

SLOVAKIA

Training and information activities

Location

Prencov

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 3 – Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

Measure

M331 - Training and information (via LEADER)

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 25 250
EAFRD 20 200
National/regional 5 050

Project duration

2014 – 2015

Project promoter

Microregion Juzne Sitno

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Slovak cultural association Microregion Juzne Sitno used EAFRD support to organise courses in ceramic production and wool processing, reviving a local tradition.

Summary

Traditional local methods of ceramic production and wool processing were in danger of dying out in Slovakia's microregion of Juzne Sitno. A local association sought to revive the traditions through courses taught by local experts.

Slovak cultural association Microregion Juzne Sitno used EAFRD support to organise courses in ceramic production and wool processing taught by local experts. They also promoted the courses through information leaflets and the display of products at regional cultural events.



Results

Revived interest in the local traditions of ceramic production and wool processing among different generations.

Participants learnt not only about the crafts, but about the lives, culture and traditions of their ancestors as well as about folk art in general.

Participants continue to perform the crafts and some plan to develop the hobby into a regular activity.

An exhibition was arranged to promote their work.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Detailed research is key to developing interesting activities before the project starts.
- Professional management of the project is vital.
- It is important to find motivated people prepared to use their new knowledge and skills after the project is over. For this reason it is important to promote the project widely in the region.

Context

The Slovakian microregion of Juzne Sitno has a rich history of ceramic production and wool processing. It is located at the south-western part of the Banska Bystrica region and there are 6 municipalities cooperating in this microregion. The area is well-known for the high quality white ceramic clay deposits which enabled the locals to develop good quality pottery at the beginning of the 17th century. Among different types of pottery, the most famous was the Beluj pottery known for its very high quality thin-walled ceramics and the sophisticated decoration technique involving very special plant-like engraved designs. The Beluj ceramics were traded worldwide. Their manufacturing ended in 1893 and today, the artist Stefan Mlich is the only one who can produce ceramics in the old traditional way.

Another unique craft developed in the region was wool processing – felting – either wet or dry. However, it was nearly lost during the 20th century. Today, many farmers are starting again with sheep breeding and they sell the unprocessed wool for very low prices. Re-establishing wool processing could give them the possibility to diversify their activities and increase the value of their production.

The civic association Microregion Juzne Sitno saw an opportunity to revive interest in the traditional skills and culture, providing courses taught by local experts.

Objectives

The project sought to give local inhabitants the opportunity to learn skills in ceramic production and wool processing while preserving the local traditions. The initiative also aimed to help farmers increase the value of their production and bring more tourism to the area.

Activities

1. Research into the crafts of traditional ceramic production and wool processing.
2. Search for experts to give lectures as well as designing and developing study and promotional materials.
3. The wool processing course was organized in March-April 2014 and the pottery course in September-October 2014.
4. 4 men and 33 women of different age groups attended 60 hours in 10 days to complete each course. Mr Mlich and Mrs Vanekova, were hired to lecture the courses. The experts possess not only specific craft skills but also broad knowledge of the particular crafts, their history, the regional context and development. Both courses were interactive and participants produced themselves many different products during the course – different ceramic and wool products.
5. Information was distributed on the courses between June 2014 and March 2015 through banners presenting both crafts and leaflets. During six different cultural events the association distributed promotional material and exhibited a variety of products to approximately 4 400 visitors.



Additional sources of information

n/a