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The Backyard Marketplace of the Hungarian Community House in Vel'ké Kapusany

1. Best practice selection criteria

The Backyard Marketplace of the Hungarian Community House in Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) is a good example of developing the economy on the basis of culture and proves what binding force culture has in the lives of local communities. The slogan written on the gate of the backyard marketplace – “I eat local produce from local producers, keeping what's local in mind” – expresses this cooperation and co-dependence very well.

2. Organization(s) / person(s) the best practice can be related to

Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) and Environs Association is the owner as well as operator of the Hungarian Community House of Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos), the think tank of the Uzh Region (Ung-vidék). In the past 15 years the institution has put in place several developments serving the preservation and reinforcement of the Hungarian population of the Uzh region (Ung-vidék):

- The Hungarian community house has been added an up-to-date adult training centre, a library named after László Mécs and a weaving workshop and houses the seats of 11 Hungarian civil organizations including Herczegh Károly Foundation established by Géza and Melinda Herczegh and Rákóczi Network, considered a high-priority institution at the national level.
- For Hungarian students living in villages situated in the periphery of the Uzh region (Ung-vidék) where there are no Hungarian educational institutions to attend, there is a Sunday school operating at the institution on a monthly basis.
- On occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Hungarian community house the Association published a paper under the title “MAGYARHÁZ” (Hungarian House), which has since then been published quarterly, reporting on the life of the Hungarian community of the Uzh region (Ung-vidék).

- In the past few years, Erdélyi János Memorial Museum has been added to the Hungarian Community House in Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) which, beyond János Erdélyi commemorates other outstanding personalities related to the region like László Mécs, Csaba Skultéty, Géza Herczegh and Lajos Géczy.

In view of the success of the developments implemented the institution concluded that it was worthwhile attempting to give a stimulus to the economy of the region – primarily for producers living from traditional agriculture – based on Hungarian culture. This is how the plan of a backyard marketplace came into being.

3. Stakeholders and beneficiaries of the best practice

- Various age groups in the population of the local and nearby villages
- Small-scale farmers

4. Objectives and activities of the best practice

Producers' market days are organically based on the services provided by the cultural organizations operating at the Hungarian Community House. In practice this means that the children's dance group, the choir and the women's weaving club prepare programmes for the Sundays and they offer these programmes, while introducing their produce, to visitors of the producers' market, thus revoking traditional folk attires as well as local traditions are all included in the Sunday programmes. In addition to having the opportunity to buy the produce and products of local small-scale producers, visitors can meet and have a taste of the lives and repertoire of local Hungarian cultural groups as well as meet the handicraft products of local craftsmen since, in the market place, toolmakers, basket weavers and other craftsmen offer their products for sale.

As there is an established community of agricultural producers in the Uzh region (Ung-vidék) already, "producers' Sundays" can be held regularly /twice a month initially/ at the part of the yard of the Hungarian community house arranged for this purpose, which significantly contributes to the development of local family farms. Marketable products include honey, milk, Mangalica swine products, eggs, chicken – all these, since the opinion poll conducted by the association proved that there was demand for family-farm

produced, home-made healthy products in Vel'ke Kapsany (Nagykapos) as well and producers, too, had the demand for selling their products locally. After working out the technical plans Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) and Environs Association submitted an application to Bethlen Gábor Fund for setting up the Backyard Marketplace. The application was approved and implementation began. The most important aspect in the implementation was to use natural materials where possible as well as to apply as many symbols based on Hungarian traditions and past as possible so as to strengthen the local community. Since the marketplace was established on the backyard of the institution it was a very important aspect that the space arranged could accommodate the widest range of community events possible and that the local culture and the local economy could be represented simultaneously.

The market stalls, for instance, are named after Hungarian historical personalities /e.g. King Matthias, Maria Theresia, etc./ with the dates of their reign also displayed on them, so that people visiting the market will have access to and ultimately learn, playfully and unintentionally, certain information related to Hungarian history. Market days always start with a cultural block whereby local cultural ensembles have the chance to demonstrate culture to social groups who probably have little access to it anywhere else.

Public personalities, too, are invited to the Sundays, who thus have the opportunity to meet representatives of cultural life from the Uzh region (Ungvidék) as well as the target group of small-scale agricultural producers and get a lot of feedback and opinions from customers as well, which they can utilise in their work later on. The market day of the Backyard Marketplace has been attended by several distinguished guests like State Secretary Responsible for National Policy Árpád János Potápi, Prime Ministerial Commissioner Katalin Szili, Melinda Herczegh, while the mayors of Vel'ke Kapusany (Nagykapos) and other settlements in the neighbourhood are always among the customers, too.

It is nice and encouraging for the organizers of the market that both performers and sellers increasingly frequently wear traditional Hungarian folk attire.

5. Area(s) affected by the best practice

Small-scale farm produce, backyard market selling small-scale farm produce

6. Territorial scope of the best practice

The Uzh region (Ung-vidék) and within that Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) specifically is one of the economically most disadvantaged Hungarian-inhabited regions in the Slovakian Upper Hungary. In view of this the management of Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) and Environs Association decided, beyond organizing community life, to attempt to invigorate the Hungarian economic space as well. Building on the positive examples of the past eras this can be done by no other means than by stimulating agricultural production; reinforcing Hungarian small-scale agricultural production while enhancing Hungarian culture.

7. The conditions (human, financial, technical) required for the best practice

Human: organizer of the background marketplace; licensed producers displaying and selling products; persons/experts responsible for information dissemination

Financial: costs of arranging the marketplace (landscaping, stalls), organizer's and expert's fees

Technical: marketplace space, stalls, washrooms

8. Results and short-, mid- and long-term impact of the best practice

As the area of the Backyard Marketplace is also a property of Vel'ké Kapusany (Nagykapos) and Environs Association, this market for small-scale farm produce is able to provide selling opportunity for small-scale producers in the long run, thereby creating a community of agricultural producers in the Uzh region (Ung-vidék), and there is also opportunity for further development since, by joining their own professional clusters, farmers will be able to contribute to the economic rise of the Uzh region (Ung-vidék) in future. The establishment and development of family farms will positively influence young people's entrepreneurial spirit, help reduce emigration and create a basis for culture-based economy.

9. Sustainability of the best practice

Producers' interest in selling and the availability of visitors to/buyers at the backyard marketplace ensure the sustainability of the marketplace in the long run.

10. Adaptability of the best practice

Considering that a backyard marketplace can be established anywhere with minor investment, it is easy to adapt. In addition to its roles in invigorating the economy and thereby creating and preserving workplaces it has several additional benefits, too, e.g. it mobilises the local community, enlarges the local cooperation network, reinforces local identity and renews urban-rural relations.

