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NEWSLETTER



Reviving of cultural heritage
Social and Economic Empowerment of
Rural Areas

INSIGHT SEMINAR OF RE-CULTURAL HERITAGE IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, SLOVAKIA

The insight seminar is one of the activities within the ERASMUS + project Reviving of cultural heritage: Social and Economic Empowerment of Rural Areas project took place from May 15 to 20, 2023, at the premises of Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. 20 foreign guests from Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Austria and Slovakia discussed various topics related to the protection and use of cultural heritage in rural and tourism development.



WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT?

The main aims of the insight seminar were:

- To exchange knowledge, experience and best practices in reviving the cultural heritage as an important driver of spatial development
- To strengthen and develop the innovative competences and skills of the participants in participative cultural heritage management
- To establish new contacts and partnerships in the field of cultural policy

During the week, the interesting and rich program was prepared for the participants. It included discussions, where participants presented examples of good practice from their countries in the areas of culture as a part of sustainable tourism; tangible and intangible heritage and institutional power and cooperation in cultural heritage policy.

The participants presented case studies from countries and discussed several issues mostly from practical point of view and found out to answer the question

“How can be cultural heritage a part of the sustainable spatial development?” The strategies and examples on how is possible to use cultural heritage specifically in tourism development of Banská Bystrica region, were presented by representatives of Regional Destination Management Organization “Zahorami zadolami”.

As the second important part of the insight seminar week, the field trips were organised. They included a discussion with representatives of the Centre for Independent Culture Záhřada.

Discussion with representatives of the Passage Theatre and tours of selected museums in the city of Banská Bystrica, namely Thurzo’s House, Thurzo Fugger innovative and interactive presentation, visit of Slovenská Ľupča Castle and a discussion with the manager of Local Action Group – an association increasing (not only) a spatial development including the restoration of the cultural heritage.



The program of the insight seminar was ended by the official certificate awarding ceremony and special dances of national music hits.



GOOD PRACTICE IN INSTITUTIONAL POWERS AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS THE CENTRE OF INDEPENDENT CULTURE - ZÁHRADA IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, SLOVAKIA

Active citizens and artists in Banská Bystrica created a unique cultural and community point, The Garden – the Centre of Independent Culture (CIC). It was officially established by active citizens and artists in Banská Bystrica as a unique cultural and community point in 2010. It is a non-profit organization that first existed as an informal community of artists, cultural managers, and volunteers.

The dominant feature of the center is a fruit garden serving as a public park as well as a place for meeting, exhibitions or concerts. The premises, where Záhrada is located, went through several phases of reconstruction, mostly managed by volunteers and financially supported through donations, crowdfunding, but also through financial support from the Norwegian funds. The centre premises located in the historic centre serve as a multifunctional theatre studio with an open dramaturgy, as well as a relaxation zone.

The Záhrada Cultural Centre is currently a fully established organization in Slovakia and abroad as well as a co-founding member of an association Antena – Network for Independent Culture in Slovakia. It is managed by a professional working team (6-10 persons).

The main purpose of Záhrada is to implement the educational, creative and artistic activities aimed at support of democracy, human rights, marginalized groups rights, fight against extremism or other negative features in society. It provides the space for contemporary art in the form of theatre and dance performances, concerts, festivals, and exhibitions, as well as its own artistic production and education. The part of the centre is a café, that is a partial source of own centre revenues.

In addition to creative and artistic activities, the Záhřada is an island of positive deviance and a platform for many human rights events and civic activism. Záhřada is one of a key partner Human Forum initiative, what is a set of educational and population activities aimed at democracy, human rights, fight against extremism or other negative features in society.

It is also a home stage of the Municipal Theater - Divadlo z Pasáže (Theatre from the Passage), which was established in 1995 as the only professional community theatre in Slovakia working with people with special needs. There is also a strong focus on cooperation with the other marginalized groups as refugees, persons with weak social background, or persons from the LGBTI+ community, person with different religion or nationality. The specific attention is paid also to the events focused on children and families to support the community solidarity and self-realization.



<https://www.zahradacnk.sk/zahrada>

During 12 years of existence, Záhřada organized more than 1800 events, hosted more than 40 artists' residence stays and co-productions. The offer of Záhřada is wide. It includes the alternative, dance, theater, electronic, music events, events for children, stand-up comedy, workshops, lectures, etc.

Among popular activities belongs also the organization of local hand-made trade market supporting the local creative producers or SWAP events aimed at the exchange of fashion clothes or plants, pub quizzes etc. The activities of Záhřada are mainly financed by the projects (Erasmus +, Slovak Arts Council; Norwegian funds, Visegrad Funds, etc.), so it means that the sustainability of Záhřada is based on multisource financing and volunteering.

To the main factors that influence the development of Záhřada belong a strong initiative from down, the need to defend the interests of democratic society, especially artists and marginal groups. Záhřada is an excellent example how to become a prosperous cultural (but not only) institution based on the volunteering activities and community initiatives supported by cultural managers and artists. It has a strong position as a partner in local development activities as well as the representative of community itself.

The success of Záhřada is based on the well-established cooperation with the Municipal Theater - Divadlo z Pasáže (Theatre from the Passage) engaging the disabled people. The theater does not have own space for performances, so Záhřada provides them their own premises and other necessary support for organizing performances.

The main offer of Záhřada is an organization of special oriented events aimed at marginal groups (PRIDE BB, beneficial concert for the supporting the partner city in Ukraine, and other)



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