

Newsletter

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Activating community through projects – building a proactive community

Vera JOVANOVIĆ, Coordinator of the festival "Nušićijada"

Association of citizens KudeS started to work in 2008 with the idea to renew Nušićijada, a festival that used to be organized in Ivanjica in late sixties and early seventies in the previous century, and thus contribute to the cultural decentralization of Serbia which was considered so important by the founders that the festival was named after it. However, apart from the modelling of cultural decentralization, this festival also showed great potential to activate the community.

Started with the initiative of the several young people who gathered signatures of almost 4,000 citizens in a month – more than 10% of Ivanjica's total population, and since 2010 organised in partnership with the civil, public and private sector, the project of organizing this festival lasts much longer than a three-day collage of music, dance, performance, old city costumes and dimmed lights in the town of Ivanjica. Nušićijada is organized as a permanent, annual process with the crown being the three-day collage of artistic forms, but which at the same time equally deals with youth education, institutional capacity building, promotion throughout the country, as well as raising awareness about the importance of cultural development in the community, good governance, and good upbringing.

The festival has made a small Ivanjica big a long time ago, and brought closer famous names from movies, theatre, music, literature, etc. to each citizen. In four years, it hosted more than 110,000 people, organized 37 theatre plays, 24 concerts,

15 educational programmes, 11 exhibitions, and many other events. The festival won dozens of rewards and deserved the support from national and international institutions. However, Nušićijada remained our festival, the festival of the local community, people of Ivanjica and those who love Ivanjica. Why? Because they build the community and develop progress together with the community. And still, it grows in all aspects thanks to the progress of the community.

Involvement of the community became a feature so typical of this festival that, after many years of improvement in their own work, the organisers recognized the need to share the model they apply in their community with all those working on improvement in their own communities. However, by working on the project called "PROACTIVE Community*", they realized that the spectrum of projects to encourage, activate and involve the community goes much beyond cultural and tourism events and that proac-



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IN THIS ISSUE:

Quick Answers Office in Zrenjanin

International Summer Camp "Rezala 2014"

InTER News

tive attitude of a community can be built through any activity imaginable. The following lines summarise what has been elaborated in the manual produced by the mentioned project.

The project that can influence the activation of the community is primarily the one for which there is an objective need. Activation can only have a long term character if it is based on objective circumstances, and it is very important to analyse the need for a certain initiative and activity. It is also necessary that the project has an impact on a large and diverse target group. It is very important that the project includes elements which can be influenced, or even created by the community. Apart from the significance for the quality of the process, individuals and institutions will also be additionally motivated to be involved in a process if they can influence it or manifest their knowledge and skills. Finally, the complete effect in the community activation will be held by those projects that can be constantly improved and thus always offer new possibilities and initiatives for involvement of individuals and institutions.

It is not necessary to particularly emphasize that for a successful implementation of any project it is important to follow the rules of quality management, and those rules are even more important in a project with the ambition to activate a community. Each stage, from analysis through fundraising to evaluation, has to be tackled methodically and with quality if you expect to gain, build and maintain the trust of the community where you work.

Even though Nušićijada is prepared in the conditions that do not make it possible to strictly follow the rules of project management, there is no space for large organisational omissions, especially if we take in consideration the complex structure and numerous activities that have to be implemented at the same time – from programme selection through tourism and media promotion to coordination between teams and work groups.

Good management in these cases necessarily includes a special segment that is especially focused on community involvement. Volunteer programmes, local actions, public debates, joint plan-



The need for Nušićijada is not only shown in the mentioned petition which was citizens' direct influence on decision making of the local authorities, but also in the evaluations carried out each year. The festival's target group is large and heterogeneous, the organisational model encourages the community and asks for its opinion in all key issues, and the growing team is open for different profiles. Carefully built foundation is further developed every year, both in the aspect of organisation and programme.

ning, etc. are only some tools that will involve individuals and institutions and nourish their partnership.

Nušićijada supports educational programme for young volunteers that is implemented throughout the year, and which is used in practice by more than a hundred of them at the festival. The fields young people are taught about are numerous: volunteering, teamwork, promotion, project management, events, partnership and coopera-

tion, etc. and they can happen to be in the same group with a chief of police or a manager of the tourist organisation – representatives of institutions participating in capacity building. Local actions such as the traditional “Half way there” which includes hundreds of citizens through direct contact, conversation, surveys, radio shows, etc. contribute to active participation of a large part of the population.

Raising awareness is an important part of every project, and in projects with the goal to activate the community this segment is even more demanding. The community simply cannot be involved in something if it is not sufficiently informed about or if it is not aware of its role in the process. It is also important to raise awareness about the project through constant management of the availability of data so that stakeholders, target groups and actors can have all the information necessary to make opinions and attitudes about the project, make decisions about their involvement and create the system of values that will very often be more important than the financial framework and have the crucial role for the project’s sustainability. Modern communication channels make every promotion quite simple and effective.

Apart from extraordinary national media promotion, Nušičijada also organises an elaborate promotion within the local community. Website and social networks serve to regularly inform thousands of followers, and provide a constant invitation to participate. Each information about the festival is available to citizens, and trust is built as the most important capital. It is especially important to emphasize that a high level of trust is indicated in the continuous donations from local businesses.

Identification of the community with the project is the final stadium of long-term activation. It is an achievement that is the hardest to reach, but there is no satisfaction that can be compared to the understanding that your community sees your project as their own creation and their own success. Identification of the community with the idea you represent is the biggest source of joy, the most important link between differences, and the only guarantee that it will last.

The level of identification is not easily measurable through evaluation, but the indicators are the most different small steps that show the awareness and satisfaction brought by a joint project. For Nušičijadu, they are proposals for contents, advice for better organisation, efforts of parents to make the costumes for their children as pretty as possible, the news about existence of a small private archive of photos, a telegram of support from a business that could not attend the presentation.

Projects that can improve the quality of life in the community are various. They can all be short-term projects, bring certain progress, and not use the capacity of the community. However, many have the potential to become more than projects by involving and activating the community. They can become a permanent value in the community that developed with their support. ■

*** The project PROACTIVE Community - Community which Participates, takes Responsibility, uses Opportunities, nourishes Activism, values Team work, fosters dialogue with Institutions, stimulates Volunteerism and enables Education) Was supported by the European Partnership with Municipalities Programme, EU PROGRESS.**



Download the *Manual PROACTIVE Community*

First year of the Quick Answers Office

Author: Duško Radišić, Assistant Mayor, City of Zrenjanin

Problems with complicated procedures and long periods for obtaining construction permits prevent a faster progress of our country towards achieving better positions for destinations that are attractive for investment. In Zrenjanin, the priority in 2012 was to optimize these procedures. After 5 months of preparation, development of an optimal solution within the existing legislation, a Quick Answers Office of the City Administration of the City of Zrenjanin was opened on February 6, 2013, with the goal to enable an easier and faster communication and solution for citizens' and investors' requests.

The foundation for successful work was provided by optimizing the process of obtaining approvals from all institutions, necessary to obtain permits. A communication network was built between the Office and other institutions, optimal deadlines were defined, and the documents provided to clients containing the necessary information were optimized. Clients can complete the procedure in the Office by signing the consent that the Office staff can collect all the necessary documents on their behalf.

The Office is responsible for control of deadlines and interventions, with support from the Mayor's Office.

The Office was established to speed up the processes in the field of urban planning, but, due to a large number of requests from citizens, it also deals with issues that do not fall into that category. Providing all kind of information, referring clients to the right address, performing actions on behalf of clients, and providing assistance to Local Communities in the implementation of their projects are just a part of a broad scope of tasks the Office is happy to carry out on behalf of the citizens, and sometimes together with them. Questions and requests are submitted in one place, personally, on-line (website, e-mail), by phone (call, sms).

So far, more than 1000 of our citizens contacted us with questions, of which 200 in the field of urban planning. Solutions for several local problems were started on the requests made by citizens: Bagljas Canal (meetings between the city administration, directorate and water supply company, funds provided from the budget, a project for pump station is currently being prepared, for a complete permanent solution through piping), as well as the problem of water tower building downtown (3 meetings with all floor owners, funds planned for fire escape, 3 projects for stairs, permit provided for the power station on the location, EV prepared the project and started with construction of the power station).

The Office makes it possible for citizens and investors to obtain information about construction permits in a significantly shorter period of time. This primarily relates to information about location, location permit, approval for construction works, as well as obtaining of occupancy permit. Also, in cooperation with LED office, the Quick Response Office provides all information to local and foreign investors. Apart from information and following deadlines, the Office collects all the necessary documents to be enclosed with a request (conditions of public companies, copy of the plan and the real estate certificate by the Republic Geodetic Authority, etc.). When the documentation is complete, the client receives information about the deadline to solve the request, and the staff from the Quick Response Office follow previously defined procedures which are elaborated for different requests in order to provide a final solution as soon as possible. We kept our promise to establish the office, and work results in the first year are above expectations considering the scope of work.

There is certainly a lot of space to improve the work and establish stronger links with state institutions, which is a task we will work on this year.

The Office's system of work prevents the possibility for corruption because everything is done in one place which minimizes the number of potential places where it can appear, and more importantly, the periods of time to solve issues are shorter, and thus the need to pay for a service to be provided faster is cancelled. ■



Development of the Strategy for utilization of tourism potentials of the Begej Channel

InTER was contracted by the Regional Centre for Socio-Economic Development BANAT to provide technical assistance in the development of the Strategy for utilization of tourism potentials of the Begej Channel. Strategy development is implemented within the project: "Joint development of Romanian - Serbian Bega Channel tourism potential capitalization Study and promotion of cross - border foreground investments", jointly implemented by the Agency for Socio-Economic Development Timisoara (ADETIM), Regional Centre for Socio-Economic development Banat and Regional Chamber of Commerce Zrenjanin and funded from the CBC Romania-Serbia Programme.

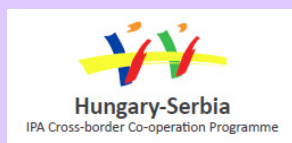
Strategy development includes the analysis of tourism and economic potentials of the Begej Channel on both sides of the border, as well as the definition of strategic development goals and priorities. InTER will include three experts in the strategy preparation: Dragiša Mijačić, dr Blagoje Paunović and Vera Jovanović, and the deadline for finalization of the document is December 1, 2014. ■

Seventh Task Force for Hungary – Serbia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

Within

the programming of the Hungary-Serbia Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2014 – 2020, the 7th Task Force meeting was organised.

Thematic priorities of the new programme were discussed at the meeting, and deadlines presented for the finalization of the Operational Programme. The meeting was held on Thursday, June 5, 2014 in Szeged. ■



Seminar "Evaluation of public policy"

Institute Alternativa from Podgorica invited InTER's Director Dragiša Mijačić to give a two-day lecture on "Evaluation of public policy" within the third module of the "School of public policy".

The seminar was organized on May 17 and 18, 2014 in the PR Centre in Podgorica. Report from the lecture can be found on the website <http://bit.ly/1lrtoLB>. ■



OUTDOOR In - Zubin Potok Tourism Development

InTER participated at the 447th International Fair of Tourism and Gastronomy in Novi Sad, on April 10- 14, 2014. At the fair, InTER participated with the project OUTDOOR In - Zubin Potok Tourism Development, where results and planned tourism activities in 2014 were presented.

In June, a mountaineering action "On the ridge of Mokra Gora mountain" was organised within the project, in cooperation with the mountaineering clubs "Gora" from Kragujevac and "Berim" from Zubin Potok. Report from the action in the magazine "Moja planeta". ■



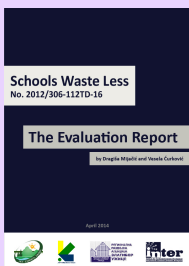
Policy brief: "Regional development: no good title or no clear vision"



Serbia got a Government with a stable majority. Prior to that, Serbian Parliament adopted the Law on Ministries, foreseeing 16 ministries. However, even though Serbia has the biggest regional differences in Europe, for the first time since 2007, the Government of the Republic of Serbia does not have a ministry of regional development. Policy Brief "Regional development: no good title or no clear vision" analyses the programme of the Government of Serbia in relation to issues relevant for regional development and provides recommendations to the key actors in this field.

The publication is in Serbian and English language and it is available on InTER website.
www.lokalnirazvoj.org

Evaluation of the project "Establishing the concept of primary waste selection in 28 schools in Užice and Tuzla"



Public Utility Company "Duboko" from Užice hired InTER to conduct the final evaluation of the project "Establishing the concept of primary waste selection in 28 schools in Užice and Tuzla", commonly known as "Schools Waste Less". The project was funded by EU IPA Cross-border cooperation Program between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and it was implemented in 28 primary and secondary schools in Užice and Tuzla. Evaluation was implemented in April 2014, and it included assessment of quality of project activities in both towns. On behalf of InTER, the evaluation was carried out by Dragiša Mijačić (team leader) and Dr. Vesela Ćurković (Team Member).

The publication is in Serbian and English language and it is available on InTER website.
www.lokalnirazvoj.org



International Summer Camp "Rezala 2014"

Within the project "OUTDOOR IN - Zubin Potok Tourism Development" financed by the European Union, the Municipality of Zubin Potok in cooperation with InTER is organising the 2nd International Summer Volunteering Youth Camp: "Rezala 2014".

Summer camp will be organised on the banks of Gazivode lake in the village Rezala, Municipality of Zubin Potok, in July 2014.

More information about the project or summer camp on the website: www.ibarski-kolasin.org



An EU funded project managed by the European Union office in Kosovo

Implemented by: Municipality of Zubin Potok in partnership with InTER

