

Establishment of the Velvary gingerbread bakery PerníkÁčča

A female entrepreneur used LEADER support to establish a gingerbread bakery and create employment for herself.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Velvary, Czechia

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6. Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: 6B. Local development

Measures: M19. LEADER CLLD

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|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Funding: | Total budget | 37 533 (EUR) |
| | EAFRD | 10 441 (EUR) |
| | National/Regional | 5 873 (EUR) |
| | Private/own | 21 219 (EUR) |

Timeframe: 23/04/2018 – 23/07/2020

Project promoter: Kateřina Woláková

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Context

Velvary is a small town in the central Bohemian region of Czechia. It has about 3 000 inhabitants. Velvary is one of the centres of the gingerbread industry in the country. At the end of the 20th century, handmade gingerbread was replaced by confectionery and machine-made gingerbread. The revival of the tradition of handmade gingerbread in the Velvary region was brought about in the second half of the 1960s. Another milestone was 1989, when it became possible to start a private business. Fortunately, Velvary town representatives understood the potential of modern gingerbread making and tried to support the renewal of this handicraft by organising a competition to find 'the most beautiful gingerbread'. This competition was a turning point for Kateřina Woláková, from Velvary, who, in 2008, together with a small team, won the competition with a gingerbread model of the Prague Gate, one of the symbols of the town.

Mrs Woláková used her eight years of parental leave to improve her processes and expand her range of products. At this stage, she was creating decorative gingerbread as gifts for friends and family in part of the kitchen in her family house, which she had converted into a small workshop. This soon became insufficient, so after the end of her parental leave, it was time for her dream to come true. Mrs. Woláková put her energies into setting up her own gingerbread factory, with a shop and a space for educational events.

Summary

Kateřina Woláková decided to turn her hobby of baking gingerbread into her main profession. This required the creation of a suitable space for the production and marketing of her products.

Thanks to LEADER funding, two previously unused rooms in a building in the vicinity of the historic centre of the town of Velvary were renovated for commercial use and the necessary equipment was acquired.

Project results

- One full-time position was created.
- The gingerbread bakery helps raise awareness about traditional crafts in the region.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Establishing cooperation with local suppliers was key to creating a quality product and building synergies between local businesses.





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Objectives

The aim of this investment project was to establish a facility for launching the business and scaling up production – offering customers a quality product made of local ingredients.

Activities

The gingerbread bakery was built in two unused rooms of a house in the city centre. It consists partly of a production room and partly of a shop for the public. Within the project, these two rooms were renovated and fully equipped for operation. One is partitioned off with a wood and glass screen, creating a small shop for the public.

The following activities were undertaken:

- Reconstructing and converting two rooms into a production room and a shop. This included placing new floor tiles, replacing the electrical wiring and light fittings, changing the water and sewage systems, plastering, lining the kitchen area and painting the walls.
- Installing wooden doors and windows in the factory room, installing a glass partition separating the shop from the production room, a counter and working desks.
- Purchasing equipment and technologies for the production and sale of gingerbread – kneader, rolling machine, oven, baking sheets, trolley, fridge, freezer, kitchenette, hob, sink, taps, refrigeration counter, cash register, laptop and small equipment.
- Conducting a communication campaign through Facebook, videos on YouTube and having a presence at regional events of the Czech National Rural Network.

Main results

- This investment contributed to expanding a range of activities and services offered to customers who can buy quality healthy gingerbread products and/or attend educational workshops and meetings on gingerbread baking.
- The applicant has created a job for herself.
- The bakery contributes to local tourism by raising awareness about traditional crafts in the region.
- Thanks to cooperation with Mrs Woláková, the local museum of Velvary (housed in one of the neighbouring buildings) is better able to build its exhibition on gingerbread. The museum now serves as a tribute to all historical gingerbread makers from the region.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Establishing cooperation with local producers was a key success factor as it contributes to the local economy and results in a better quality product.

Additional information:

Project website:

www.pernikaca.cz/e-shop/

Project on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/pernikaca/?locale=cs_CZ

Project on Instagram:

www.instagram.com/pernikaca/

Project media coverage:

<https://magazin.recepty.cz/clanky/jak-upect-dokonale-pernicky-nechte-si-poradit-od-pernikaci-2275.html>