

Happy villages - learning communities for sustainable change

different cultures, common challenges of small villages

Inspirations, new ideas, good practices – Czech, Polish and Galician examples

LOCAL HERITAGE

Local heritage plays very important role in building local identity. Unfortunately nowadays globalized, digitalized and in big part online reality does not create much space for working with heritage, passing knowledge about it in a way as it used to be passed, around family table. That is why initiatives, which help us to understand more the place we live in, are so important. They help us to understand who we are and they help us to put people together.

CULTURAL HERITAGE – OLD & NEW TRADITIONS

connecting neighbours while working together, involving all generations, making inhabitants proud of place they live in.

Masopust (Veselá, Czech Republic)

Association “Vesela vesnice o.s.” renewed tradition of Carnival in small village in central Bohemia after 71 years. Roles of masks and dramaturgy of a colorful event happening some weeks before Easter is based on stories of eyewitnesses, available literature and good practices observed in other local communities.

Celebration of Saint Barbara (Poboado Mineiro de Fontao, Galicia)

The neighbours association “A.A.V.V. Minas da Brea” renewed traditional festival of miners Santa Bárbara 40 years later. This festival was the most important in “wolfram times” currently it is spreading Fontao history and an opportunity for neighbors to interact in community.

Kaczawskie Warsztaty Artystyczne (Dobków, Poland)

Lower Silesia, where Dobków is situated is region of mixed cultures and identities, as nearly all of its inhabitants don't have there their roots, their families live there since 1945. That is why instead of renewing traditions “Stowarzyszenie Dobków” created a new tradition. Tradition of regional festival promoting local products, crafts and stories.

NATURAL HERITAGE – ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

better understanding for our local reality, rebuilding our connection with nature, understanding our environment..

Educational path (Dobków, Poland)

Dobków is situated in place of very unique geological and environmental character, which makes it perfect place for learning geology. This strength was used for development of educational path. Path is important both for visitors and for inhabitants. It helps them to understand better place they live in.

Common revitalization of public spaces (Veselá, Czech Republic)

Recent years promote rather individualistic approach, when everyone cares about his or her own “playground”. Simple common activities such as very basic revitalization of small park, or placing duck house (saving wild ducks from cats and foxes who attacked them around village lake) are examples of ways of making us care more about our common space.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE – ORAL HISTORY

houses, benches, trees, those in nowadays reality, and those on old photos have “their own stories” and the only way of discovering them is asking our neighbors..

Oral history archive (Poboado Mineiro de Fontao, Galicia)

New neighbors interviewed our old neighbors. Enthusiasts who were making interviews with help of script, with important fact about history of Fontao. Those audio interviews, together with interviews which were recorded before, now create “Oral history archive of Fontao”.

Roll game set in the history (Poboado Mineiro de Fontao, Galicia)

An interactive walk through “wolfram’s times” that help children and adults to understand better the history of Fontao. Experiencing it directly makes you understand history much more than reading it from books.

Living memory - educational path (Veselá, Czech Republic)

Walk through village, through stories of different places, houses. Walk during which information panels in shape of old decorated windows are sharing with us their stories. Recorded audio with stories of eyewitnesses can be as well heard through mp3 borrowed from local shop or online application.

Reconstruction of monuments, creation of public spaces (Veselá, Czech Republic)

Old, destroyed sculptures, monuments which were important for previous generations because of specific reason. Even if today their original message is not as relevant, their story can help us understand better our local community and become places where neighbours can meet and talk.

Power of family photos (Dobków, Poland)

Small activities with big meanings: exhibition of old photos, when neighbors can meet, talk, bring back memories, tell stories, or calendar in a form of “family album” with pictures and stories from our local community.

SELF ORGANISATION AND LEADERSHIP

meetings, discussions, facing challenges and celebrating successes, how can we support the community development process? what is participative leadership? what is crucial for community to develop?

- Regular meetings – and regular “reasons” to meet, for instance according to yearly cycle of traditions and celebrations
- Cooperation and communication cross generations
- Importance of impulse, leader, person who empowers others
- Role of leader: to find potential in others and to make them build up on their strengths
- Crucial for self organization within local community is well organized public space which creates opportunities for neighbours to meet – for instance benches (see partnership benches)
- Methods which can support selforganisation and effective participative leadership: Open space, Appreciative enquire, Technology of participation

IDEAS AND GOOD PRACTICES

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Not the one for people who “professionally” buy and sell antiques, but the one for neighbours, where everyone puts things found on attics, cellars, things that he or she does not need any more, and sells it for symbolic prize, or exchange it for something useful. Place where we can get rid of this what we do not need and where we can find something that we could use, and most of all, place for neighbours to meet and talk.

Time bank

Each of us knows “something”, each one can teach someone else. Older neighbour can teach us how to bake delicious apple pie, and we can pay back by teaching her how to use email box. Banks of time allow us to learn new things without “for free”, or rather through investment of time, which we need to teach someone something new. And most of all it allows us to get to know our neighbours.

Public piano and public chess

What if you could listen to someone playing piano while waiting at bus stop, or what if you could play yourself? What about playing chess with neighbours in local park? “Public” pianos and public chesses start to appear in bigger and smaller town and cities all over the World. They do not only make our reality more colourful, but most of all they are first step towards interaction with neighbours.