

**Get to know good
practices of local
action groups
and their beneficiaries**



INCLUSION LEADER



Mazowsze.
serce Polski



Krajowa Sieć
Obszarów Wiejskich



"European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas"

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The inspiration to write the Inclusion-Leader project was the figure of Stefan Czarnowski, an outstanding Polish sociologist originating from Kroczewo, Płońsk county; his work is our resource and signpost. While implementing the project we wanted to identify and show innovative methods and tools used by the LAG to include groups threatened with social exclusion. Many groups implement interesting and effective initiatives and it is worth sharing them with others. Therefore, the objective of our project was to collect and disseminate good practices to counteract social exclusion by organising the Stefan Czarnowski competition for the title of Inclusion-Leader and to develop a publication of selected good practices. We were particularly keen to include in the Local Development Strategy implementation process those persons and groups who are threatened with social exclusion because of impeded access to the labour market, origin, place of residence, race, religious affiliation, age, sex or disability. As part of the project Local Action Group - Friendly Mazovia announced Stefan Czarnowski competition for the title of Inclusion-Leader. The competition was addressed to the local action groups and their beneficiaries from Mazowieckie, Warmińsko-mazurskie and Małopolskie provinces. Applications could be submitted in 4 categories: I. Activities involving the unemployed, women returning to the labour market, II. Activities involving young people under the age of 26, III. Activities involving senior citizens over the age of 60, IV. Other activities involving disadvantaged groups due to origin, place of residence, race, religious affiliation, gender, disability. In order to encourage the participants we adopted a simple formula for submitting applications for the competition; we expanded the target group to include LAG beneficiaries and planned very attractive prizes: three main prizes in each of the four categories: 1st place: PLN 5000, 2nd place: PLN 4000, 3rd place: PLN 3000 and special distinctions of the Płońsk County Governor and Załuski Commune Head worth PLN 1000 each. The invitation to participate in the competition was sent twice to all the groups from 3 provinces. The information was repeatedly published on the website of the project partners, the National Network of Rural Areas, LAG group, in the press and on the radio. To remind people of the competition and to encourage them to participate we made telephone calls to many LAGs. Taking into account a simple formula of the competition, attractive prizes, broad and longer-lasting promotion, convenient time to submit applications and, first of all, its objective, which is important for all LAGs, we expected at least several dozen applications. However, in the period from 14 June to 16 July 2021 the LAG-Friendly Mazovia office received 20 applications. This was the minimum we assumed in the project. It is difficult to understand why the local action groups did not want to share their ideas, proven measures in this respect?

The prizes awarded by the committee were presented to the winners on August 14, 2021 during the 8th Raciąż Fair. We would like to thank all participants for their participation in the contest and congratulate the winners!

By developing the publication in Polish and English and disseminating it in selected provinces, Poland and the EU, we want to create inspiration and conditions for other LAGs to use proven innovative methods and tools to counteract social exclusion.

If one were to ask the average student of social sciences in Poland for the best known definition of culture, he would certainly (if he studied diligently) reply that it is the totality of objectified elements of social achievements, common to a number of groups and, because of their objectivity, fixed and capable of expanding spatially¹. The author of this definition, well-known and recognised in the scientific circles, is Stefan Czarnowski, one of the most eminent Polish sociologists, who was born on 1 September 1879 in Krocze, in a wealthy landowning family (in his birth certificate his father appears as the owner of seven estates and two towns)².

Among his ancestors (on the distaff side) was an eighteenth-century merchant, industrialist and Armenian banker, Paschalis, to whom Czarnowski owed "his exceptional, somewhat eastern beauty, as well as original mental liveliness, in spite of appearances of great calm, in spite of restraint and actual composure"³. It was perhaps this that gave him insight and openness to what was different, often overlooked and unnoticed. He was valued not only for his scientific achievements, but also for his sensitivity and particular passion for the idea of social justice, pro-social journalistic activity, involvement in the fight for Poland's independence, but also for his reliability, total dedication to work and... his sense of humour.

A lecturer at the Universities of Sorbonne and Warsaw, a recognized Celtic scholar (author of a study on St. Patrick as an example of a national hero), sociologist and historian of religion, author of classic studies on social change, history of religion, popular culture and a short study on "redundant people", still taught at universities.

He believed that we owe particular attention and support to those who are not lucky enough to have the privilege of full participation in social and cultural life, who because of lack of work and other circumstances function on the margins of social life, thus becoming easy prey to populist, totalitarian ideologies. "Redundant people," as he pointed out, calling them "leaves torn from the tree, blown by the wind" - are an important and unused resource; it is our duty to enable and facilitate their integration into social life.

The idea of social inclusion, which assumes that everyone can find their place in the community, even if for various reasons (sometimes independent of themselves) they were excluded from it, perfectly fits Czarnowski's definition that "everything in man has a social beginning". In the community, a human being is born, grows, struggles with it and changes, and finally gives back what he or she has received from it. Supporting activities and initiatives that give one a chance, allow one to spread one's wings, learn about one's own potential, regain faith in one's own strengths and subjectivity, which is what we used to call empowerment today, is an activity that would certainly meet with Stefan Czarnowski's appreciation.

The originators and executors of the INCLUSION LEADER project have perfectly brought out what is most valuable and still relevant in Czarnowski's work and, above all, in his life; despite the contemporary naming, the awarded projects are all about the same things: sensitivity and social justice, respect for every human being and working towards making everyone feel an integral part of society; only then will they be able to live, develop and grow normally. Innovativeness, tailor-made activities, use of local resources, i.e. the criteria applied in the competition, make it not only a valuable and inspiring set of good practices, but also an interesting example, worth following, of skillful implementation of the LEADER program directives to stimulate activity of local communities.

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¹ Stefan Czarnowski, Culture, Warsaw, Wiedza i Życie 1938, p.19-20.

² M. Handelsman, Stefan Czarnowski 1879-1937 [in:] S. Czarnowski, Społeczeństwo i kultura – prace z socjologii i kultury religii, Polski Instytut Socjologiczny, Warsaw 1939, p. XIII.

³ Ibid.

Category I

Activities involving the unemployed and women returning to the labour market

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1ST
place

Project title:

Social Economy Academy of Sądecka Crown

Development of social economy entities and social enterprises acting for the development and promotion of local community, identity and cultural education is the aim of Local Development Strategy developed by LAG "Sądecka Crown" for 2014-2020. The implementation of own operation Social Economy Academy of Sądecka Crown directly contributed to the promotion of social economy among rural residents living in the area of communes: Chełmiec, Kamionka Wielka, Grybów, the town of Grybów. The project built a basis for a significant increase in awareness, knowledge and opportunities to create social economy entities in our area. In turn, in the context of high unemployment in the LAG area, combined with an unfavourable unemployment structure and a high proportion of the population using social assistance, it provided a real opportunity for improving the situation on the local labour market. The project assumed the implementation of initiatives that had not been carried out on the local market (the area of 4 communes) and their latent need was perceived by the LAG Sądecka Crown. Thanks to the implementation of the own operation, a breakthrough was made for the local community, in particular for the unemployed, and the realisation of the Sądecka Crown Academy of Social Economy became the turning point for the LAG to set up a social cooperative in partnership with Chełmiec commune.

The project's target group were the unemployed, including long-term unemployed, social assistance clients and persons interested in becoming involved in the Social

Economy. Inhabitants of rural areas covered by LAG "Sądecka Crown" benefited from initiatives carried out as part of the Social Economy Academy. The unemployed (including school graduates - people under 35 years of age; the long-term unemployed; women) and people benefiting from social assistance - as the target group indicated in the Local Development Strategy, gained new professional competencies through the assistance provided by a vocational counsellor who diagnosed the skills of such people, indicated the development path in the field of social economy and, in the case of suitable predispositions, referred them to the training on Social Economy Manager. In this way, the unemployed gained knowledge and professional skills that were used to start working in a social enterprise (obtaining a certificate of completion of training and certificate of Social Economy Manager).

A training "Social Economy Manager" was organised concerning formal and legal aspects of setting up a social enterprise, attended by 20 socially excluded persons and LAG employees. In addition, a one-day study visit to a social cooperative in Kielce was organised to exchange information and experience in the field of social economy and activation and, as a result, to disseminate and transfer good practices to the area of communes covered by the Local Development Strategy.

The project also provided for promotion of the idea and mechanisms of social economy during four local events through a presentation of the activities of social enterprises operating in Poland, as well as creation of a consultation



point with an advisor specialising in social economy issues. Employees of social cooperatives organised bread baking, soap making and decoupage workshops for residents, which were used free of charge by event participants: children, youth, seniors. Using social cooperatives to run workshops was also a well-thought-out way to provide financial assistance to these entities. Indirectly, all participants of 4 local events (approx. 800 people per event) as well as readers of the press and media were introduced to the idea of social economy. By sharing knowledge and experience of successful social enterprises, practical aspects of social economy were presented. Good practices in running social enterprises have become an incentive for LAG area inhabitants to become active in the field of social economy.

Moreover, the LAG planned to hold competitions (for children and the youth and for families) during events on the social economy subject with valuable prizes. The contests were aimed at attracting participants and making

them interested in the subject of the event. Thanks to this, local residents and tourists showed interest in the topic, became involved in workshops, competitions and games organised, among others, by employees of social enterprises. Assimilation of information on social economy through participation in workshops, organised events, learning by playing/competitions was the most effective method of transferring knowledge and promoting the idea of social economy, and valuable prizes attracted and encouraged to participate in competitions.

The effects of the project Academy of Social Economy of Sądecka Crown contributed to the establishment in 2017. Social Cooperative "PUCUŚ", which in 2020 was merged with the Social Cooperative "PRZEDSZKOLAKI TO MY" ["KINDERGARTEN KIDS ARE US"], of which the LAG is a founding member. It is certain that thanks to the project implementation a new social economy entity was established that successfully performs activities for the local community and provides employment to socially excluded persons. The use of local resources, i.e. human potential, experience of the LAG team helped to build partnership between a public institution and a non-governmental organisation. Running a joint enterprise, professional activation and investment in human capital are the key objectives of the cooperative activity which currently employs 25 persons from the group of the socially excluded and unemployed. A good practice in the project is to build partnerships around the idea of social economy, combining various activities: educational (training, study visit, counselling), promotional, dissemination and activating activities (events, presentations of social cooperatives, competitions with prizes).



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2ND
place

Project title:

Knowledge and Innovation - I

The project entitled "Knowledge and Innovation - I" was implemented under an undertaking set out in the Local Development Strategy of the same name. It was addressed to the inhabitants of the area of activity of the Local Action Group "Mazovia's Mainland" Association, i.e. five Mazovian communes: Czerwin, Goworowo, Rzekuń, Rzewnie and Troszyn, particularly to the representatives of disfavoured groups. The Local Development Strategy defines eight disadvantaged groups: groups disadvantaged in terms of access to the labour market, the long-term unemployed, unemployed people with low qualifications and experience, young people under 29 years of age, women, people with disabilities, carers of dependent persons and groups disadvantaged in terms of economic situation, elderly people running a household alone, farmers and household members of unprofitable small farms. The undertaking was planned on the basis of diagnosed problems and needs of the target group. It was found that inhabitants of the LAG area, including in particular disadvantaged groups, often face the lack of an idea of how to engage in economic activity. They have great difficulty in defining an innovative idea for professional activity that would guarantee them sufficient income, due to which they remain passive and socially excluded. This undertaking was therefore an enrichment of the measures relating to the economic development of the LAG area and resulted from the diagnosed problems that were reflected in the SWOT analysis as a weakness indicating, inter alia, insufficient measures for the development of innovative entrepreneurship. It assumed strengthening social capital in the LAG area towards the introduction of educational offers on profitable activities, innovative on the scale of the LAG area, which would guarantee the achievement of the general objective and the growth of competitiveness and entrepreneurship of the LAG area. As part of the undertaking, the LAG planned to organise study tours for the inhabitants of the area wishing to set up businesses in order to present them good practices

in innovative entrepreneurship so as to leave the framework and templates reproduced in the area. It was considered that people from disadvantaged groups diagnosed in the context of access to the labour market should be particularly involved in these initiatives in order to create for them the perspective of employment and self-development. The project was implemented as part of the so-called LAG's own measures due to the lack of other entities in the area with sufficient capital and human resources to implement it.

Having precisely defined the interests and potential of the area inhabitants, the "Knowledge and Innovation - I" project was planned. It was noted that due to the resources of the area, i.e. its agricultural character and the inhabitants' traditions related to the production of cold meats, cheese and other food products for their own needs, food processing is an excellent direction for the area's development. The consumers' interest in healthy, traditional food was also taken into account. Finally, the project provided for the participation of disadvantaged groups, in terms of their access to the labour market, in an educational offer related to food processing. The scope of the educational offer included the implementation of two-day workshops for 60 people.





In total, the workshops for one of two 30-person groups of participants covered 2 days and 16 hours of classes. The subject matter of the workshops was related to food processing, in particular milk, meat, plants, including fruit; moreover, it included content related to: regulations on the sale of processed products, including by farmers; production technology, hygiene requirements, food safety, hazards in food processing, legal and administrative requirements when setting up a small processing business, seeking interesting, innovative business ideas, principles for setting up and running a business, activities affecting environmental protection and counteracting climate change in processing. The workshop component on food processing was particularly important. The workshop was held in the first half of 2019 at the Small Processing Practical Training Centre at the Agricultural Advisory

Centre, Radom Branch, which had adequate premises, personnel resources and experience (butcher's, dairy, seminar rooms, trainers, hotel rooms, etc.). During the practical classes, participants were able to take part in the production of cheese, sausage, juice, flour and bran on their own. The excellent staff of trainers explained in a very accessible way all aspects related to the running of processing plants and the possibility of producing food products for sale. Such a form turned out to be a very good method for activating disadvantaged groups due to the attractive manner of conveying knowledge, and thus its effective assimilation.

To sum up, the implementation of the measure created conditions for the development of innovative activities in the LAG area enabling the creation of jobs by setting up small processing activities, in particular by representatives of disadvantaged groups. Thanks to the implementation of the operation, the workshop participants acquired practical knowledge and skills in the area of food processing which provided a basis for their actions aimed at starting economic activity in this area. Our monitoring shows that new food producers are emerging. Interested residents have benefited from the subsidy for starting a business in the area of processing. A good practice of the project is to use the resources and potential of the area, to break habits, customs and duplicated patterns of activity in the area as well as to identify and create innovative forms of professional activity.



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**3RD
place**

Project title:

Multimedia Local Education Centre (MULTICEL)

"MULTICEL" Multimedia Centre for Local Education is a cooperation project implemented by min. LAG "Korona Północnego Krakowa" [*"Northern Cracow's Crown"*] Association. The project's objective was to provide training and advisory support for the area's inhabitants, to promote entrepreneurial and creative attitudes among various age groups and to create conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the area covered by the Local Development Strategy.

The planned activities in the project were innovative. So far no initiative aiming at the use of innovative solutions in the field of education of local society, in particular disadvantaged groups, had been implemented in our area. The basis of the MULTICEL offer realised by the Northern Cracow's Crown Association was the organisation of vocational courses for school leavers, including women, who after finishing school were not present on the labour

market or had left it for several years, or unemployed people looking for work. The courses were particularly targeted at people from disadvantaged groups identified in the Local Development Strategy of the Northern Cracow's Crown Association. The prepared offer made it possible to achieve benefits such as gaining new skills and qualifications during stationary classes organised close to the place of residence. It was possible for one person to participate in more than one type of course (e.g. an administration and office course and a language course), because the aim of the project was to provide multidirectional support to people seeking employment, so that after completing the project they would acquire knowledge and skills which would enable them to find employment or facilitate job search. It was also possible for one participant to participate only in one course chosen by them.



Courses have been organised on the following topics:

1. an administrative and clerical worker with specialisation in human resources and payroll - this course included 152 hours of classes for 10 participants.
2. a computer course - MS Office - this course included 76 hours of classes for 10 participants.
3. a waiter course of the first degree - this course included 32 hours of classes for 10 participants.
4. a bartending course of the first degree - this course included 40 hours of classes for 10 participants.
5. a florist course of the first degree - this course included 32 hours of classes for 10 participants.
6. a language course - English courses at the basic and intermediate level were conducted. The course covered one semester of 60 hours each for groups of max. 15 participants. Lessons 1 time per week, 50 minutes each.



The offer of vocational courses was complemented by the organisation of a free series of meetings with a career counsellor for a total of 120 hours of counselling. Counselling was intended for a total of 30 people (each person was entitled to 2 meetings of 2 hours each). The aim of the counselling was to enable individual meetings with a professional in order to verify the current professional path (for people who have already worked) or to determine the direction of future professional development (both for people who have already worked and for those who are at the threshold of their professional career). Counselling was organised at the same time as the course offer. The

counselling was used by the participants of the courses (and such a model was preferred by the LAG) with the reservation that, in the case of vacancies, we took into account the possibility for people to participate only in the counselling without having to attend the courses offered by MULTICEL.

Both the planned courses and the associated vocational guidance were innovative - by combining these two types of services available in MULTICEL, we wanted to support in a complementary way the inhabitants of our area who are looking for work. The vocational counselling allowed them to get to know their weaknesses and strengths and to indicate in which direction they should direct their professional path. Professional courses allowed them to acquire new knowledge and skills, facilitating their job search. In addition, the lack of restriction to participate in

only one course allowed them to gain skills that are attractive to potential employers, e.g. a graduate of an administration and office course and a language course could apply for a position as a professional office administrator. Ultimately the MULTICEL offer was also a way of social activation - free courses, small groups of participants, proximity to home, individual career counselling - all of this helped to break down barriers among participants who were absent from the labour market:

- either for financial reasons (they could not afford to pay for the courses e.g. graduates after finishing their education),
- or they did not believe in their own abilities and because of lack of knowledge/skills they were afraid to participate in courses organised e.g. in large groups in Cracow (a problem identified e.g. among people who had not been present on the labour market for a long time or had never worked),
- or going to Cracow for the course consumed too much time (a problem for mothers with small children who want to enter or return to the labour market).

The knowledge acquired by the trainees is used by them as well as by other people participating in demonstrations, as in the case of a bartending or floristry course, where course participants present their skills at various events. A good practice in the project, which is worth using, is to place emphasis on multidirectional support for people seeking employment, so that after completing the project, they acquire knowledge and skills to facilitate finding employment or looking for it effectively.

Category II

Activities involving young people up to the age of 26

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1ST
place

Project title:

**International cooperation project
'Young Local Leaders'**

The international cooperation project "Young Local Leaders" was implemented in 2018-2019 by three local action groups: Association - Local Action Group "Let's Be Together" from Węgrów, Association "Local Action Group - Tygiel Doliny Bugu [Melting Pot of the Bug River Valley]" from Drohiczyn and Local Action Group "Nemunas" from Jurbarkas, Lithuania. The project was divided into three stages, in each of them the most important element was the youth camp organised in the area of one of the three partners. Each camp was attended by 30 participants, 10 persons aged up to 30 from each partner LAG (in practice, they were mainly 16-21 year-olds). The theoretical knowledge acquired by the young was translated into practical activities and their effects serve local communities. The activities in the area of LAG "Let's Be Together" were carried out in the last stage in July 2019.

The project was dedicated to young people who have a future in their small homeland, are active in the community or want to initiate some kind of activity for the benefit of the local community. We made every effort to ensure that the project would lead to social change through community work tools. We wanted young people to perceive the needs

and resources of their immediate environment and to initiate solutions to local problems based on these resources. One of the elements of this model are activities based on partnership between institutions and people shaping the life of a given community - leaders. The project is in line with the local development strategies of all three local action groups (in particular, in the LAG "Let's Be Together" these are: increasing the activity of the inhabitants and improving knowledge on environmental protection and climate change, as well as development and modernisation of public infrastructure to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants).



Throughout the project, the young people participated in the Local Leader School, which applied the Organising Local Community (OSL) method. It is an innovative method of community work aimed at permanent change of social reality. Classes were not held in the form of lectures, but were workshops, games, simulations, in which the OSL method was "smuggled in". The youth were trained in the field of cooperation with village inhabitants, broadly understood animation and activation. The participants broadened their knowledge on the issues of the local community engagement method, language and social communication, promotion of initiated events, group management. Thanks to this, the young people acquired skills and knowledge necessary to implement their own undertakings in their small homelands and made the local community interested in public and social issues. This was possible above all thanks to the fact that the acquired theoretical knowledge was translated into practical activities with the inhabitants of the places where the camps were held, and the effects of joint work are now serving local communities. The last, third stage of the project was organised by the LAG "Let's Be Together". - The camp was held in Łochów. During the leadership school, the young people focused on carrying out one specific project from A to Z, i.e. from diagnosing the needs through formulating the goals, defining the necessary actions and measures to implementing the project and evaluating the effects. The camp was an important part of the camp's work on the construction of a rehabilitation yard at the Community Self-Help Centre in Miedzna. An important part of the camp was working on the construction of a rehabilitation square at the Community Self-Help Centre in Miedzna. The young leaders

translated the acquired knowledge and skills into practical action. Everyday physical work showed that by working together, in partnership with one another, with little effort, one can create something that will serve others - in this case, people with disabilities. In addition, the young people participated in workshops entitled "Increasing ecological awareness of residents" (including a visit to companies applying modern green energy solutions, a visit to a wind farm in Korytnica and a hydroelectric power plant on the Liwiec River in Zawiszyn).

There was also time for integration and learning about local natural resources and cultural events, e.g. by canoeing on the river Liwiec or hiking in the area.

Project implementation contributed to building and strengthening social capital. The activities led to the formation of young leaders active in small local communities. The tangible results of the project are the places which were created thanks to the work and involvement of young people. The resulting small-scale infrastructure serves the local community and is used free of charge. On the part of the LAG "Let's be together" a rehabilitation square was created at the Community Self-help Centre in Miedzna. The square is used by disabled people living in the Community Self-help Centre. Working together with the hosts of the place, the young people cleared the area, prepared it properly and covered it with artificial grass. During the camp in the LAG "Melting Pot of the Bug River Valley" area the young created furniture from europallets and planted plants in the form of four gardens referring to the seasons of the year at the Community Self-help Centre in Nowe Litewniki (Sarnaki commune). In Lithuania, the young people's task was to



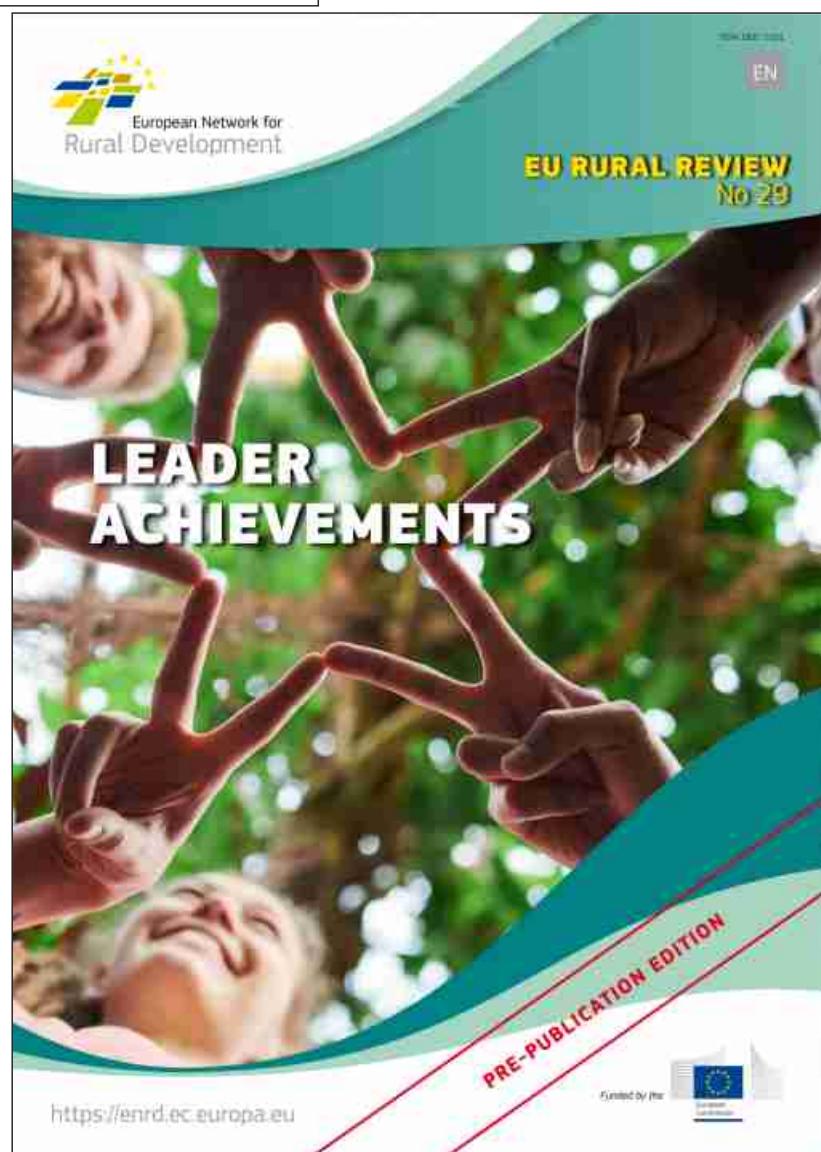


young people. Our experiences written down in this publication can be used by others and help them in organising such an undertaking. The folder is available at: <http://www.lgdbadzmyrazem.pl/wydawnictwa/>. It is also worthwhile to use the Guide to the Method for a Young Leader - How to Develop Young Local Leaders to Work in Communities Using the Method of Local Community Organising, which is available at the following link:

<http://www.lgdbadzmyrazem.pl/metoda-na-mlodego-lidera-katalog-projektu-mlodzi-lokalni-liderzy-mll/#more-4287>

help create a support place for families in crisis in a former kindergarten building. The youth cleared the building of rubble, tidied up the surrounding area and built a picnic place and a gazebo. The young people who participated in the project also noticed the positive results. They noticed that the project helped them to learn independence and creativity in undertaking new activities. They also learned cooperation and contact with other people. Great satisfaction was given to them by the final results of the work they did during each camp.

Project activities were based on using local resources, especially cultural, social, historical and natural ones to activate inhabitants of small towns, including those threatened by poverty and social exclusion. This included activities based on partnership between institutions and individuals. Young people, using available resources, created new places - small infrastructures, which are now used in a special way by people at risk of social exclusion, including the disabled or families in crisis. At the end of the project a brochure "Young Leaders - a chance for development of the local community" was published. Apart from information about the project regarding its concept, course and results, one can find in it chapters devoted to the technical side of organising similar camps for



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9th RD place

Project title:

"Nature educates - the amazing micro and macro world at your fingertips!"

The nature education project at the Sielanka-Raciąż agritourism farm consisted of two parts: a field-based nature trail and stationary classroom activities. As part of the project, a nature trail with 26 educational boards entitled Nature is Adventure was created. The project is addressed to the population of the surrounding villages; mainly children and youth. The first part consists of educational boards covering topics in fauna and flora: forest mammals, birds, fish, trees and the most important information on ecology. In separate places there are models of birds, which can be recognized with the use of optical devices, binoculars or telescopes. And smaller organisms such as insects can be examined by children and young people using the available magnifying glasses.

Some of the activities took place and continue to take place on our nature trail, among very interesting large boards. Children have the opportunity to have direct contact with nature and check their knowledge about it on the boards.

These are fantastic nature activities for children and young people in the form of competitions, quizzes and integration games, including recognition of bird species using binoculars (realistic models placed on trees), learning animal tracks, distinguishing tree and bush species.

"The guide of the trail is me, and the person supporting my work is my dad - Mikołaj Adamczyk". The length of the



educational-natural path is about 1000 m. Presentation time is about 2 - 3 hours. The second, so-called stationary part is carried out in a room in the building of the farmstead adapted for this purpose. Thanks to a professional sound system with a DVD player, children and youth can watch nature films and photos from the area, learn the songs of local birds from a prepared soundtrack. A set of microscopes with accessories brings the micro world closer to those interested, which is also displayed through a projector in three-dimensional technology. This equipment is perfect for nature workshops, thanks to which we can offer a wide range of activities: from observing the micro world, through learning about animal tracks, learning native bird species to discovering their sounds.



Both paths can accommodate a group of about 50 people at a time. A guest book is kept. Thanks to the project we get to know nature in a friendly, active and modern, innovative way. The equipment and educational paths are used by school and kindergarten excursions, green schools, which we invite to our farm, both from the commune, county as well as other places in Mazovia. We rely on local resources, the qualities of the Półka-Raciąż Nature and Landscape Complex. There are numerous species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians, the area is also distinguished by the richness of avifauna, 100 species of birds

have been found here. Four endangered species, listed in the Polish Red Book, nest here: bittern, green sandpiper, bluethroat, and aquatic warbler. The number and species composition of birds, as well as the picturesque landscape,

make the area stand out against the background of the whole Mazovia province. Among local inhabitants and nature lovers it is sometimes called Little Biebrza. Above all, we combine knowledge with practice thanks to the use of an educational path, professional equipment, local nature park resources, experience and passion of workshop leaders and the activity of the participants themselves. Thanks to the continuation of the project and innovative, interesting solutions, our offer is presented during study visits as the so-called good practice and still arouses great interest on the part of the participants. Good practice means creating favourable conditions for participants' activity, creative atmosphere, appropriate educational tools and various forms of activity, as well as focusing on the results, showing the effects and promoting the project.

***Thanks to the continuation
of the project and innovative,
interesting solutions, our offer
is presented during study visits as
the so-called good practice
and still arouses great interest
on the part of the participants.***

**Lokalna Grupa Działania Zalew Zegrzyński
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**3RD
place**

Project title:

Roots - local development based on cultural and natural heritage

The International Cooperation Project "Roots - local development based on cultural and natural heritage" aimed at:

- promotion of local natural and cultural heritage in each participating community,
- increasing the level of awareness of the participating local communities and activation of social organisations operating in these areas,
- learning from each other's experience in using the cultural and natural heritage for local development,
- promotion of entrepreneurship development based on local cultural and natural resources of each area,
- disseminate the achievements of the project and promote the participating communities in Europe.

The project partners were: LAG "Zegrzyński Lagoon Partnership" (Poland, Mazowieckie Province), LAG Active Together (Poland, Mazowieckie Province), LAG Pohjoisimman Lapin Leader (Finland)

The whole project was directed at activities involving young people.

The project activities included:

- the organisation of 2 international youth camps for the promotion of natural and cultural heritage, one in Finland and one in Poland,
- creation of a multimedia Internet base of cultural and natural heritage sites in the area of

each LAG,

- development by the participants of the camps and conducting a social campaign for the protection of the natural and cultural environment of the area (specific sites) and their use for the development of the area, including
- ✓ preparation of information for a multimedia Internet base of cultural and natural heritage sites for the area of each LAG,
- ✓ development, publication and distribution of a publication presenting good practices in using cultural and natural heritage for local development to local communities in Europe (in Polish and English).



In addition, a folder on the use of cultural and natural heritage for local development was published, press articles were published and a programme was broadcast on regional TVP Warsaw.

Cultural and natural resources were used to involve young people. The youngsters compiled information for an online database of cultural and natural heritage objects and thus had the opportunity to broaden their knowledge about the local heritage of their "small homelands" and the areas of the other project partners. Thanks to the realised activities the youngsters participating in the project gained knowledge about ways to promote their areas, but also more easily perceived the importance of the heritage of the area for people not connected with it.

The ROOTS project was innovative in the areas involved by the LAGs. As regards the project theme, i.e. local development based on cultural and natural heritage, partial measures had so far been implemented in the partner areas, consisting either in promotion of natural and cultural assets of these areas (training, albums, exhibitions, etc.), or in development of tourist services using these assets in an extensive way (e.g. purchase of boating equipment for tourist resorts). There was a lack of activities linking these two aspects of local development in a deeper way, involving valorisation of cultural and natural sites. The project placed emphasis on such valorisation through the creation of an Internet multimedia database of cultural and natural heritage sites in the area of each LAG and drawing on foreign experience in this field. This database was used to develop tourist products and to promote tourism in the LAG area. Another innovative element in the LAG area was the preparation, in international partnership, of a social campaign for the protection of the natural and cultural environment of the area (specific sites) and their use for the area development and the delivery of the campaign by the camp participants. This meant a transition from passive participation of young inhabitants in training to active promotion of solutions based on cultural and natural values for the local development. It was addressed to local authorities and local communities of LAG areas



The outcomes of the project were:

- new knowledge about own resources acquired by local, predominantly rural communities,
- increased awareness of each community regarding natural and cultural heritage and their value for local socio-economic development,
- new ideas related to the use of natural and cultural heritage,
- international networks, partnerships and friendships created,
- good practice in using natural and cultural heritage for local development developed and disseminated in other European communities.

A good practice in the project was to involve young people, creating favourable conditions, attractive forms and inspiring atmosphere for cooperation in order to identify local resources, develop promotional material for the project partners' areas and implement a campaign for the protection of natural and cultural environment.

Association „Pluton strzelecki w Załuskach”**[“Rifleman Platoon in Załuski”]**

Cieciórki 1 F, 09-100 Płonśk

province mazowieckie, county Płonśk, commune Płonśk

**Award
in-kind****Project title****Activation of local community, development of tourist offer and promotion of LAG area through training activities aimed at strengthening social capital in the field of pro-defence, social and civil attitudes**

The project consisted in the implementation of a series of training courses of a pro-defence and educational nature as well as strengthening the civic attitudes of trainees and included young people up to 26 years of age. The series of trainings included classes in drill, green tactics (action in undeveloped area) and black (action in urban area) and red (medical rescue of the battlefield), civilian first aid, shooting, as well as lessons in history and civic education. All these classes were based on physical activity on the part of the participants. The training involved school children wishing to develop their passions or planning to take up a future job in uniformed formations. The project also included classes in weapon construction, as well as shooting with firearms at a professional shooting range. All of the above activities were conducted chronologically, according to the assumed training cycle that



adequately prepares its participants for further stages of training. The shooting activities are the culmination of the training, therefore they require appropriate preparation of the participants both mentally and physically. Field activities were interspersed with lectures and historical talks. As a result of participating in the project, not only did the participants' physical condition improve, but they also gained new passions and acquired skills that will later help them apply for the uniformed services. The training cycle included various forms in order to ensure attractiveness to the widest possible group of young people. Young people would not be able to afford this type of activity due to its cost and difficult accessibility, as training of this type is available to soldiers. The trainings were carried out with the use of modern equipment and devices as well as highly specialised entities. We cooperated with the "Rybieniec" Shooting Training Centre and the GROM Academy



company, run by Tomasz Laskowski, a former Grom special forces operator. The project was in line with the objectives of the LAG - Friendly Mazovia laid down in the Local Development Strategy: "Stimulation of social activity and responsibility of the inhabitants", "Promotion of a joint local brand" and "Construction of an integrated tourist offer". The joint local brand was promoted by means of promoting the LAG area in the Association's activities, all the more so as these activities undoubtedly become a tourist attraction of the region and become a permanent element of the LAG area character. In its activities the Association made use of numerous attractions of the region, in particular the remnants of historical armed conflicts, thus creating educational paths. We anticipate that a type of local tourism will be created in the area of our Association's activity as many members of the local community from outside the LAG area will visit the area of its activities to participate in the events organised. Moreover, the project made use of local facilities, i.e. shooting ranges and schools in the area of Płońsk County. The young people who participated in the project are still actively involved in the Association's activities and new persons willingly join our group. The Association also establishes contacts with similar organisations from outside the LAG area, including Małopolska and Lublin regions.

The project carried out tasks in the field of tourist offer development and local community activation in an innovative way. It used previously unused methods of military training "for everyone" without the necessity of incurring any financial costs on the part of the project participants. This training was

conducted using equipment and training methods previously available only to the military. A good practice of the project is to provide young people with an attractive and unique form of cyclical training, combining physical activity, practical classes in the field with talks and lectures on history, defence and civic attitudes.



Category III

Activities involving seniors over 60 years of age

**Regionalne Stowarzyszenie Twórców Kultury
i Dziedzictwa Narodowego w Raciążu**
[Regional Association of Creators of Culture and National Heritage in Raciąż]

beneficiary of the LAG - Friendly Mazovia
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**1ST
place**

Project title

**Development of social activity through
cultural inclusion of different age and social groups**

The aim of our association's grant project was to activate the local community and, first of all, to attract the young generation (children and youth) from their computers and to encourage seniors to leave their homes and become active. The cooperation of different age groups and exchange of knowledge and experience between them was important for us. We were particularly interested in increasing the activity of those members of our community who are at risk of social exclusion. To implement the planned measures we engaged disadvantaged groups referred to in the Local Development Strategy of LAG - Friendly Mazovia such as the long-term unemployed, the unemployed aged over 50, youth and seniors as well as the project partners: Ryszard Kaczorowski Municipal Cultural, Sports and Recreation Centre in Raciąż, the Commune and Town of Raciąż, Municipal Kindergarten in Raciąż, Association of Seniors, Retirees and Pensioners, Stanisław Konarski Primary School in Raciąż. The project was open and we invited and involved inhabitants from the LAG-Friendly Mazovia area, Association of Folk Artists from Łowicz (Łódzkie Province), "Zaczyn" Foundation from Drobin (Płock county) and the Rural Housewives' Circle.

The objective was achieved through the organisation of a cycle of handicraft workshops for children and senior citizens, publication of a book "Book of memories and

interviews of Raciąż residents" and a brochure on the association's activities and the workshops held "Two years have passed...". The effect of the implemented activities was to increase the activity of 1650 people, which was achieved through the organisation of 9 handicraft workshops, the use of purchased equipment, the publication of 200 publications with memories of residents obtained through a series of meetings "Ask if you can and you have whom" and the publication of 300 publications containing materials about the activities of the association and information about the conducted workshops in 2019.



The workshops enabled the development of passions and interests of the local community. While conducting them, we used proven methods and solutions from organisations involved in the project. Handicraft workshops covered such areas as: theatre, boxes as before, decoupage, string on bottles and many others. Through their organisation we encouraged the local community, in particular children and youth, the unemployed and seniors over 60, to take up activities, leave their homes and act together. Additionally, a publication was issued containing reminiscences of senior citizens and the oldest residents of our town and its vicinity collected during a series of meetings entitled "Ask if you can and you have someone to ask", whose main



objective was to promote and disseminate the traditions of our fathers. The publication containing materials from the conducted workshops was to show how important the integration of the local society is - the activity for the benefit of senior citizens in the local community, propagating culture and passing it on to the youngest inhabitants (preschoolers and grade 1 and 3 pupils) of the town and commune of Raciąż. Additionally, through the implementation of the task, we created conditions for the exchange of knowledge and experience between generations and for the maintenance and propagation of traditions in the town and commune. These activities, above all, encouraged to be active and undertake joint tasks because in the times of mass media the inhabitants of our area are less and less focused on developing their passions and interests. The assumption of the project which was carried out was to get young people out of their computers and offer them a different way of spending their free time. This undertaking instilled in them the

spirit of culture and heritage of our fathers, it also facilitated increasing the activity of elderly people and seniors over 60. The undertaken activities showed the elderly, the youth and the unemployed how important a role they play in the local society and how important their activity and cooperation with other groups is. Their task and the way to increase their activity is to propagate culture as well as to promote and disseminate the traditions of our fathers among the representatives of the younger generation.

Workshops on making caskets from string or flowers from crepe paper and tissue paper have been permanently incorporated into the activities we run. "We make them

when needed, for example in the kindergarten, on Grandmother's and Grandfather's Day, Mother's Day. In cooperation with a primary school - grades 1-3, we invite children from younger classes to workshops. They know that on special occasions, such as Christmas or Easter, they can come to us and we will conduct workshops with them.

As a part of the project a book entitled "Book of Remembrance. Memories and interviews of Raciąż residents" was published. All age groups of children and adults took part in the meetings; the biggest interest was among seniors and people without work. The above actions caused that apart from activating the seniors, some young people left their computers and started to cooperate with us. Several children and young people became involved in working on the play "Fear". The script was written and directed by a high school student from Raciąż. The play was performed during the summary of the project and promotion of the book "Book of Remembrance".

A folder entitled "Two years have passed" promoted our



activities to such an extent that they arouse more and more interest, not only in workshops (the Rural Housewives' Circle from Raciąż Commune join us), but also in memories of old times and "strange content" stories about customs, fears and prophecies. And so we decided (with the cooperation of the Rural Housewives' Circle and many people from the commune) to collect materials to publish the book of remembrance, part II - interviews, memories and stories of the residents of Raciąż Commune. As a result, we have a target group from children to seniors and our innovativeness consists in the fact that we go to Rural Housewives' Circle meetings in various villages; people from the area visit us, exchange ideas and together we put some of the ideas into practice, e.g. we organise or take part in various competitions, currently it is a cooking competition.

"The innovation of the project we implemented was that if a group of interested people could not reach us, we reached them: the Rural Housewives' Circle, villages, schools in the Raciąż commune, transport to people for interviews "Ask if you can and if you have somebody to ask". (in cooperation with the Public Library in Raciąż). Moreover, in the project we used local resources, i.e. knowledge and experience of the residents, local historical and cultural heritage. We also used innovative methods to include disadvantaged groups by involving them in the implementation of tasks planned in the project.

Thanks to the implementation of the project, our Association has gained new experience. Currently, as part of the project "You praise what you don't know, sustainment and popularisation of cultural and historical heritage of the town and commune of Raciąż", the task co-financed from the funds of the Mazowieckie Province budget, we offer workshops in loom weaving, spinning on a spinning wheel, flat embroidery of the Łowicz type, cross-stitch, machine sewing, creating masterpieces from tissue paper, crepe paper, knitting and crocheting (tablecloths, doilies, runners). The workshop began on 29 June 2021 and will continue until 15 November 2021.

Through our activities, we preserve the traditions of generations and pass on our local and national heritage to younger generations. We build local and supralocal cooperation, engage groups threatened with social exclusion in our activities. A good practice of the project are the methods of engaging participants, especially at the stage of making interviews for the Book of Remembrance.

We involved the entire local community; we used personal and family contacts; we visited offices, shops, parishes, schools, kindergartens, friends; we engaged the local authorities. Interviews were published in the local press and in special notebooks. This action moved everyone so much that we are still collecting materials for the second part of the Book of Remembrance.



**Association of Creative Women „Na obcasach”
["On Heels"] in Joniec - beneficiary of LAG - Friendly Mazovia**
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**2ND
place**

Project title

„To save from oblivion” or to restore the splendour of the village building in Sobokłeszcz through increased activation and integration of the local community

Within the project we organised cyclical workshops on job seeking methods, psychological, integration meetings addressed to different age groups, mainly to seniors, but also to unemployed women, parents and grandparents from our commune.

Many women from our commune fell out of the labour market because they devoted themselves to their families and in order to facilitate their return to professional life we organised a meeting with a career counsellor who held a workshop entitled "What to do with the CV gap or how to return to the labour market". Women are sometimes limited by their complexes and are afraid to "fight for success", especially those 50+ who most often are forced by their life situation to look for a job or, after their children leaving homes, are finally willing and able to start working. There are no large workplaces in our commune, and communication with larger cities is also a problem if someone does not have their own car - therefore, the counsellor explained how to look for a job, but also how to get one (employee buses, commuting in one car, internet groups and forums, etc.). Ladies looking for a job were also shown how with well-chosen makeup (for complexion, age, time of day) they can gain even more self-confidence and make a better impression on the employer, and men were shown how to look neat (clothes, hairstyle, beard, nails).

Nowadays, parents are very busy and pay little attention to their children, who, staring at their computer screens, have a disturbed sense of self-worth. Therefore, as part of the project we conducted

workshops with a psychologist entitled "Building a positive self-image in children". The workshop was aimed at making parents and grandparents, who often take care of children in villages while parents are at work, aware of factors facilitating and hindering the building of the child's self-esteem in the process of upbringing. Particularly, in summer, children and young people are looking for new experiences which are dangerous for them. In order to protect them from irresponsible behaviour we organised workshops entitled: "Don't get high or you'll burn yourself - what are drugs, legal highs and what harm do they do". The first part of the workshop was intended for parents and grandparents, so that they were aware of the dangers of drugs, legal highs and other stimulants for their children and grandchildren. The seniors actively participated in the training, they had a lot of questions - because as most of them said "in their times" there was no such availability and popularity of such "stimulants".



Referring to the history of the building of the old firehouse in Sobokłeszcz, where in its glory years "parties" were held every Saturday, in August 2019 we invited pensioners from local circles, associations and more to the 1970s for a dance entitled "Where did those parties go". The idea arose due to the lack of any entertainment in our community for seniors who spend most of their time within four walls.

All the above activities took place in the renovated village common room, which returned to its glory days and became an integration place for all generations.

Innovation in the social sphere consisted in creation, implementation and dissemination of activities involving various social and professional groups (youth, women, seniors). We effectively involved disadvantaged groups in the project (women, seniors and people 50+ from our commune who return to the labour market). The innovation in our project also consisted in the use of material resources (the fire station building), human resources (members of the association - who are also seniors, specialists) and the involvement of partners representing various sectors of the economy in order to solve problems which are important for our community. We did not need to persuade anyone to participate; all we needed was infor-



mation posts on Facebook (followed by a photo-report from the workshop), posters and information distributed in local shops; our association has several village leaders, so the news spread rapidly.

The most important benefit of the project is the integration of residents during workshops and meetings which resulted in new acquaintances and even friendships. No less important was the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by the participants. The main result - in the era of the Internet, digitisation and smartphones - was to draw the inhabitants of our commune out of their homes, so that they could break away from the mundane of everyday life for a while and see in a broader perspective what is really important in life: happy children without addictions, discussing all issues with their parents and grandparents; family and friends who can always be counted on and good intergenerational fun.

The workshops were very successful, therefore, there is a possibility to continue the project - after all, there are still so many interesting intergenerational topics to discuss, conversations to conduct, games to organise - unfortunately, the pandemic thwarted many plans - but everyone looks to the future with confidence. The topic of the workshop was universal and after adjusting it to one's own needs, expectations and possibilities, similar workshops could be conducted in any part of Poland.



**Municipal and Communal Cultural Centre
beneficiary LAG - Friendly Mazovia**

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3 RD place

Project title

„Music brings generations together and soothes customs”



The purpose of the operation was:

- enrichment of the cultural offer by the Communal Cultural Centre,
- developing the activity of the local community, including, in particular, youth and seniors,
- promotion of the Sochocin Brass Band,
- Improvement of the musical and technical level of the project participants through conducting open music workshops, arranging musical pieces, recording and publishing two CDs "15 years of the Sochocin Brass Band" and "In the Christmas mood" as well as organisation of 8 concerts for the community promoting the recorded music material.

Sochocin Brass Band has existed since May 1997. In 2012 it celebrated its 15th anniversary. Its members are mainly children, youth and seniors. Thanks to the project implementation new members arrived and the orchestra concerts aroused great interest. In its concert programme, the orchestra performed enter-

tainment, patriotic, folk songs and carols. The presentation of these pieces contributed to the promotion of the musical cultural heritage in our small homeland. The concert activity and the release of two records contributed to the interest of young and elderly people in this kind of music, who by joining the ranks of the orchestra had an opportunity to meet, participate in rehearsals, spend their time actively and broaden their musical education. The youngest project participant was 8 years old and the oldest was 72. In 2012 during the project realisation the orchestra played concerts during events and celebrations organised by the Communal Cultural Centre in Sochocin. It was a concert during WOŚP (Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity), Women's Day, Christmas Carols and Pastorals Concert, participation of the orchestra in Easter celebrations in the parish church in Sochocin, "Music brings generations together" concert for the school youth in Sochocin, for the Primary School in Kołoząb, in the Primary School in Smardzew, on the occasion of the 3rd May Constitution, participation in the Corpus Christi celebrations, concert





during the 6th Sochocin Days. As part of the project two records were released: "15 Years of the Sochocin Brass Band", which features pop, folk and popular music, and "In a Festive Mood" with Polish carols and pastorals. 30 musicians took part in the project. Andrzej Świercz, a musician, bandmaster and a long-term teacher of the State Music School in Płońsk, was responsible for arranging the songs and preparing the orchestra for the recording.

In total, 8 open concerts performed by the orchestra were attended by approximately 3,000 listeners. The project created conditions for active and creative spending of free time for young people and seniors living in rural areas with limited opportunities for contacts, cooperation and participation in culture. Participation in the orchestra means systematic meetings, rehearsals, concerts, musical improvement, but also work on character, teamwork, communication, cooperation and problem solving skills. A good practice in the project may be the way of recruiting participants, based on the previous educational and musical activity of the Municipal and Communal Cultural Centre in Sochocin. Candidates from all musical sections,

the brass band and musical ensembles were selected. It was important for the project to include different age groups, including seniors. Recruitment of seniors took place through personal contacts and during meetings of the seniors' club, which take place regularly in the Municipal and Communal Cultural Centre. We created opportunities for workshop participants to present themselves in concerts during important events in the Commune and other localities. It is also important to obtain allies for the undertaking. Partners of the project were: the Commune Office in Sochocin, Primary School in Kołoząb, Primary School in Smardzewo, Public School and Kindergarten Complex in Sochocin, Self-Government Repair and Construction Company in Sochocin.



Category IV

Other activities involving disadvantaged groups due to origin, place of residence, race, religious affiliation, gender, disability

Katarzyna Bańska

Beneficiary of LAG – Przyjazne Mazowsze [Friendly Mazovia]

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1ST
place

Project title

„Touring Creative Workshop”

As part of the "Touring Creative Workshop" project, the funds obtained were used to purchase devices and equipment enabling the innovative educational techniques to reach the smallest towns in the county. Among others, necessary licenses to conduct classes on memory techniques for children and seniors were purchased, scenarios of the nationwide educational network Bystrzak Academy of Creative Development, which implements innovative educational techniques mainly in urban agglomerations, were adapted to rural conditions, 12 mobile stands for learning robotics at two levels of advancement were created and equipped - for children from grades 1-3 and for seniors, as well as 6 stands for computer mnemonic exercises with seniors... Thanks to this, the Touring Creative Workshop could visit communes and villages in the Płońsk county and conduct over 2,000 hours of workshops on average annually.

It should be noted that among the staff employed by the Touring Creative Workshop there were people from a disadvantaged group - women returning to the labour market after having children.

For almost three years, since Touring Creative Workshop has existed, we have cooperated with local institutions and organisations such as: OSP [Voluntary Fire Brigade] Kaczorowy and Dobska Kolonia, communal libraries in Raciąż and Sochocin, parishes in Płońsk and Gralewo,



Communal Offices in Sochocin, Baboszewo and Raciąż, community centres in Skarżyn and Szerominek, Baby Room Płońsk, as well as larger educational and cultural institutions: Municipal Centre of Culture, Sports and Recreation in Raciąż or Housing Estate Club Plastus of the Housing Cooperative in Płońsk, Theatre of the Place, Płońsk Clay Factory, Cheese Factory in Śródborze, La Obora Art Studio from Kuchary Żydowskie, Senior Plus Club in Płońsk. Among our partners were also primary and secondary schools. With our classes we reached, among others, Community High School in Raciąż, Kindergarten in Baboszewo, TWP School in Ciechanów, Konarski Primary School in Raciąż and B. Chrobry Primary School No. 1 in Płońsk.

Our activities, workshops, lectures, family meetings, competitions are addressed mainly to children and youth as well as their families, who come from small towns and villages in Płońsk County, i.e. areas very often exposed to social exclusion, poorer access to cultural goods or educational offer.

The aim of the activities is to activate the local community, to show the youth and seniors new active patterns of behaviour, to bring people together around projects, to counteract the syndrome of "learned helplessness" and the attitude that "nothing will succeed", "nothing is worth doing". We believe that in this way the local community will become closer, there will be more integration in the community and the participants of our meetings - young and old will be willing to engage in various projects in the future.



Apart from cyclical weekly classes in robotics, memory techniques, speed reading, handicrafts and fine arts, we have become the organiser of the locally recognised annual event #PodróżniczeLato [#Travelling Summer]. In the first two weeks of summer holidays we offer children and teenagers from our county organised half-schools, workshops and trips. In the following weeks of holidays we organise occasional meetings on adventure and travel topics that enable children and teenagers even in the smallest towns to take advantage of holiday animations developing their minds and bodies.

One of the most important successes of the Touring

Creative Workshop was the participation of young people from Community High School in Raciąż in the international creative thinking competition "Odyssey of the Mind" (<https://odyseja.org>). Our pupils, coming from small localities from Płońsk county, prepared by the trainers of the Odyssey Creative Workshop, finally won two awards: the Omer prize awarded by the Odyssey of the Mind Foundation for keeping the rules of fair play and they advanced to the stage of the National Final. Thanks to their success in Warsaw the students of Community High School in Raciąż became psychologically stronger and more self-confident.

Another important achievement of ours was subcontracting of tasks in grant projects implemented by informal groups that were selected to perform tasks in the project implemented by the LAG-PM entitled "Laboratory of Local Education". Under the project we provided organisational and logistic support to two intergenerational projects called "To go into the future without fear" and "To train body, mind and heart with grandmother and grandfather". These were cultural and educational initiatives in which three generations took part in workshops and lectures organised by us. The activities we conducted included: historical workshops - including an open-air meeting "My Identity" in Okopy, Strożecin - on the history and culture of our region, intergenerational cooking workshops - including bread baking, a visit to a local cheese factory or a meeting on local herbs and honey, as well as workshops and lectures on educational innovations and use of new technologies.

It's also worth mentioning that in March 2021 in the competition Very Young Culture the project in which our company is an organising and administrative partner received the most points and won a grant, thanks to which in the summer of 2021 we conducted puppet theatre workshops for children and young people from rural communities in our region entitled: "In the land of paper fairy tales - me, mom, dad and paper and string". The workshop resulted in a public theatre performance addressed to a wide audience - thanks to which the whole local community could benefit from the fruits of the project.

The period of the pandemic motivated us to undertake activities using Internet techniques - thanks to which we conducted online meetings for children and seniors via the zoom platform, we started a YouTube channel with original fairy tales visualised using various artistic

techniques - which encouraged the recipients to try out their own handicraft skills, and we also conducted an action #ObjazdowyWarsztat-Czytelniczy [#Touring Reading Workshop] aimed at cyclic publishing of book reviews and publishing novelties which contribute to the promotion of reading. The activities we undertook were aimed at involving children and young people in technological education of the older generation in their families and familiarising entire families with the challenges resulting from transferring a wide range of services to a digitalised and virtual sphere.

It should be emphasised that the good practices and networks developed since the beginning of the Touring Creative Workshop allow us to believe that the project will continue even after the end of the funding period from the RDP 2014-2020. We intend to develop our mission and continue our work - cultural activities, workshops, lectures, family meetings, competitions for young people, promotion of culture in its broadest sense. As far as the participants are concerned, through our activities we involve them in the process of joint breaking down of barriers and patterns. The realisation of this assumption is served by, among others, our exercises in creativity, concentration, strengthening self-confidence and self-presentation, as well as the use of memory techniques (motivating the imagination, nonlinear notation, training in memory efficiency). The skills acquired during the classes serve to increase the level of entrepreneurship and to take bolder action of the rural population also for the benefit of their own villages.

We believe that the families participating in our initiatives will integrate, become more sensitive to their joint needs,



and above all, leave their homes more often and seek contact with other people. This will lead to greater activation of local youth and seniors, a greater sense of "agency" and a greater desire to undertake new activities.

As an interesting fact confirming the quality of our services and innovativeness of good practices applied by us we would like to point out the fact that our experiences including multigenerational local communities in joint activities have started to be used also by recipients from outside Płońsk County, among others, the Montessori School of Saint Urszula Ledóchowska in Warsaw, the University of the Third Age of the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, University of the Third Age in Łomianki, University of the Third Age in Wilanów, Galeria na Uciechę [Gallery for Pleasure] in Zawoja (Małopolskie Province), Senior Plus Day House in Olszówka (Świętokrzyskie Province).



<https://radioplonsk.pl/aktualnosci/warsztaty-laczace-pokolenia>

<http://radioplonsk.pl/aktualnosci/w-indianskiej-wiosce-czyli-wyprawa-na-dziki-zachod?fbclid=IwAR3CLWpwBgY8eJFtTHlk1BID-paiUTghOjT4sBtfISgoMdOyeyUoYbmguQw>

<https://www.facebook.com/93i6fm/posts/2060052630958222>

**Joanna Wlizło/Tulette Osada Rękodzieła Artystycznego
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2ND
place

Project title

Tulette Osada Rękodzieła Artystycznego [Tulette Settlement of Handicrafts]



Tulette Osada Rękodzieła Artystycznego [Tulette Settlement of Handicrafts] was established in 2018 and is located in a picturesque area, in the buffer zone of the Górznieńsko-Lidzbarski Landscape Park. In addition to the studio, where we conduct classes during the colder months, we have an area where we set up workshop tents every year. These are tepees, Indian tents and a large tent

which is a replica of the Pavilion from the 18th century. It is here, in spring, summer and warm autumn, that we meet the recipients of our activities, offering them a wide range of handicraft workshops.

For children and young people from rural areas we offer all year round classes in woodwork, batik, patchwork, candle and soap making, macramé, Indian handicraft, weaving, eco-printing, textile dyeing and periodical workshops in ceramics. Annual activities already include "Holidays in the Village", "Indian Survival" and "Forest Adventures". "Holidays in the Village" is a project in which at the beginning of the holidays for two weeks we invite children and young people to start or deepen their adventure with crafts. "Indian Survival" is a holiday activity that engages rural children and youth in discovering their aptitude for survival in a variety of terrain and weather conditions and teaches them how to use natural resources and sensitises them to the beauty of nature. "Forest Adventures" is a program for groups of children and youth, aimed at integration and shaping attitudes of respect for others who have a different way of being than the majority of the group. It is a pedagogical activity, filled with games and outdoor activities as well as mutual support during handicraft workshops.

Acting in the field of education and cultural animation, we assume in our activities that the exchange of experiences between generations is very important and necessary for the survival of various fields of handicrafts in our area. We often meet whole families at ceramic workshops, where we support and learn together. Besides, the Tulette Settlement of Handicrafts takes part in projects aimed at

intergenerational integration. An example is the project "Cultural Attic" organised within the framework of the Very Young Culture 2019-2021- Mazovia. We are also very happy to carry out family projects with the Agritourism Farm Dworek nad Wkrą [Manor House on the Wkra] and the Academy of Colours. As part of our cooperation we have three editions of the family picnic "Garden of Adventures" aimed at integrating the local community - rural with urban.

Our company also reaches out to the disabled. For adults with disabilities wishing to improve their competences on the labour market we conducted handicraft workshops in small woodwork and decoupage decoration of wooden objects. The project was implemented with EU funds and its organiser was Logos Education and Development Centre from Żuromin.

Our company also offers individual hand therapy classes with the use of ceramics. People with physical disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, trauma, etc.) and people (including children) with intellectual disabilities may also participate in these classes. Classes using various ceramic exercises and techniques are not tedious, boring therapeutic exercises, but therapy while acquiring and developing craft skills.

Tulette Settlement Handicrafts undertakes activities for children and young people with social adaptation difficulties and specific learning difficulties. In this regard, we carried out three projects in the framework of Very Young Culture in 2018, 2019 and 2021. These were: "Animator", "Little Craftsman Settlement" and "Planet of the Bees". Although the first was about film animation workshops, the second about handicraft workshops and the third about beekeeping workshops, they were an excellent opportunity for sociotherapeutic activities. The first two were addressed to children and young people with developmental dyslexia and were intended to bring out their creative potential, strengthen their sense of worth and open them to success. All these projects also included support for people with adaptation difficulties (depressed, shy people). Recipients of these activities had the opportunity to find themselves in a group of people with similar problems, they could get help,

understanding and motivation to overcome difficulties.

The last group that may be disadvantaged and for whom our company has prepared an offer are women from rural areas who want to improve their skills. The activities that we undertake in this regard include handicraft workshops. For women we conducted handmade paper workshops, ceramics, furniture restoration and styling, upholstery workshops. We have also conducted macramé workshops for Rural Housewives Circles. These meetings are not only an opportunity to improve one's skills in various handicrafts and crafts, but also socialise, integrate, exchange experiences, support groups.

Our company, undertaking a wide range of activities, using the above described innovative methods in our area for the benefit of people and disadvantaged groups due to their place of residence, gender, disability, adaptation difficulties, achieves such effects as: the use of the potential of the participants of the activities, creating opportunities for development and overcoming difficulties, the integration of the local community, increasing competence in artistic handicraft, but also in soft skills of the participants, sensitisation to the resources of the immediate area, both human and natural, increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the participants in the labour market.



**STOWARZYSZENIE LOKALNA GRUPA DZIAŁANIA
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**3RD
place**

Project title

Apple pie tradition in Chełmoński's Land

The "Apple Pie Day" initiative has been implemented since 2008. So far, 11 editions have been held in a stationary form. As part of the last edition in 2020, due to the prevailing epidemic, a photo competition was launched to maintain a substitute of the apple pie tradition in the Chełmoński's Land. The target group of the initiative are the inhabitants of rural areas covered by Local Development Strategy. We also invite and include people with disabilities to actively participate in the event.

Apple pie - the queen of grandma's tables, one of the nicest tastes of childhood. Although the years pass and the world changes, it still belongs to the most frequently eaten and baked cakes in Poland. The importance of this apple delicacy is clearly evidenced by the fact that it has lived to see countless recipes and secret ingredients.

What makes our initiative different from other local festivals and events? It is not only a celebration of apples, but also a venture to raise funds for an important cause. All proceeds from the apple pie day will be donated to help homeless animals in Żabia Wola and surrounding areas. This goal is being achieved thanks to broad partner cooperation and involvement of representatives of non-governmental organisations operating in rural areas, local governments, but also community residents and entrepreneurs. So far, the event has been co-organised by the Cultural Centre and the Communal Public Library in Żabia Wola, the "Homeless of Żabia Wola" Association, the Żabia Wola Voluntary Service and the Voluntary Fire Brigade Skuły while the organisation of the event has been supported by, among others, the "Chance" Association, the "Parabuch" Association for Creative Activities, the Chance Association and the Pony for Children Stable. The fundraising for stray animals would not have been possible without the involvement of volunteers. During

the events, the most crowded is always the "Café under an apple tree", where you can buy pieces of apple cake entered in competitions and donated by people supporting the action, drink hot tea or chocolate, or even eat an apple in glaze placed on a stick. The money collected in this way is used to pay for such things as medicines and medical treatments for homeless animals. In addition, you can also take part in a tombola and contribute to a can for volunteers of the "Homeless of Żabia Wola" Association - these funds are also used to help homeless animals.



The purpose of the "Apple Pie Day" is also to activate and integrate the inhabitants of rural areas. Therefore, the inseparable element of the fun are culinary competitions which took various forms and themes making subsequent editions more varied, including those aiming at the selection of "Master of apple pie", the author of the best "Little something from apple pie" among children or "Fiku miku zamknij lato w słoiku" ["Hanky panky, close summer in a jar"] jam. Even before the beginning of the event, representatives of the organiser were accepting baked goods fighting for the title of the tastiest and the prettiest apple pie and other delicacies. Additional attractions during the events held so far included performances by local bands and children and young people attending classes in cultural centres, as well as the organisation of other competitions, such as "Pick up scattered apples" for the youngest participants, whose task was to collect the fruit as quickly as possible in a special apple-pan. - the participants' task was to eat a piece of the delicious pie in the shortest possible time without using their hands.

Moreover, the area where the events are held is always crowded with stalls attracting the festivities' participants to stop even for a moment. "Good practices" are presented by the entrepreneurs from the LAG area who received a financial grant from the LAG. There are also numerous stands run by craftsmen selling wooden sculptures, hand-made cushions and gastronomy. In subsequent editions interesting attractions included games for the youngest who willingly tested their perceptiveness while looking for the geocaching treasure or thematic stands such as "Make a house for insects", "Creative recycling - screwing on colourful nuts", "Microscopes", "Painting beehives". Additionally, a photographic competition "Dog and cat photos" was announced, where photos were evaluated in various categories, e.g. "Sweetie", "Modest", "Dignified", "Fashionable" - a pet in a disguise, "Stuntman/hero", "Similarity" - a pet and its owner, "Savage" (a domesticated animal). The submitted photos depicted not only dogs and cats but also hamsters, rabbits, storks and even an elk with his husky dog friend or ...a pig. All the submitted photographs were presented at an exhibition, which was located right next to the festival stage. One of the editions of "Apple Pie Day" was focused on the theme of "Eco", proposing in the program of the event for example a presentation of ecological fashion by young people from the School in Radziejowice. All creations were made of materials associated with recycling - garbage bags, newspapers, corks, etc. The presented attractions made

it possible to involve the inhabitants of rural areas, who could actively spend their time and at the same time support the charitable goal of the initiative - to help homeless animals.

The pandemic situation in 2020 made it necessary to organise this event in an unusual form - a photo competition "My 2020 apple pie" was announced. On the plus side, the inhabitants of the Chełmoński Region joined the fun - a photo competition "with apple pie in the background" and interesting materials were created - photos, sketches and recipes for this delicious apple pie. Works prepared by individuals and organisations (housewives' circles, village leaders) were entered in the competition. We hope that the coming years will see the return of the traditional form of our initiative which is a much needed activity enabling the inhabitants of rural communes to participate in the implementation of our Local Development Strategy and combines fun with the implementation of an important objective, i.e. help for homeless animals.

There is no denying that we live in times when computers and multimedia have a huge impact on the life of society. Society is slowly losing its values and ceases to delight in "small miracles", small pleasures, still having no time for anything else but work. "Apple Pie Day" shows, however, that we are increasingly eager to return to that closeness and shared fun that was the main pastime of past generations. Crowds of people of different ages, united by their fondness for apple pie and apples, come to the event. The participants are also united by the idea of helping neglected animals and the desire to experience an adventure different than in front of a computer screen. Each time, there are smiles on the faces of the gathered adults, seniors, children and people with disabilities. Events such as "Apple Pie Day" allow us to believe in people, their selflessness, enthusiasm, good hearts and enormous talents.



**Local Action Group "Kurpsie Razem"
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Project title

Grant project entitled "Festivities integrating the Kurpiowska village"

The Association of the Local Action Group "Kurpsie Together" is a non-governmental organisation covering the area of 9 Kurpsie communes in the countries of Ostrołęcki and Przasnyski. Our mission is sustainable and diversified development of the Kurpsie Region through stimulating the creation of new jobs and increasing the activity of the local community, taking into account the wealth of the folk culture and natural assets of the Green Forest communes. At the stage of drawing up the Local Development Strategy it was decided that the LAG would broadly follow the formula of the so called "GRANT PROJECTS". The main objective of the grant projects is to support initiatives aimed at integration and animation of rural communities by means of grants awarded by the LAG "Kurpsie Together" to non-governmental organisations.

One of the implemented undertakings in 2017 was the grant project entitled "Organisation of festivals integrating the Kurpiowska village" implemented under the general objective: Activation and strengthening of social capital of the area covered by the local development strategy, including disadvantaged groups". The project significantly contributed to the activation of the local community and mobilised people to actively participate in the organisation of festivities. Within the framework of the entire undertaking, 14 local NGOs and KGWs [Rural Housewives' Circles] carried out 24 festivities in the area of communes covered by the Local Development Strategy, for a total pool of funds of PLN 200 000. During the festivities, competitions for children and young people were held, folk bands performed, folk handicrafts were shown, and regional dishes were tasted. The youngest inhabitants of the Kurpsie villages could also enjoy festivities with attractions such as inflatable castles, slides, ball pools, photo booths and others. Thanks to the



festivities, activities to activate disadvantaged groups and local communities were initiated - the inhabitants began to meet to organise various initiatives relating to events commemorating various stories of the life of the village and its inhabitants. Ideas and solutions involving the community, including disadvantaged groups, in the rural development process are a good practice of the project. The effects depend on us, on engaging inhabitants, using their potential and local resources, cultural, historical and natural heritage.

The project improved the quality of life and activation of people struggling with problems of poverty and social exclusion. The level of unemployment in the supported areas is about 10% and significantly exceeds the unemployment rate for the Mazowieckie Province and the country. It should be emphasized that the festivals were not organised in large commune villages, but in villages where such events did not take place.

Organisation of 24 festivals in the LAG area had an impact on effective and active involvement of the disadvantaged group in the organisation and direct participation in the whole project. The project was aimed at activating rural society in order to combat apathy on the part of the

inhabitants and, in consequence, limit the depopulation of villages. Thanks to this initiative the inhabitants could meet and establish new relations. During the implementation of the project there were animation activities, games and a number of other activities such as competitions on environmental protection. The participants could demonstrate their driving skills sitting behind the wheel of a car simulator. An additional attraction were alco-goggles, which reflected driving a car after drinking alcohol both during the day and at night. A photo booth with many gadgets such as hats, wigs, glasses, moustaches, masks was available so that each participant could go home with a souvenir photo. Other attractions included a fire dance show, a dance party, and a road rescue show performed by the Voluntary Fire Brigade. Local services and products were used to prepare the festivities. Those who wanted could take advantage of a breast cancer prevention course, a make-up demonstration, and a traffic awareness course, with a bike as the main prize.

Area inhabitants actively participated in the organisation of 24 festivals. The festivities were not cyclical but they initiated many events that have been organised in the LAG area so far. The project mobilised inhabitants to leave their homes and take joint action for the good of the whole rural community. The inhabitants decided to make the festivities obligatory events organised in the village, which confirmed that the decision to organise the grant project was correct.

The grant project initiatives were implemented with innovative and original ideas, the names of the tasks were unique and the inhabitants were eager to take part in them. Local Kurpsie bands, folk ensembles and circles of housewives performed on stage and presented traditional



songs and dances. Tastings of regional dishes were organised and local folk artists could present their products such as lace, paper cutouts, tissue paper flowers, etc. Those who were interested could try their hand at embroidery, crocheting, paper cutting and making Kurpsie bouquets. The history and traditions of the Kurpsie area were discussed, and even a reconstruction of the historic battle of 1863 was carried out. During the events, visitors could admire historical exhibitions, including old equipment, and take part in knowledge competitions about them.

The organisation of the festivities is a good initiative in terms of activation of the inhabitants. The participants in the project were very motivated already at the stage of writing the grant application. Some people worked on the performance; others planned the tasting dishes for the residents and guests, and the rest did a lot of other organisational work. The implementation of the festivities initiated cyclical meetings of residents and improved their living conditions, as well as helped promote the entire area by showing what is the hallmark of the area.



The National Network of Rural Areas is a proposal for broadly understood cooperation and exchange of experience in the field of rural development between all organisations active in rural areas and for their development.

The Regional Office of the National Network of Rural Areas in Mazowieckie Province implementing the assumptions of RDP 2014-2020, supports local initiatives in rural areas and promotes regional culture and history, undertakes a number of information and promotional activities aimed at activating local communities, supporting the exchange of experiences and good practices and seeking innovative solutions for the development of rural areas.

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We encourage to visit the following websites: www.mazowieckie.ksow.pl, where you can find information about current initiatives and NRN support, and www.ksow.pl, where you can register as a NRN Partner.

Project implemented by LAG - Przyjazne Mazowsze



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