Solidarity Purchasing Groups.

In 1997 the first GAS network was born. Thanks to the network, in fact, the GAS's experience spread fast. Information among groups was circulated by a bulletin called “Bogar”. Released mainly as a paper on the web, in each number there was an updated list of GAS groups which “fell into the net”, the presentation of one group and one or more producers, news from the world of GAS. Another important network tool was the website, in which there was general information about GAS, their story, motivations, structure, and producers.

In 1999 is the year of the first official national GAS meeting. It took place in Fidenza, with the title “Bio-logico bio-etico”. The meeting proceedings took the shape of the document I GAS – un modo diverso di fare la spesa. This “base document” of being a GAS put on paper the reasons why a group rises, what is a GAS, its motivations and guidelines, its criteria, its internal and external organization and its perspective. The document also contains some practical indications about for example what to do when a group becomes too big, or some advices for a new one.

On 23 June 2005, they reached the number of 200. The national meetings in 2004 and 2005 took place in two particular frames: the very first editions of “Terra Futura” and “Fà la Cosa Giusta” respectively. These are two national and annual appointments in which the so-called “Solidarity Economy's world” opens its door at sectors such as tourism, textile products, energy, and services in general.
In 2007 “Gas Energia” was founded. This is an association between some Solidarity Purchasing Groups to buy collectively “clean energy”, to sustain the local energy auto-production and to promote local initiatives supporting renewable resources.

In 2008, then, Solidarity Purchasing Groups made another important step. They were in fact recognized by Financial Law (Legge 24.12.2007 n° 244, G.U. 28.12.2007). At article one, paragraphs from 266 to 268, this law defines the GAS and states that their member-directed activities are not commercial, to Iva and direct taxation’s scope.

(The GAS as laboratories of civil economy by Laura Colombo)

Nowadays the Italian network counts about 350 solidarity-purchasing groups (81 in Tuscany) in 2011, but for 2014 it has increased up to 900 GAS around Italy.

**What’s the meaning of the word ”solidale” (solidarity based)?**

When a purchasing group doesn’t search for just the cheapest price, but instead puts people and environment before profit, the group becomes a solidarity-purchasing group. A solidarity purchasing group chooses the products and producers on the basis of respect for the environment and the solidarity between the members of the group, the traders and the producers. Specifically, these guidelines lead to the choice of local products (in order to minimize the environmental impact of the transport), fair-trade goods (in order to respect disadvantaged producers by promoting their human rights, in particular women’s, children’s and indigenous people’s) and reusable or eco-compatible goods (to promote a sustainable lifestyle).

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**5. Consorzio Leonardo**

Key words: Sustainable agriculture, social inclusion, social agriculture, educational farm

Address: Viale Grigoletti, 72/E - 33170 Pordenone

Contacts Tel: 0029 0434.378725 leonardo.pordenone@confcooperative.it

http://www.consortzioleonardo.pn.it

Legal status: Social Cooperative

Territorial focus: North-east Italy

“Leonardo” is a consortium of social cooperatives. It was born in 1998 in Pordenone with the aim to encourage the cooperation between its cooperatives and to promote their development and the idea of cooperation in general.

It brings together 14 cooperatives (7 of “A” type, 4 of “B” type and 3 of “A and B” type) that work in the area of Pordenone. The cooperatives’ members (workers and volunteers) are over 750 and there are also about 100 employees.

The cooperatives work in a lot of different sectors: social assistance, education and training.

Their target groups are:

- minors (with or without social problems)
- elderly people, disadvantaged people
- disabled people (mentally and physically)
- drug users and immigrants.

The Consorzio Leonardo social utility services are:
• Development of social cooperation projects (FORCES, NEXUS, SILAVORO, F.L.E.S., IMMIGRACOOP, DONNE IN MOVIMENTO, COOPERNIÑOS, RAGAZZI FUORI, TELEFONO CASA)
• Services to its cooperatives: designing, reporting of projects funded, appraisal for facilitated loans, secretarial management, drafting for social report, and training.
• Management of personal services: Casa Padiel, Casa Colvera
• Management of the National Civil Service

The "social farming" project promoted by the Health Service n. 6 “Friuli Occidentale” and financed thanks to the regional law L.R 1712008 (Legge finanziaria 2009 del Friuli Venezia Giulia - art. 10. commi 81-84), allows the activity of study and experimentation for the promotion and development of social farms, that includes as working partners disadvantaged subjects, in the north area of the province of Pordenone.

The aim of the project is to increase working-partnership opportunities such as the social inclusion chances offered by the social farms, and the individuation of legal and normative acts that can support stable relations between social cooperatives and farming companies and the development of a network of social farms on the regional ground.

6. Uovo di Colombo

Key words: Sustainable agriculture, social inclusion, social agriculture, educational farm, social services
Address: Via dei Comparini 6 - 55049 Viareggio; http://www.uovodicolombo.net/
Legal status: Non governamenta
Contacts: 0039 0584-385920 / 0039 0584-385905; uovodicolombo@hotmail.com
Territorial focus: Viareggio – Lucca district, Tuscany
The association counts 181 members, 30 of them are actives

The UOVO DI COLOMBO association was born in 1996. It aims to encourage a re-acquisition of full rights of citizenship by persons with a disadvantage (especially with mental health problems, disability or dependency) by moving the centrality of the interventions by the disease to the person, their abilities and potential for change, by:

• - Projects of socio-therapeutic and working
• Opportunities for socialization and cultural expression
• Active volunteer opportunities

The socio-therapeutic and working project contains the following: shop, handicraft laboratory, joinery workshop, reparation of bicycle, laundry, tailoring, production of honey, poultry and domestic, gardening and aromatic plants, kitchen and catering, cleaning and maintenance parks and gardens, wildlife restoration.

The association promotes actions of socialization through tours and excursions, handbooks, creative workshops, workshops taking care of themself, theatre.
The cooperative (it is an A and B type of cooperative) "Il Pungiglione" has its roots in the Pope John XXIII Association Community, founded by Don Oreste Benzi and, from the beginning of its history, has focused on the quality of the products of the honey manufacturing chain combined with the quality of the social rehabilitation of disadvantaged people, especially those who come from the penitentiary system.

The cooperative processes in a biological way the various bee products: honey, honeydew, royal jelly, beeswax and propolis.

Recently, with regard to the honey chestnut and acacia products in Lunigiana was obtained by the European Union the first DOP (protected designation of origin) recognition in Italy.

The carpentry provides materials and equipment for beekeeping to all the beekeepers of the nation who make request.

The workers are the ex-prisoners, disabled people, and they live also in the campus.

The recovery of the people comes from putting ones life at the side of each of those who come in contact with the cooperative or are received at the center "Reborn" located in the building, according to one of the specific vocation of the Community Pope John XXIII: the direct sharing of your own live with the lasts.

At Boceda, in the industrial area of Mulazzo, the employment in different work activities in the beekeeping industry helps people from social exclusion of life experiences, to regain a place in society and a positive stability of life.

In Bottega dei Buoni Frutta, the cooperative shop has a variety of products from more the 40 local producers and farmers within 50 km. The Bottega was one of the Region of Toscana Filiera Corta project that supports the spread of the short-chain food supply among the people, tourists in Toscana.
8. Social farms network in Sicilia

Key words: Sustainable agriculture, local farming, and educational farm
Address: Via Caronda 39, 95024 – Acireale (CT); http://www.fattoriesocialisicilia.it/
Contact: fattoriasocialisicilia@virgilio.it;
Legal status: Non-governmental organization
Territorial focus: Sicily – South Italy

The Social Farms are farms that offer cultural, educational, charitable, educational services and social inclusion, employment possibility for vulnerable persons or disadvantaged areas. The roots of the social farms are deeply into the solidarity forms and the values of the reciprocity, voluntary work and mutual help that can characterize the rural areas.

The social farms in Sicily mainly are organized in network of people, organizations, agricultural companies engaged in the promotion of health, social inclusion and sustainable development.

Companies and businesses can become part of the Social Farms Network Sicily signing the policy document of subscription. The network promotes all types of social economy, and the products are sold for GASs.