

CARPATHIAN FOUNDATION – HUNGARY

SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE CARPATHIANS



**CARPATHIAN
CIVIL SOCIETY
PLATFORM**



Carpathian Social
Innovation Award
2021



• Visegrad Fund



Carpathian Foundation



2022

Foreword

Responding to social, economic, and ecological challenges, civil societies play a pivotal role in reconfiguration and the renewal of social practices, with the intention to strengthen social cohesion and to improve the quality of life of the communities they serve. This is the base of social innovation even if civil society actors are not always aware of this concept, because innovation stems from their nature and functional essence, i.e. quick community-based response to social needs, and adaptation to the changing environment. This is one of the most important differences that distinguishes the state from civil society. While the state with its rigid hierarchy is necessarily slow to react to social and ecological challenges, and not able to detect the roots of burning issues manifested at local and mezzo levels, civil societies embedded in the communities offer solutions that can be adapted by the state and could be introduced into the mainstream policy. Therefore, a smart state should create enabling environment to free the innovative energy of civil societies and form partnerships with civil society.

In order to recognize the various efforts of civil society organizations active in the Carpathian region, which covers the bordering areas of Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, the founders of the Carpathian Civil Platform, Fundacja Brama Karpat - Poland, ETP Slovakia, Carpathian Foundation - Hungary, and Carpathian Foundation - Ukraine, launched its Carpathian

Civil Innovation Award competition to support civil society organizations to present their community-based innovations implemented over the last two years. In addition to recognizing the social innovation of civil society organizations active in local communities of the Carpathians, the other goal of the Award is to offer an opportunity for these organizations to learn from each other by exchanging experience in the approach and methods of their innovations.

This brochure contains examples of social innovation initiated by Carpathian civil society organizations. As readers will see, these innovations cover a wide range of topics reflecting the main challenges societies, communities are facing in the Carpathians, which stem from the peripheral location, and social and natural vulnerability of the Region. Some initiatives address poverty, while others focus on social integration of underserved social groups such as Roma; some initiatives introduce new instruments of citizen mobilization for regional development, while others deal with disabled people; there are initiatives that focus on the protection of local natural and cultural heritage for the future and address the question, how this heritage can generate local development and transgenerational dialogue.

We hope, these examples will resonate in the communities of the Carpathians and some of them can serve as a model to be adapted to other communities in the Region.

SÁNDOR KÖLES

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Carpathian Foundation-Hungary



HUNGARY

Title of the innovation: **Abathon-the community development hackathon**

Name of organization, location: **Fogadó Észak-Abaúji Közösségfejlesztők Köre Egyesület (FÉSZAK-KÖR), Gönc (Gönci microregion, Abaúj region), Hungary**

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Abaúj is one of the most disadvantaged regions in Hungary, a rural area encompassing a large number of small villages with poor infrastructure. It has 17,150 inhabitants, but there is a negative migration: it is an area with aging population young people leaving the area. Impoverishment is high and increasing, a large share of the

population is unskilled. There are two small towns (2000-3000 inhabitants) in a district of 30 municipalities with small villages, mostly with 200-800 inhabitants. Natural and cultural resources are abandoned, although tourism has a high potential in the area. There is a deficit in the resources and community capital (human, social, cultural, economic, natural, political and monetary capital) among the people and communities of this region.



BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The organization is working on the development of settlements/microregions based on community development in the North part of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county. The mission of FÉSZAK-KÖR is to implement community solutions, because they believe that solutions attained through community planning are the ones that are the most sustainable and therefore the most desirable in the long run. In their community development work their main goals are to form participatory democracy, to fight social injustice, to decrease inequalities, and alleviate poverty. The members of the organization are of different professions; therefore, they are a true representation of the real rural communities.



DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Practically there is no community planning in this region, neither on local or regional level. The main reason on the one hand is the lack of motivation, faith, knowledge of people, and on the other hand there is no social practice for it. Due to the deficit in the resources, communities show disfunctions and they do not fulfill their true role. There is no tradition and practice of community learning, during which people could learn to think and act as a community. Apart from a couple of examples, there is no community-based functioning, people do not voice their opinion in local issues. Co-operations and partnerships are mere formalities, the culture of democratic dialogue has not evolved. The actors responsible for the commonweal do not have the knowledge, the practice and experience in community planning.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The goal of the Abaúj Community Development Hackathon (ABATHON) is to establish the culture of community planning through an exciting, innovative method. The community planning can give base to community functioning both on a local level and between settlements, towns, as well as on the level of organizations.

The initiative is focused on the development of new social partnerships and networks. FÉSZAK-KÖR organized the Abaúj Community Development Hackathon (ABATHON) which is based on 15-years of experience in community development. The ABATHON is a 48-hour creative but regulated community design based on teamwork. The 5-7

invited team consist of residents of the Gönci district, who are assisted by mentors in developing their ideas so that they can successfully present them to the jury. All ideas are supported by follow-up and - if they are open to professional support - by involving them in community development workshops in a way that is in line with the activities of the FÉSZAK-Kör.



HUNGARY

Title of the innovation: **Let's renovate the children's health center together!**

Name of organization, location: **Somnakuno Drom Roma Women Civil Association, Nagykálló**

Brief introduction of the community/location: **Nagykálló is a small town located with cca. 10500 inhabitants in the disadvantaged region of North-East Hungary, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county.**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Somnakuno Drom has been working as an informal group since 2012, and the association was established in 2020. The goal of the organization is to help disadvantaged Roma people and children, as well as to be a bridge between non-Roma and Roma people. The organization works in one of the biggest Roma segregates in Nagykálló, on the



Gödrök Roma settlement. They try to help local people in many ways - from developing activities for children to representation of rights for the parents.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Nagykálló is a small town, and there are two children's health center. While one of them is fully renovated and is located in the city center, the other one is far from the center, and it was in a very run-down state. 80% of the Roma children belong to the latter health center. The furniture, the floor and the

walls in the Roma health center decayed, so Roma parents and children felt disadvantaged compared to the people who belonged to the other, better equipped health center. Therefore, the Association decided to solve this problem with the help and involvement of the local Roma community.

The association's innovation promotes social inclusion and integration, strengthens cooperation between NGOs, local governments and businesses, and develops a community donation culture and social responsibility.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

Somnakuno started by interviewing people living in the Roma settlement to find out what they think about this situation, and they asked them to tell a personal story that they lived through in connection with the children's health center in question.

Then they prepared an action plan and involved Partners Hungary Foundation mini-grant funds. Somnakuno organized street forums and prepared the financial plan together with locals. In addition to the mini-grant, they approached the Mayor and the town representatives to ask for their support. In the meantime, Somnakuno Drom started a community fundraising where they asked for donations in kind. The Mayor, who before was not supportive at all, replied to the letter and the Local Municipality arranged for the painting of the health center within 3 days. In the meantime, the community fundraising was a success too: a smart tv, a swing chair, toys, a carpet

and drawing kits were offered by the community members. The organization cooperated with the children's doctor, and the overall renovation of the health center was implemented in full by the volunteering local Roma parents.

There are several beneficial outcomes of the project:

- The children's health center is in a perfect state, children love going there
- Roma parents feel the ownership of the center and are very proud of their contribution
- The Mayor and the Representatives publicly thanked the work of Somnakuno, and stated that they are proud of them (this had never happened before to a Roma organization in Nagykovács).
- Non-Roma people are very proud of local Roma people and thanked their work
- Local entrepreneurs were inspired by the project to start local initiatives
- The doctor is very proud, and was very supportive of Somnakuno, and voiced that this was achieved by a Roma organization together with the local Roma people - for the whole community

Somnakuno's goal is to send a message that Roma people can do things for themselves if they get the chance and trust. Inspired by Somnakuno's initiative, the Local Municipality renovated the health visitors' center with the help of local entrepreneurs. Somnakuno plans to present their best practice throughout the



country to Roma communities to inspire them to get together and act together for their own community. Somnakuno believes that this is a positive example that can bring down the walls between Roman and non-Roma people, and erase stereotypes such as: Roma are negligent, they do not care for their children, they are lazy, untalented and greedy.



HUNGARY

Title of the innovation: **Infinite love hidden in a heart pillow**

Name of organization, location: **Community of Life-giving Relationships (Éltető Kapcsolatok Közössége - short name: ÉKKŐ Association), Miskolc**

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION, BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Association is located in Miskolc, North-Hungary, but their scope of activity stretches across the Carpathian basin- they have members and activities in Romania and Slovakia as well. ÉKKŐ Association was established by 26 enthusiastic people of action from Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The



goal of the Association is to form supportive, value preserving relationships among Hungarian families in the Carpathian basin and foster good connections with non-Hungarian communities. The organization also works on raising health awareness, on the overcoming the taboos associated with cancer, on creating a network around those

suffering from a serious, often life-threatening illness, and on the creation of self-help communities in which the receiver of the help becomes a helper, and which foster their own leaders, organize the outreach to fellow patients with heart pillows, and authentically invite them into the established helping communities.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Breast cancer is the leading form of cancer among women in Hungary, 7-8 thousand women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. One in three of them dies from the disease. A general recommendation after women undergo a mastectomy is that they put "something" on the surgical wound under their armpit to relieve their pain. Doctors and nurses knew that SOMETHING was needed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The heart pillow program – originally established in the USA – was launched in Hungary 20 years ago. In 2020 ÉKKŐ started to design the Infinite Love in a Heart Pillow program. According to the two main target groups they perform their activities related to two main tasks:

- recruiting volunteers for sewing the heart pillows
- detecting women with breast cancer and offering them to join the Heart pillow program

ÉKKŐ promotes the psycho-physical treatment for women who had breast surgery in Eastern Slovakia by donating heart pillows made in Hungarian voluntary communities.

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ÉKKŐ helps the individual at the social level with civil cooperation. The suffering of the individual breaks the national barriers between Slovaks and Hungarians.

During the preparation and delivery of the heart cushions to the patients, each person of the helping chain experiences how good it is to help our fellow human beings. Heart pads have an important role to play in healing, reducing post-surgery pain, and conveying the message to sick women that they are not alone. Others know and care about their post-surgery pain and discomfort. So far, ÉKKŐ has delivered 350 heart pillows to women operated with breast cancer in Košice (Kassa), Michalovce

(Nagyimihály), Trebišov (Terebes), Prešov (Eperjes) and Bratislava (Pozsony) in Slovakia. Volunteer work communities have been established in 3 locations: Košice, Miskolc and Velky Kapusany (Nagykapos) to help women with breast cancer in Slovakia. Heart pillow tailoring and stitching are real community strengthening opportunities.

In the heart pillow program, no distinction was made between Hungarian and Slovak women, the goal is to help sick people without any discrimination. ÉKKŐ believes that in the long run, in addition to direct help, the main results of this support will be sincere relationships, friendships, and collaborations in terms of openness to each other.



VIDEO LINK - in English with Hungarian subtitles

Description of the Heart Pillow program in Hungarian: www.eltetokapcsolatok.hu/szivparna/

POLAND

Title of the innovation: **We take off the crown and support Bieszczady NGOs**
 Name of organization, location: **Bieszczadzka Foundation, Ustrzyki Dolne, Poland**



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Ustrzyki Dolne - an urban-rural commune in Podkarpacie, in the Bieszczady powiat, located on the Strwiąż River. Ustrzyki Dolne is a small town. Before the outbreak of World War I, the number of Jews in the city reached 2.6 thousand people. During the war there was a significant decline, because in 1921 only 1768 Jews lived in Ustrzyki Dolne itself. Poles and Ukrainians also lived in minority. In the interwar period, apart from the main synagogue and the synagogue of the Yad Charuzim Association, there were two Beth Midrashes in the city: the old and the new, as well as the houses of prayer of Hasidim - supporters of the tzadiks from Sadogóra and Bełż. During the war, most of the Jews were murdered.

After World War II, the city remained within the borders of the USSR until 1951. It was only as a result of the "exchange of land" that it returned to Poland along with part of the Bieszczady Mountains. Currently 8,826

inhabitants live here, of which 51.9% are women and 48.1% are men (data from December 2021).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

Bieszczadzka Foundation was established in 2003 in Ustrzyki Dolne. The Foundation integrates and coordinates partner three-sector activities of NGOs, companies, public institutions, solves economic, social and environmental problems, supports the use of natural and cultural resources for the development of tourism, improving the quality of life of the inhabitants and creating a coherent program of sustainable development in the Bieszczady Mountains. The main areas of activity are the Bieszczady (12 communes from the counties of Lesko, Bieszczady, Sanok and Przemyśl, and the border areas of Slovakia and Ukraine). The activities of Bieszczadzka Foundation can be divided into two main areas: social and eco-tourism.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Ustrzyki is a small town and NGOs often do not have the back office and know how to function in the modern market so as to effectively act for the benefit of the local community.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

As part of the fund for non-governmental organizations and civic initiatives the Bieszczadzka Foundation together with the partner of the Local Action Group (LAG) "Zielone Bieszczady" project based in Orelec implemented a project entitled "We take off the crown and support Bieszczady

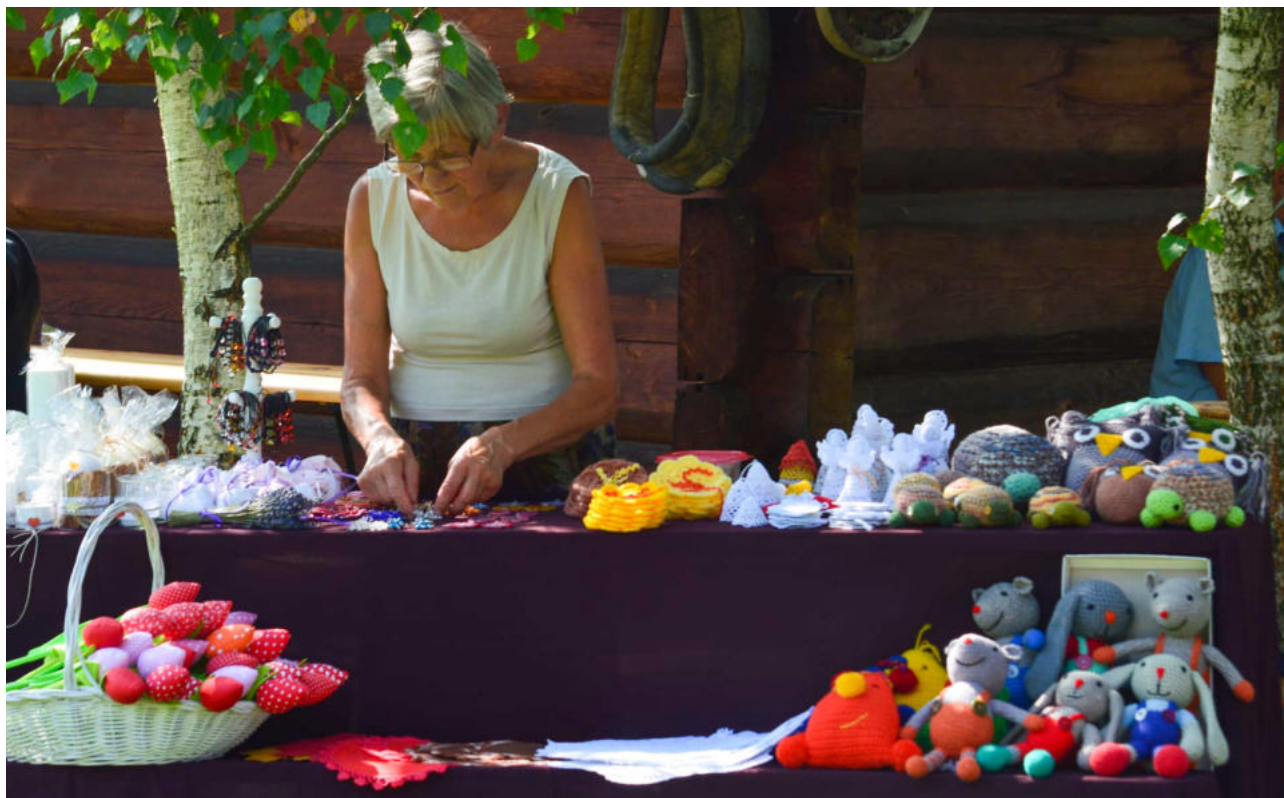
NGOs". The aim of the project was to strengthen the potential of non-governmental organizations in Bieszczady by providing leaders and members of organizations with knowledge in the field of the operation of NGOs and capacity building of leaders efficiently managing projects, actively and effectively acting for the benefit of the local community. As part of the training, workshops and individual consultations, we obtained the following results: the social capital increased by acquiring knowledge about the operation of NGOs, 20 representatives of NGOs in Bieszczady acquired competence in writing projects and solidified knowledge of solving current problems related to the operation of non-governmental organizations.



POLAND

Title of the innovation: **Junior Eko Angler**

Name of organization, location: **Kopalnia Foundation, Brzegi Dolne**



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Brzegi Dolne is a village in the Strwiąż valley, located in the vicinity of Ustrzyki Dolne. The village was founded in 1532, and was placed on Wallachian law. As a curiosity, it can be added that in the years 1945-1951 Berehy Dolne and several nearby towns belonged to the USSR, but after the so-called straightening of the borders and conversion of these areas into carbon-bearing areas of the Lublin region, the village returned to Poland. Currently, Brzegi Dolne has about 430 inhabitants of which 51.1% are women and 48.9% men, although in winter and summer this number is significantly increased by tourists.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Kopalnia Foundation was established in 2019. The main priority of the organization is to support local inhabitants and the cooperation with cultural organizations and institutions working for the local community. The name of the Foundation - Kopalnia was chosen to relate historically to the Brzegi Dolne - Łodyna crude oil mine on the one hand, and on the other hand to "explore and dig" in history and culture, extracting from its elements important for social development. The foundation focuses on four main directions:

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 📌 Kopalnia

- Expanding the offer for children and adolescents - including anglers - by maintaining cooperation with the fishing club, extending the workshop and training offer, especially outdoors, on the waters of the PZW District Krosno.
- Working with and for seniors - the pandemic has shown how lonely they have been, so they considered both the time of danger and lack of meeting opportunities - these gave the idea to create an external reading room and provide individual help through volunteers willing to visit the elderly in their homes.



- Supporting the development of culture by supplementing the resources of the library and reading room, and developing cultural offer according to the interest of the local community.
- Development of partnerships, cooperation with local leaders and institutions operating in the local community, NGOs and entrepreneurs.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

In 2019, based on the interviews conducted among the inhabitants and workers of cultural institutions (village libraries and the Center for Culture and Tourism) they established a foundation to strengthen and act for the local community and social integration, especially in the fields of culture and sport. Great authors, lectures and cultural presentations or film screenings are not accessible in this small village. They have access to the library, which gives people the only opportunity to develop and expand their passions and knowledge. It is important to develop the resources of the library and create a friendly space - the community's space. The organization wants to keep working with groups of different interests and ages trying to respond for their needs. The main areas of activity are cultural activities - supporting the development of the library and reading room, organization of cultural events and thematic

exhibitions, art workshops, events and discussions, organization of the annual event - Feast of Herbs and Flowers - emphasizing the beauty of the Feast of Our Lady of Herbs and organizing a competition for the Most Beautiful Bouquet of Herbs in Kwiatowa, as well as being alert to the beauty of nature and its protection - activities for anglers, including promoting fishing among children and adolescents.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

In 2021, they implemented a very important project called Junior Eko Angler, in the Ustrzyki Dolny Commune, in which they showed sustainable development in the activities of the Foundation, carried out in the Ustrzyki Dolne Commune, including trips to Polish waters. The main goal of the project was to familiarize children and young people with sustainable fishing and to sensitize them to the needs of maintaining the cleanliness of the surrounding nature and to prepare a talk on the cleanliness of the river region, including the Strwiąż River during the local festival called "Feast of Herbs and Flowers and other gifts of the earth – water". During the three months of the project, three workshop activities took place, which increased the participants' knowledge about the "rights and obligations" of anglers towards the nature they use. In addition, they also learned about the methods of breeding fry and restocking rivers with appropriate species of fish.

The local community was sensitized to the needs of the surrounding environment and our obligations towards the environment. The activities were instructed by all members of the Social Fisheries Guard.



POLAND

Title of the innovation: **Together means more for the Carpathians and us**

Name of organization, location: **Center for Coordination and Support of Socio-Economic Activity**



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Orelec a village in Poland located in the Podkarpackie voivodship, in the Lesko powiat, in the Olszanica commune. The village lies in mountainous areas of high natural value, characterized by a clean environment, low development, high unemployment, low population level and a large forested area. The specificity of the area is also a result of an incredible mixture of cultures and nationalities. It is believed that the village was founded at the beginning of the 16th century on the basis of Wallachian law. The name of the village comes from the word oreł and is meant to denote the place where the eagles live. The population of

the village of Orelec is 412. The village is inhabited by 8.2% of the commune inhabitants. Currently, the number of inhabitants is decreasing due to migrations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The association was established in 2018. The main area of activity is the development of civil society and promotion of social economy. Activities are focused on supporting initiatives and assisting members in economic, social and cultural activities, promoting tourism and physical culture among locals, as well as protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

The Wallachian Culture Trail is a trail of natural and cultural heritage related to Wallachian traditions in the Carpathians. The main problem is the limited knowledge of the voivodship inhabitants about the heritage of Wallachia (Wołochów - "Fathers of Europe"). Young people close themselves in the virtual world without cherishing their identity and tradition. There is a need to tighten intergenerational ties and exchange experiences. There is a need to disseminate traditions among young people through handicraft workshops, which will not only contribute to strengthening the intergenerational bond but also make them sensitive to the local product.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The initiative was implemented under the project "On the Wallachian Trail" carried out by the Regional Institute Foundation. The project was implemented

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principle of “master-student”, i.e. involvement of young people (grandchildren - younger participants of the workshops, but also other volunteers) in the consolidation of knowledge gained during the workshops. Young people play the role of a “master” for older people in the areas related to digital competence, and, in turn in the areas related to social competences and regional culture/handicraft or customs, they play the role of a “student”, while increasing the motivation of older participants to continue their active

in partnership with the Association “Stolica Bieszczad Ustrzyki Dolne”, the Bieszczadzka Foundation - “Orelec Gala” and the Local Action Group “Zielone Bieszczady”.

participation, for example by producing and selling artistic products using digital channels. This allows for intergenerational integration and exchange of roles.

Objectives of the project: getting to know the Wallachian Culture Trail, consolidating of dying out techniques and skills, tightening cooperation between stronger and weaker NGO’s, as well as multi-generational integration of participants. Activities within the project: preparation and organization of lectures on the Wallachian Culture Trail and organization of artistic workshops on Carpathian culture. The aim of the initiative was primarily to acquaint the community with the Wallachian Culture Trail - a route of natural and cultural heritage associated with Wallachian traditions in the Carpathians, and to preserve the dying out traditional techniques and skills inherited from past generations living in the Carpathians. Activities such as traditional handicraft workshops strengthen the sense of identity and dignity of the inhabitants of the Carpathian region, especially Poles and Ukrainians living in the area through which the trail runs. The method of the workshops is innovative and relies on inter-generational cooperation on the



SLOVAKIA

Title of the innovation: **Registration Week 2021 (Winner Slovakia)**

Name of organization, location: **DEDO Foundation, Košice, Slovakia**

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

The Registration Week took place from May 24 to 30, 2021 in Košice and mapped families with minor children in housing need. The results brought real numbers that will require fitting solutions. According to the findings, 552 adults live homeless in Košice, aged mostly between 18 and 39. A total of 189 families live in shacks or garden cottages and 74 families in shelters. However, the key information is that 748 children live in homelessness.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The DEDO Foundation innovates social services in Slovakia by constantly looking for solutions to current problems of people, especially families with housing needs. After the initial pilot implementation, we also enforce changes in public policies and legislation. We are currently bringing to Slovakia the Housing First approach, which gives the most vulnerable groups the opportunity of social housing with professional support. Professional support is provided by a multidisciplinary team of the partner non-profit organization All for the Family. At the end of 2021, there were 17 families in 17 households. In order to make rental housing in Košice more accessible, the DEDO Foundation is planning to establish a social rental agency.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

For the first time in Slovakia, the DEDO Foundation applies a methodology developed in the USA and has been successfully applied in many European countries, including the Czech Republic. The primary goal of the Registration Week 2021 in

Košice was to map families with children living in housing need. Dedo Foundation promised to provide housing with professional support to the most vulnerable families. The registration week is the first step toward a systemic solution to the homelessness of families with children. It has brought very practical data needed to address the housing emergency. The aim was also to bring the issue of homelessness of families closer to the general public and seek consensus on the need to tackle the issue and, last but not least, elaborate the registration week methodology into a manual that can be used in other cities for other target groups.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The DEDO Foundation invited the City of Košice and organizations that work with people in housing need to take part in the registration week. Also, 80 volunteers from the general public participated. During the week they visited families living in shelters, emergency housing facilities and settlements to conduct an interview with them. The interview was captured in a structured questionnaire. Families also had the opportunity to come to a designated contact point and conduct an interview outside their place of residence. The collected and processed data showed what is the number of families with homeless children, what is the structure of families (parents, children, their age, share of single parents), where these families currently live, what is their history of housing needs, what is the state of health of family members, such as the daily functioning of families and their socialization, such as the dynamics of family homelessness. Based on the processed data, it will be possible to connect families with the necessary support, prioritize the most vulnerable ones and

take measures to address the acute housing need of families. After the registration week, the first group of families were invited to join the Housing First project. The obtained data will also be used

in the creation of a strategy for the prevention and solution of housing needs in the City of Košice. It will contain measures and an action plan aimed at ending homelessness in the city.



SLOVAKIA

Title of the innovation: **Coding Camp for Girls**

Name of organization, location: **Female Algorithm, Košice, Slovakia**



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Košice Region offers the most IT opportunities after Bratislava. The organization considers it necessary to lead the girls to overcome the common gender stereotype that girls and technology do not belong together. Next year they would like to organize at least 4 camps in Košice and in the coming years they would like to expand to other regions in Eastern Slovakia.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Female Algorithm civic association was established in October 2020. It bears the title of the book by its founder, Lenka Hlinkova, and it follows up on the long-term volunteer activities of her team aimed at encouraging mainly women and girls to study and work in the IT sector. The main activity of the association is the education of children and adults in areas of digital skills, diversity, inclusion and critical thinking. They help build an active civil society without prejudices and increase people's competence skills for better application in the labor market. They carry out researches and publishing activities. The team consists of 18 professionals. In 2021, they trained more than 3,000 people.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

The problem addressed through innovation is the under-representation of girls in faculties of informatics and other technical fields. Only 10% of the graduates of these faculties are women, and a 2016 survey found that up to 2/3 of the students at these faculties were discouraged from studying by someone in the family. Girls do not know the possibilities of working in IT and they are often driven away from this direction by the stereotype that women and technology do not belong together. The current proportion of women working in IT in Slovakia is 13.8%. Bulgaria

and Romania have a ratio of around 30%. The IT sector achieves 3 times the GDP compared to other industries and the average wage in IT is twice the average wages in Slovakia. Women currently represent the huge undiscovered potential of the country, and their greater representation in IT would help not only themselves but also the Košice region and, ultimately, the entire national economy.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

For the second year in a row, Female Algorithm have organized a free summer 5-day coding camp for 10 girls from different social backgrounds. Both times in addition to advertising on social media, children's homes from Košice were approached. Professional lecturers are tutoring the girls, they are explaining the basics of creating web applications from design, to programming and testing, and internet security. During the summer camp, the girls also improve their presentation skills, listen to the stories of successful computer science students and look behind the scenes at one of the IT companies in Košice. At the end of the camp, they present their final website and also take an online test. The participant with the highest score of correct answers wins a prize. The fee of the camp includes snacks and lunch at a nearby restaurant. After completing the camp, the girls become familiar with the process of software development, the individual positions involved in this process, as well as the possibilities of study and further application in the IT field. The Female Algorithm is constantly improving their syllabi and they see a lot of room for scaling up - e.g. dividing girls into groups depending on the level, focusing on different technologies (web development, applications, smart cities, mini-hackers, data analysis, UX) and also groups mixed with boys. They maintain long-term contact with graduates. They plan to measure the impact of education also by monitoring their choice of secondary school.

SLOVAKIA

Title of the innovation: **CykloDobro**

Name of organization, location: **Okolo NGO, Košice, Slovakia**

Brief introduction of the community/location: **Various locations in the region of East Slovakia**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANISATION

The NGO Okolo was established in 2019. Their main goal is to produce unusual social/cultural events as a tool to bring people together with a wide range of interests. Their activities always strive for a positive impact on the environment and to improve awareness of the value of unused things and spaces. From the beginning, the members of the NGO, with the support of other organizations and local governments, have created a background in three areas they are actively involved in: 1. Promoting cashless trade, 2. Building a cycling community, 3. Remote rural development

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Access to efficient transportation is one of the key aspects of quality of life, but different groups



of people do not have the option. An increase in the share of individual motor traffic results in an increase in noise, dust, increased emissions and, last but not least, an increase in the number of diseases of civilization - obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Many people have their garages hampered by broken, unwanted, spare bicycles. Not much is missing and the bikes can serve their purpose again.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

Since 2019, during European Mobility Week, they have been collecting spare bicycles and bicycle parts, we repair them and we donate upcycled bicycles to people in need and organizations that work with such people.

In 2019, in cooperation with the Košice CLUB and Cyklokoalícia Košice, they assembled 10 bicycles and organized a workshop on basic maintenance and small bicycle repairs. In the European Mobility Week competition, the organization won the prize for most original activity.

In 2020, CykloDobro for the pandemic was the only activity organized in connection with the European week of mobility in Košice. During the event, Okolo NGO managed to organize two screenings about mobility in the city, two workshops on basic maintenance and a lecture on the current state and future of bicycle transport in Košice in cooperation with Cyklokoalícia Košice and Tabačka Kulturfabrik. They handed over 23 bicycles.

In 2021, Okolo received support from the village of Vinné and the organization Nádej z Bukózy. They mobilized their citizens and employees who have donated a significant number of damaged

bicycles to the organization. Thanks to Výmenníky, Cyclo coalition Košice and 00's Art Wave, despite the pandemic, they managed to organize an all-day DJ set and create a sculpture from bicycle

parts, which is currently at auction and assemble 29 functional bicycles. So far, 15 volunteers have helped Okolo's work with bicycles. They managed all the years with a budget of 0 euros.



UKRAINE

Title of the innovation: **Early Creative Childhood development**

Name of organization, location: **Zakarpattia regional charitable foundation „Blaho”**

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION, DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

Transcarpathia – the smallest region in Ukraine – has the biggest Roma community in the country, which is estimated as more than 40 000 people. However, some experts double this figure and believe that every third Ukrainian Roma lives there. One of the main features of local Roma community is its rapid increase within last two decades which suggests higher than average birth rate. According to the WHO children under age 18 comprise 62%

of Roma population in Ukraine. 10 000 Roma kids attended schools in Transcarpathia last academic year, which is few times bigger than two decades ago. It is more common for Transcarpathia that Roma children live in a frame of traditional social organization – Roma camps. Also, they belong to diverse cultural, linguistic (60% - Hungarian, 20% - Roma, 20% - Ukrainian), and religious groups. Often their parents are poor, unemployed (62%), illiterate (25%), without official documents (17%), and early married. In some local settlements up to 50% of them live in illegal housing without utilities and basic sanitarium conditions.



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DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The project aims at giving Roma kids an opportunity to develop their creative skills, the same as other children, as well as get children prepared for the school education. Besides children the project works with the parents who have very low level in performing a primary school curriculum.

The classes for children and parents are organized 3 times a week and main topics were related to providing comprehensive development of the target group. Besides giving children and parents opportunity to study it delivers a sense of the necessity of discipline during classes, learning of basic safety, traffic rules, sanitation and hygiene, fire safety, healthy life style.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

Transcarpathian Regional Charitable Foundation "Blaho" is an independent self-governing organization that has been operating in the Transcarpathian region since 2003. The mission of the organization is to revive Transcarpathia and provide educational and social assistance to children from large, low-income families and homeless children. The organization implements different initiatives to support, promote and integrate Roma children in educational institutions; as well as works at changing the mentality and stereotypes of Roma parents and vice versa – the attitude of Ukrainians towards Roma people. In 2014, Blaho started Roma Center for Early Childhood Development: Preparing for School with the financial support of International Renaissance Foundation and International Childhood Foundation.

Children and parents enjoy attending classes and are able to learn what they need for further education. They effectively acquire new knowledge and increase their self-esteem, learn to be a part of team by participating in collective creative work, making various products and other different group activities. In long term perspective parents have realized their responsibility for their children's education and development, and children have received a start of pre-school education and schooling, their parents are proud of their achievements and support them in their education.



UKRAINE

Title of the innovation: **Summer camp for Roma children**

Name of organization, location: **Hand of Help Civil Organization, Uzhgorod**



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

As described in the initiative by organization Blaho, Transcarpathia region has the biggest Roma population in Ukraine. Analyzing various challenges of local Roma community most of experts are quite unanimous in defining their underlying systematic drivers. These are poverty, unemployment, poor housing, poor education, discrimination, absence of personal documents, and limited access to health care. Actually, they comprise a set of factors which make Roma socially excluded. Moreover, the experts highlight that these drivers do not work separately but are closely interrelated and connected. Often, they are the causes of each other, a kind of vicious circle which trapped Roma. For example, the experts define health status, housing, employment, and personal documents both like the causes and outcomes of poor education. Rights violation (discrimination) is a result and a reason for poor housing, unemployment, lack of personal documents, limited access to education, and health problems. Meanwhile, growing number of poor Roma pupils turned some regular schools

into segregated. Currently there are 6 completely segregated schools and 15 schools with separated classes for Roma in the region. There is similar situation with the kindergartens. And despite of the growing number of pupils only 5% of them study for 9 years (mandatory minimum), and only 1% gain full secondary education but most of Roma children give up school at the age of 10-11 One of the schools that provide education mostly for Roma children is Uzhgorod school No. 14. This is the oldest Roma school in Europe (established in 1926).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The goal of Hand of help NGO is to facilitate and support Roma children and preschoolers to get an education. The Hand of Help organization was established in 2012. And since that it has accomplished different projects assisting Roma children and adults to believe that the education is an extremely important tool for social integration and improving Roma people's quality of life. It has organized plenty of different initiatives and events to help Roma to become closer to school facilities, like trainings on basic skills, assuring possibilities to attend the school (humanitarian aid, food, hygienic goods), making school education attractive (school bus, excursion), psychological support and others.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE

There is a widespread belief in discussions about the issue of Roma upbringing and education that access to school education is equal for all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or social status. By this logic, if for some reason parents do not want to send their children to school or at least monitor their educational process, and children who are still enrolled in school, but do not regularly attend classes, it is considered to be the decision of the parents. And no one has the right to force them, because "they have such a culture" or "they are not capable of learning just because they are Roma." In reality Roma children differ from other peers by

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their conditions in which they live and their culture. Therefore, educational work with them may require alternative approaches in methodology and creative practices in teaching. Quite often teachers perceive Roma as “special” and therefore may not require them to have a brilliant knowledge of the material, believing that such children only need to be able to read and write. This approach is fundamentally wrong, because although all children are different, this does not mean that Roma children are worse or less able to learn. The real reason for the reluctance of Roma children to study is their unpreparedness for school. They have not attended kindergartens, so they often do not understand what teachers want from them, what is their task, what needs to be done, and they often do not know the institutional

go outside their settlement. In Roma families, older children often take care of younger ones - children simply lose their childhood. The rest of them wander the streets of the city without any grounds. And this is approximately 60 children.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The Summer Camp for preschoolers and school-age children organized by the Hand of Help NGOs is focused on preventing these problems. The purpose of the school camp is to realize the rights of every child to complete rest, provide meaningful leisure, meet the interests and spiritual needs in accordance with individual needs during the summer holidays. The other idea of the camp is to organize effective

and safe rest for Roma children, reduce morbidity, reduce injuries, promote healthy lifestyles, maintain proper environmental status, increase the level of communication skills, creativity, education. Main activities were related to the engagement of Roma children to efficient use of natural resources (sun and air baths, exercise in the fresh air); balanced diet (presence in the diet of fresh vegetables, natural juices); strict observance of sanitary and hygienic norms of children’s rest, formation of personal hygiene skills; proper organization of physical culture and health work (sports competitions, moving games, hiking, formation of skills of safe behavior); observance of the daily routine; various educational activities.

Summer camps provide children with a great opportunity to combine pleasant and useful recreation with



rules. Because of all this, they feel uncomfortable in class - and simply avoid learning and eventually drop out. And after the end of the school year, children really have nowhere to go and nothing to do. Wealthier parents go out of town for so-called “earnings” (collecting metal and waste paper, for seasonal work) and take their children with them. Much of the Roma children just stay at home, do not

developing skills on critical and creative thinking, teamwork, self-reflection and other useful skills for the future. The main task of teachers was to create an environment in which children will be safe and have fun, where they can grow emotionally and physically. After all, here they learn to be friends, respect and accept others, be independent and responsible, show initiative and help others.

UKRAINE

Title of the innovation: **Project on Social Adaptation of Veterans and return to the Civil Life**
 Name of organization, location: **Civil Organization „Our Native Zakarpattia”, Uzhgorod**

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY/LOCATION

Zakarpattia region is the serving area of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, State Emergency Service of Ukraine, the National Police and the others. The total number of troops is about 13,000 - 15,000 people, and 2,000 out of them are being fired every 2 years. Since 2014 Ukraine fights against Russia invasion on the West, and there are special troops from Zakarpattia engaged in the war.

is NORD University. In Ukraine the main partner and coordinator of the project is the International Fund for Social Adaptation (Kyiv). “Our Native Transcarpathia” is the coordinator and leader of the Ukraine-Norway project and the Uzhgorod National University is the executor and provide education courses for the clients. The NGO is a unique structure providing services in complex retraining, socialization, clarification of personal needs of each veteran, as well as the support of



project participants - mentoring, consulting, assistance with the necessary contacts, etc. In particular, the social adaptation is facilitated due provision of psychological trainings and individual work, the individual interviews and trainings on employment (informing about the labor market and employment technologies, developing a personal resume

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

“Our Native Zakarpattia” was established in January 2018. Strengthening the role and building capacity of veterans to assist the socio-economic development of the region.

and interview skills with potential employers and partners, getting acquainted with the basics of marketing itself). Another sphere of assistance is setting up the relations with different stakeholders (organization of a meeting with representatives of the employment center, city administration, managers and leading specialists of enterprises), as well as assistance in finding potential investors, obtaining grants and other ways to get funding. There is also cooperation with donors, for almost a year in particular, course participants are helped to write business plans and project applications.

DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM/ISSUE, DESCRIPTION OF THE INNOVATION

The main focus of the NGO is working on the project is to provide professional retraining and social, psychological adaptation of servicemen, war veterans and their families. Financial support is provided from the Ministry Norwegian Foreign Affairs (through NORD University) co-financed by the Ukrainian state. The main partner in Norway

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Carpathian Civil Society Platform



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<https://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu/en/tartalom/carpathian-civil-society-platform>



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