



**'Local endogenous development and urban regeneration
of small alpine towns'**

Project Final Conference

16. - 17. September 2006

PRA' CATINAT – FENESTRELLE - TORINO

WORKPACKAGE 6

Services and quality of life

***DRAFT OF THE FINAL PRESENTATION
OF THE WP CO-ORDINATOR***

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1. Introduction

The first aim of this WP was to promote integrated and sustainable development processes by a participatory process. The WP focused on a long-term endogenous development based on resources of the local economical system. It produced models of intervention of transnational problems providing transferable solutions as bottom-up strategies with the help of external experts and neutral moderators. The SSC experts evaluated the case studies and gave recommendations to the involved partners.

2. AlpCity Project Overview: WP 6– “Services and quality of life”

In this work package 7 pilot cases were made by 3 partners (Municipality of Grainau, Region of Piemonte and Region of Niederoesterreich).

Each partner coordinated his own cases, ensured the trans-national interest and regularly report at meetings. General guidance was devised and disseminated.

Municipality of Grainau

Main activities:

1. Tourism: Strengthening competitiveness of Grainau by cross-sectoral improvement of service quality with focus on the tourism sector

Strengthening one of the most relevant economic sectors for Grainau was done by initiating a participatory process with experts and local stakeholders. Establishing of different work groups (families & children, nature & sport, wellness) in order to ensure sustainable (economical, ecological and social) development and preserve/provide jobs in the community as well as improve quality of life for inhabitants and guests as well as enable economic development

2) Hiking trails through Grainau
planning process with experts

- a) Geological hiking trail
- b) Field name trail
- c) Adventure trail for families

3) Zugspitz-Card

Due to the public traffic in the region, it is urgently necessary to introduce a standardized card for all the public traffic and for the sights in Grainau and its surroundings.

4) Children exchange Grainau - Torino
July, 2006 and February 2007

The students of Grainau and Torino, in the age of 9-10 years will visit the capital of the Region Piemonte or the village of Grainau. The Grainauer pupil visited Turin from the 03. till 08.07.2006. The children of Turin will visit Grainau from 17.-24.02.2007. They will discover the differences in living at a town and in the mountains.

Achieved results:

1) The Workshops generated an extensive accumulation of ideas. First of them have been already realized. Others are still in progress. The change in the way of thinking of the local stakeholders has started. First improvements (service quality, product innovations, bundling energies for marketing, generation of a “common way of thinking” etc.) are becoming visible.

However, the process has to be continued!

2) Hiking trails

a) The geological hiking trail is finished

b) The field name trail will be finished during spring 2007.

c) The adventure trail for families will be finished during spring 2007.

3) Zugspitz-Card

The preparations for the ZugspitzCard are final. The conversion will take place after conclusion of the AlpCity project. The Start is 01.05.2007. Also into the decision merged were local stakeholders and the one from the region. The municipality Grainau expects with the start of the ZugspitzCard project, that still further municipalities of the district will take part on the project.

4) Children exchange

Grainau children visited Turin from 03.-08.2006 and the Turin Children will come to Grainau from 17.-24.02.2007.

Lessons learned:

The public-private-partnership principle is conducted in this project. One of the factors of success was the assignment of an external consultant as a moderator. A neutral person enabled to mediate and communicate the impressions, requirements, and wishes objectively between local stakeholders and the municipality.

Problems occurred regarding the motivation of people to participate and actively join, contribute and support the work-process.

The main focus must be set on sustainable continuation of the process.

Niederoesterreich

Main activities:

2 networks were established (1. network youth and 2. network multimedia libraries)

Information was given to the cities with active public libraries and politicians or young people with the offer to take part in the project. In introductory workshops the specific goals of the network were set and because of the interest of the partners the implementation of educational workshops was done.

1 symposium was held in October 2005 (libraries), 1 will be held in November 2006 (youth).

Achieved results:

1. Network Youth

Six cities became real partners in exchanging experiences and know how concerning youth-topics in small towns.

The network has six permanent member-cities, although many more cities and partners in Niederoesterreich expressed interest in taking part of a prosecution of the network youth! Youth-congress is now in preparation (autumn 2006)

2. Network multimedia libraries

In the participating towns, the role of the libraries was more put into focus. Krems will soon build new rooms for their public library.

At the moment, the network has only two permanent members, although many more libraries expressed interest in taking part.

Lessons learned:

1. Network Youth

Networking is widely regarded as a very important and needed thing.

Especially building up a network takes time. Therefore a coordinator is needed, who can work only for that particular project. Long term aims have to be gained and defined, so a going on of coordination is needed. Networking needs a constant and longer-lasting coordination as the partners are clear.

The participants in the network have to see their personal advantages for getting active. This takes time and much work.

Especially on the political level, politicians have to be involved too. Youth is a very important subject in regions (villages, towns), as this target group is the future generation!

2. Network multimedia libraries

Especially on the political level, it will be important to break up the image of the old style libraries with little old ladies taking care of them, but to position the library as an active and important access point to education and science.

The full usage of new media is limited because there is a lack of technical skills with many people.

The goal of eight participating libraries was missed, not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of personnel resources with the libraries involved.

Piemonte

Main activities:

Starting from the consideration that mountain schools are becoming smaller and smaller because of the diminishing number of pupils, the project is aimed at giving attractive contents and activities to traditional schools, so creating a new and innovative model linked to the mountain environment. The enhancement of professional competences, sports, environmental and local culture, informatics and foreign (as well as minority) languages will be some of the core activities. The school is proposed as a residential College open all year around, offering also, beyond the lessons, a centre for sports, laboratories and cultural events.

Achieved results:

The following steps have been implemented:

- identification of the area/schools for the carrying out of the case study
- involvement of the Park of the Maritime Alps as case study coordinator
- drafting of a strategy and a work plan for the collaboration among Piedmont Region, the Park of the Maritime Alps, University of Turin and local actors and stakeholders
- collection of documents and data concerning the situation, priorities and challenges of schools in mountain areas (e.g. referring to the book 'Le scuole di montagna in Piemonte', Edmond Le Monnier ed., 2004)
- preliminary research for Best Practices related to educational innovative initiatives in Piedmont's mountain areas.
- a survey (e.g. questionnaires and focus groups) among the local population and stakeholders has confirmed objectives and results: families from Entracque and Valdieri were asked to express their schooling needs and the reasons of their abandonment of the valley
- different meetings with key local stakeholders such as the representatives of local administrations, representatives of the Mountain Regional Council Department, the Provincial Educational Office of Cuneo
- hypothesis for an innovative model of an International mountain school integrated to the revitalisation of the territory and based on the sense of belonging
- preliminary financial study and plan of work for the recovery of existent schools/buildings as well as hypothesis related to the most appropriate legal basis for the proposed international mountain schools

Lessons learned:

The most encouraging result is the interest and support from the local population (often sceptical) and institutions at different levels (region, province and local administrations).

Actually, the most relevant information and hints in terms of ideas for future activities came from the local population and families (local survey).

It became clear that for the revitalisation of the local territory is crucial to foster innovative approaches and initiatives, to invest, support and empower young people in terms of job creation and training as well as foster projects integrated to the local territory but open to other initiatives at a wide level (e.g. trans-national), and able to involve different actors and promote a long term perspective (need for a vision).

Through the pilot case design and implementation new forms of relationships between public institutions and citizens have been exploited. For the mountain population, often sceptical, it represented an important starting point for being actively involved into a project having in mind the future of the valley.

3. Common aspects

The involved partners understood that the best way to achieve their goal is to promote networking and participatory processes, involving people and local actors in order to build common consensus and interest.

As for the common aspects, the red lines that link the pilot cases of this WP there are two aspects we can find in each pilot case:

- the effort to increase public-private partnership in the field of planning by participatory process
- the effort to improve the transparency of the making of decisions and the sustainable continuation of these process

Other common aspects of the pilot cases are the following:

- improvement of the quality of the process;
- setting up of efficient networking and collaboration among local actors to integrate and enhance local initiatives;
- the importance of long-term projects and sustainable processes;
- the positive role of external experts and consultants as neutral moderators.

4. Final considerations

The process of coordination and of exchange of lessons learned is linked with much work but worth to be done. The trans-national approach of Alpcity in the Interreg 3b Alpine Space Programme is not only a good opportunity to evaluate the own national way of work, but also to compare with other regions and to learn from each other. So similar problems of small alpine towns can be solved in a better, faster and more effective way.

Due to different political and administrative structures the transferability of the experiences may vary, but each partner can learn much about the solutions of the others and adopt the process, maybe partially, to its own system.

One of the most important lessons learned is the fact, that such a huge network of 11 partners spread over 5 states of Europe only can be successful if there is will for cooperation between all partners and a competent lead partner. The international success of the project Alpcity is caused by the excellent work of all partners and especially of the lead partner, the Region of Piemonte.

Therefore let me say to all of you, many thanks for your efforts and your patience with all partners!