

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# Community events and participatory approach

## RurALL D2.2.1

**Daniela Fuchs, Maddalena Lamura and Amira al Meklef (Centre for  
Social Innovation, ZSI/Austria) and  
Petra Peternel and Brigita Horvat (Zavod PIP/Slovenia)**



# Index

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Adaptations of the CEP (O1.2)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Workshops results</b>	<b>5</b>
Beltinci/Slovenia	5
Bystřice/ Czech Republic	8
Eberau/Austria	11
Comuna Hodod/Romania	14
Mojkovac/Montenegro	16
Jelšava / Slovakia	18
Opština Despotovac/Serbia	20
Božići – Jelička/Bosnia and Herzegovina	22
Primorje-Gorski Kotar County/Croatia	24
Sandanski/Bulgaria	26
Sárvár/Hungary	28
<b>Evaluation framework for the community engagement workshops</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Annex</b>	<b>34</b>



# Introduction

Deliverable 2.2.1 “Community events and participatory approach” (hereinafter D.2.2.1) provides an overview of Activity 2.2 “Giving new function to dwellings and renovation ideas by implementing community engagement activities” (Piloting).

As the Proposal states, D.2.2.1 will summarize partners’ efforts on community engagement: “According to a transnationally developed approach territorial partners will implement community engagement events where they will ensure critical mass of citizen/experts and identify ideas for dwellings renovation. Simultaneously, transnational exchange of ideas will be implemented”.

Activity 2.2 implements the Community Engagement Plan (Output 1.2) and thus covers community engagement activities in the 11 regions (Beltinci/ Slovenia, Eberau/ Austria, Sárvár/Hungary, Bystřice/ Czech Republic, Jelšava/ Slovakia, Comuna Hodod/Romania, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County / Croatia, Prijedor/Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mojkovac/ Montenegro, Sandanski/Bulgaria, Opština Despotovac/Serbia) involved in the RurALL project.

Based on Activity 2.1 1 Identification and mapping of dwellings (piloting), partners organized community engagement activities to create new visions of livable communities and the role of deteriorating dwellings therein, together with residents and interested people. These ideas are planned to eventually translate into three detailed Design Ideas per community, one for residential (private), commercial and public function in each community, as well as twenty basic Design Ideas. The detailed ideas are developed further, while the basic ideas showcase potential renovations and new uses. Moreover, Activity 2.2 is closely intertwined with the Transnational network of rural communities and experts (Activity 1.3), which constitutes a phase in the RurALL community engagement strategy according to the Community Engagement Plan (CEP, Activity and Output 1.2).

If you are interested in the overall outline of the RurALL community engagement strategy, please see Output 1.2 (Community Engagement Plan). Here, we suggested an overall methodology for community engagement. This deliverable only summarizes important changes to the original Community Engagement Plan (Output 1.2).

However, as the regions in the RurALL project are very different regarding a lot of factors (from size to political structure) and therefore have different requirements towards community engagement, the project opted for a flexible engagement approach. Partners were allowed to adapt the proposed methods and even select a different approach if it seemed more feasible to them. In addition, MOBA HOUSING SCE (PP 14) has organized a 2-hour online workshop on February 14, 2025, on participatory planning to provide a hands-on inspiration for project partners on how to integrate architectural requirements and community engagement long-term (e.g., in the actual building process) (Annex).

Thus, D2.2.1 presents partner's collected experiences and the results of the first part of the community engagement. To ensure the quality of the process, the RurALL project implemented an external evaluation of the second workshops of the community engagement (Design Thinking Sprint), whose results are presented as well.

The final design ideas that are being developed in Activity 2.2 will be presented in Output 2.2.

# Adaptations of the CEP (O1.2)

The Community Engagement Plan (CEP; Output 1.2) provides an overall outline on the suggested engagement process of the RurALL project. However, as it set out to accommodate also other activities (Transnational Expert Network, Activity 1.3, Business Model Development, Activity 2.3), which evolved as the project progressed, the community engagement plan was adapted to fit the project's needs. Especially the foreseen structure of the transnational expert network and the development of the business models underwent minor changes. The adaptations are shown in the flowcharts below, Figure 1 and 2.

## **Consultancy by the transnational expert network**

The original plan included on one-on-one consultancy opportunities for each partner and expert. Instead, now the online meetings address specific topics (Design, Business Models, Multi-stakeholder governance model). Partners receive expert input on these topics (presentations) and then have the opportunity for individual consultancy in break-out sessions with experts to discuss the challenges regarding their own renovation ideas. These consultancies happen based on templates to collect questions ahead of the meeting and PP1 assigning territorial partners and communities to experts, who are specialized in the collected questions. The overall number of parallel sessions was reduced. A detailed description will be provided in D2.2.2.

## **Business model development**

Rather than having two online meetings to develop business models, a live face-to-face workshop with the respective communities was favored.

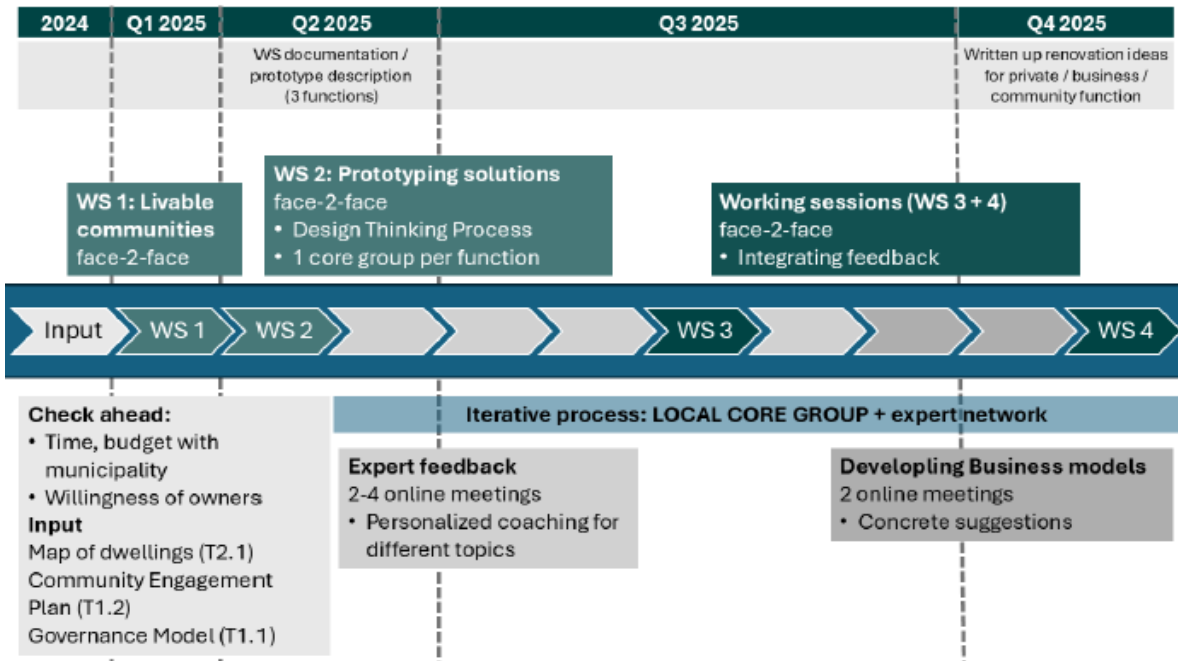


Figure 2: The original RurALL engagement process as outlined in the CEP (Output 1.2), p. 30.

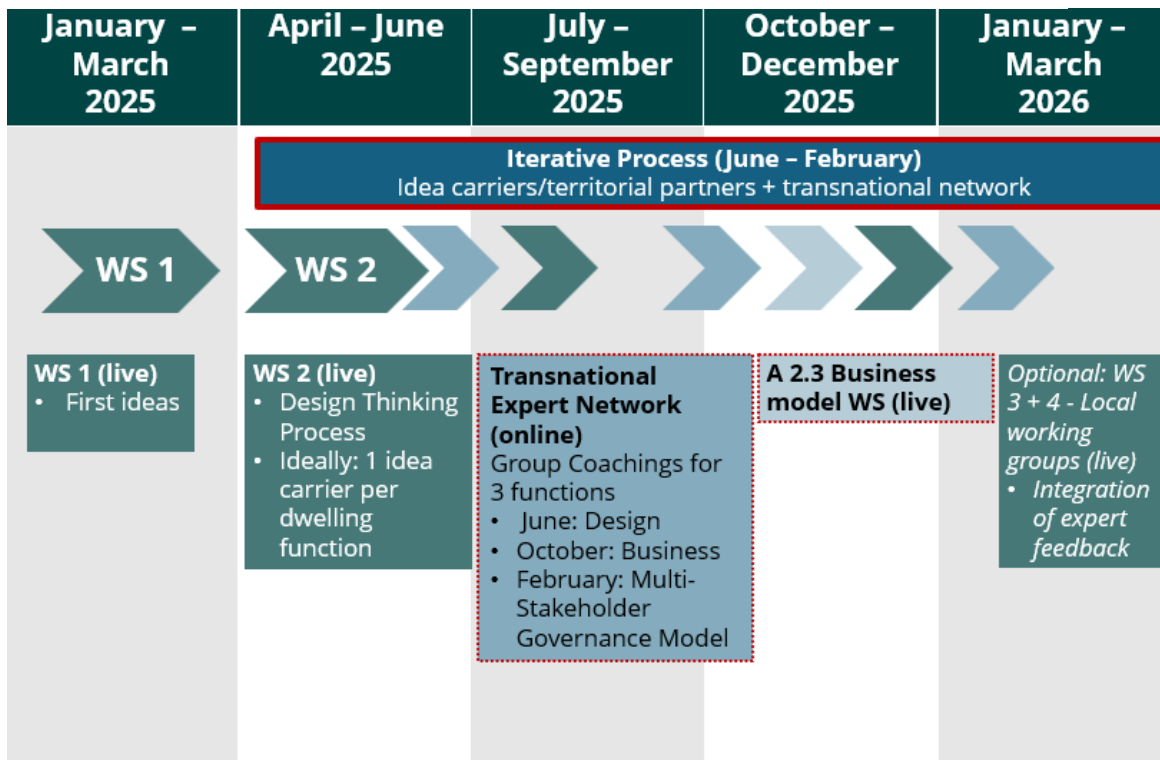


Figure 1: The adapted community engagement plan, integrating Activity 2.2, 1.3 and 2.3.

The detailed methods of the transnational expert network engagement and the business model development can be found in the respective deliverables (Deliverable 1.3 and Deliverable 2.3).

# Workshops results

## Beltinci/Slovenia

### Workshop 1 – Hidden Potentials of Our Buildings

The workshop Hidden Potentials of Our Buildings, held on May 27, 2025, in Beltinci, was one of the key activities carried out within the RurALL project at the local level, in the pilot area of the Municipality of Beltinci. The event aimed to identify community needs related to housing and spatial use, and to explore new ideas and possibilities for the revitalisation of deteriorating dwellings or buildings with potential.

Residents, building owners, representatives of associations, public institutions, and other organisations operating in the municipality, potential investors, and all those interested in co-creating the community space were invited to attend.

The event began with introductory remarks from the Lead Partner (LP1 – Municipality of Beltinci), who presented the broader context of demographic decline and highlighted the importance of reactivating deteriorating dwellings. This was followed by a welcome speech by the Mayor, Mr. Marko Virag, who emphasized the transformative potential of vacant buildings – as opportunities for revitalisation rather than as symbols of population decline.

The project team presented the main objectives and challenges of the RurALL project, including population decline, an increasing number of underused buildings, and the need for innovative multi-stakeholder governance of such structures.

This was followed by a presentation of the building mapping activity conducted in the municipality. The team explained the methodology used to identify vacant or deteriorating buildings – based on public records, fieldwork, and cooperation with local stakeholders – and described several challenges encountered, such as difficulties in locating or contacting property owners. The presentation concluded with an overview of findings: the number and spatial distribution of mapped buildings, the reasons why buildings are vacant and photographic documentation and basic data shown via projection.

Participants then took part in a needs analysis by splitting into smaller working groups to discuss local housing challenges. Each group reflected on both individual and collective needs, such as

housing for various target groups, spaces for associations, facilities for social services, or infrastructure for tourism and local businesses.

After presenting their findings on community needs, participants engaged in group work focused on collecting proposals for new functions and uses for vacant buildings. Using a “gallery of buildings” with photos and descriptions, each group selected certain mapped buildings and proposed potential new uses or functions aligned with the previously identified needs of the community. These proposed functions were then presented to the plenary.

The discussions revealed a broad range of possible reuses, grouped into three main categories:

- Commercial use: tourist accommodations (hostels and other lodging for cyclists, visitors attending cultural events, and others), agri-tourism farms, and workshops for traditional crafts
- Private/Residential use: affordable housing for young people and families, protected housing for vulnerable groups, shared housing for the elderly, and housing for foreign workers
- Public use: coworking and learning spaces, multipurpose community halls, association meeting rooms, and day centres for the elderly

The workshop clearly demonstrated both the existing potential of vacant buildings and the community's interest to bring them back to life as important spaces for the future.

The event concluded with a summary of the outcomes and an outline of the next steps, including the selection of three buildings for more in-depth exploration and the announcement of a second workshop with the local community.

## **Workshop 2 – Together for a New Life of Buildings**

Second Workshop – Together for a New Life of Buildings, aimed at engaging the local community in the pilot area of the Municipality of Beltinci, was held on June 11, 2025, at the Beltinci Castle. The workshop was organized with the goal of developing concrete proposals for the revitalization of three selected deteriorating dwellings (dwellings with potential) identified during the first phase of the RurALL project.

Based on data on the condition of the buildings and their former function, we worked together with participants to explore meaningful new functions for residential, community/public, or commercial use. During the workshop, we developed concrete ideas on how the buildings could be renovated, who they should serve, how they should be managed, and how the new functions could contribute to community development.

The event welcomed citizens, building owners, representatives of associations, institutions, and other organizations active in the municipality, potential investors, and anyone interested in co-creating the local community space.

The event was opened by the Lead Partner (LP – Municipality of Beltinci), who welcomed the participants and presented the purpose of the workshop – to co-create meaningful and feasible functions for deteriorating dwellings. The mayor, Mr. Marko Virag, also welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of community involvement in realizing these ideas.

Participants introduced themselves and shared whether they were attending the workshop as property owners, residents, association members, potential investors, or representatives of the municipality or institutions.

The workshop began with a summary of the outcomes of the first workshop, where the community's shared vision to transform abandoned buildings into valuable resources or infrastructure for supporting economic services, tourism, housing, and community services in the municipality was highlighted.

Jožef Ferčak, president of the Lipa local community, presented a local initiative connected to the old school building (Lipa 135). For this building, which was included in the mapping process of the RurALL project, a new function was already co-developed with the local community – the building could be used as a hostel for cyclists, hikers and others. The presentation included the current condition of the building, community needs, the renovation planning process, and the proposed future use.

This was followed by the development of concrete proposals for building revitalization. The work took place in three working groups, each focusing on one of the buildings identified as building with potential. The idea, raised during the first workshop, to focus on buildings in public, municipal ownership was taken into account. Each group received information folders with photos, spatial data, parcel maps, and a worksheet covering six thematic areas: new functions/program content, space and functionality, management model, partnerships, community impact, and funding opportunities. With the support of facilitators, participants developed creative yet realistic proposals for each location, based on the needs of the local community.

### **Building 1: Beltinci, Mladinska ulica 26**

Proposed as a multifunctional community space for local associations and intergenerational activities. Suggested uses include sports (e.g., bowling), cultural events, and workshops. Renovation ideas include functional interior remodeling, a covered terrace, and a landscaped outdoor area. The building could be managed by the municipality or local associations. Expected impacts: greater social cohesion, intergenerational cooperation, and a livelier community life. Potential funding sources: EU and national funds, Eko Fund, sponsorships, and event-generated income.

## **Building 2: Beltinci, Ravenska ulica 15**

Proposed as a creative and cultural center offering artist residencies, traditional lifestyle experiences, culinary workshops, and outdoor events. A special emphasis was placed on preserving Pannonian architectural heritage. The center could be managed by ZTKŠ Beltinci or another cultural institution, possibly through a public-private partnership. Potential partners include artists, local associations, and regional cultural organizations. The developed idea includes cultural revitalization, heritage preservation, tourism development, and economic stimulation.

## **Building 3: Lipovci 2, Lipovci**

Envisioned as a day or intergenerational center for courses, workshops, art colonies, and social events, with designated spaces for local community activities. Proposals include modernizing the interior, arranging outdoor recreational areas, and improving accessibility (e.g., ramps, solar panels). Management could be handled by local associations and the local community council. The building would serve diverse user groups and contribute to lifelong learning, social cohesion, and rural revitalization. Funding sources: Eko Fund, sponsorships, and public funds at various levels.

Each group presented its proposals in a plenary session, demonstrating an understanding of local needs, creative programming ideas, and models for financing and partnerships. The workshop marked a transition from conceptual mapping to concrete proposals, forming the basis for the next phase of the RurALL project.

# **Bystřice/ Czech Republic**

## **Workshop 1 – Liveable Bystrice**

The first RurALL workshop in Bystřice focused on the question: *How can our community stay livable and worth living in?* The workshop brought together residents, local officials, and other stakeholders to think about how abandoned or underused buildings could be brought back to life for the benefit of the town.

The discussions were split into three main themes: commercial use, residential use, and community use.

### **Commercial use:**

The hottest topic here was the old bakery at Bystřice 33. Many residents would love to see it return to its original role as a bakery, but the owner wasn't open to selling or reopening it. On top of that, the site has environmental problems like asbestos that would make redevelopment tricky. Still, people floated alternative ideas such as turning it into a gym or a clubhouse for local associations. Overall, there's a clear need for more commercial and semi-commercial spaces that contribute to everyday life, but financial and ownership hurdles remain.

**Residential use:**

This group looked at abandoned buildings that could be turned into housing. Proposals covered a range of needs: starter flats for disadvantaged groups, shared “community apartments” with common facilities, and regular housing for families and individuals. Specific properties were mentioned, such as old schools, station houses, or granaries, that could be adapted. The key focus was affordability and inclusivity—ensuring that people of different backgrounds can find a place to live without being priced out. Ideas also included applying for EU and national funding, exploring “rent-to-own” models, and even cooperative housing managed by groups of citizens.

**Community use:**

Although less detailed in the notes, the community group suggested turning unused buildings into spaces for culture, education, and public life—things like multifunctional halls, cultural centers, or spaces for youth and social services. The emphasis was on creating hubs that would bring people together, strengthen social bonds, and provide opportunities for learning and leisure. Practical suggestions included involving NGOs, local associations, schools, and volunteers in both the renovation and the ongoing use of these places.

**Revitalizing unused resources:**

Across all groups, there was strong agreement that old, abandoned buildings are an opportunity rather than a burden. For commercial uses, partnerships with entrepreneurs and even business incubators were suggested, backed by incentives like subsidies or low-interest loans. For housing, municipally owned properties were seen as easier to redevelop, and mixed-use buildings—combining housing with childcare or co-working spaces—were especially appealing. For community use, the focus was on multifunctionality and sustainability, with funding from regional or EU programs and community-driven maintenance.

**Final reflections:**

The turnout was better than expected, and while people were initially hesitant, they soon got actively involved, offering concrete ideas and debating options. The workshop showed a strong attachment to local buildings and a clear willingness to repurpose them in ways that benefit both the community and the local economy. The municipality was an active participant too, which helped ensure that ideas weren’t just wishful thinking but tied into actual plans and possibilities.

The event closed with an invitation to a second workshop, where participants will refine their proposals with expert input.

**In short:** The community is motivated, the municipality is supportive, and there’s no shortage of ideas—from bakeries to housing cooperatives to cultural centers. The challenge now is to turn this energy into real projects.

## Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town

The second RurALL workshop in Bystřice, held in May 2025, took things a step further. While the first meeting was all about brainstorming ideas, this one focused on *prototyping solutions*—actually shaping concrete concepts for how abandoned or underused spaces could be transformed. About 15

participants joined, including municipal representatives, NGOs, residents of all ages, entrepreneurs, and regional development experts.

The session started with a warm-up, where everyone introduced themselves and shared one keyword that represented their hopes for the project. Words like *revitalization*, *sustainability*, *inclusion*, *innovation*, and *ownership* captured the spirit of the day. The group's overall expectations were to create community-driven solutions that linked heritage with modern functions while keeping things realistic and sustainable.

### **Step 1: Understanding the problems**

Three focus groups were formed again: commercial, residential, and community use.

- *Commercial*: They highlighted abandoned central buildings with great potential, but owners are reluctant to sell or cooperate. The big question: how to attract small businesses into these spaces despite the hurdles?
- *Residential*: There's a mismatch between lots of empty buildings and a big need for affordable housing for families, seniors, and vulnerable groups. The challenge: how to adapt these spaces quickly, safely, and inclusively.
- *Community*: People felt the town lacks a multifunctional civic hub for culture, education, and intergenerational activities. The question: which community functions could realistically thrive in such a space?

### **Step 2–3: Asking and finding common ground**

Participants interviewed each other to dig deeper. They found that some buildings are in decent shape with basic utilities, while others need full overhauls. Ownership plays a huge role—municipal properties are easier to work with than privately owned ones like the bakery. Residents also showed interest in *hybrid models*—for example, mixing living, working, and leisure in the same building. Another issue raised was that many people simply don't know about existing planning processes or funding opportunities.

From this, the groups defined “point of view” statements to guide their prototypes. For example: *How might we convert heritage buildings into starter business hubs? Or: How could we transform vacant municipal properties into affordable, climate-conscious housing?*

### **Step 4–5: Generating and prototyping ideas**

Participants flooded the table with over 60 post-it ideas. Some of the favorites included:

- **Commercial**: Turning the old bakery into a café-incubator that mixes food, pop-up shops, and business mentoring. A social cooperative grocery store. A cultural brewery with a local product shop.
- **Residential**: Rebuilding the Ouběnice school into starter flats plus wellness space for seniors. Converting the station into co-living for young couples or seasonal workers. Launching an energy-efficient retrofitting program.

- **Community:** Transforming *Dům u Jelena* into an arts & crafts museum with co-working zones. A youth workshop in the old hangar focused on aviation and model-making. A cultural and social club in a former school for music, library services, and activities for seniors.

Groups then sketched mockups and pitched their concepts. Feedback was mostly positive: the business incubator got a lot of enthusiasm, though participants noted regulatory hurdles; the housing + wellness concept impressed experts as a strong candidate for EU funding; and the community hub idea was popular with youth and seniors, though sustainability will require NGO partnerships.

### **Step 6–8: Refining and testing**

Participants adjusted their prototypes, adding governance ideas like cooperative management, phasing renovation plans, and even digital tools (like an app for room booking and events). They then tested their concepts through “user journeys”—imagining a young family moving into the Ouběnice flats, a senior joining cultural events in the new hub, or a young entrepreneur launching a bakery through the incubator. These scenarios showed how the ideas could work in practice, making them feel both realistic and inspiring.

In short, this workshop was about turning wishful thinking into workable plans. The community came up with detailed, creative prototypes that balance heritage, affordability, and modern needs. Now, the next step will be figuring out funding, governance, and long-term sustainability—so that these ideas can eventually move from paper sketches into real walls and doors.

## **Eberau/Austria**

### **Workshop 1 – Liveable Eberau**

ZSI organized the first workshop in Eberau (Southern Burgenland) on March 3, 2025, from 18:00-21:00 in the municipal office. 8 participants (mostly local authorities, but also citizens and dwelling owners) participated to make Eberau (even more) livable. Potentials and challenges addressed the three functions of the project (living, commercial, public) and were discussed from different perspectives.

For Eberau, main challenges to creating and maintaining a livable living environment concerned creating sufficient job offers, maintaining daily supply, i.e., a minimum level of infrastructure doctors (like a grocery store, post office, kindergarden, primary and secondary education (until the age of 14)), and an ageing community, i.e., the need to enable intergenerational living. Unused resources for better living concerned the local land price, advertisement of nature and tranquility of the region, the (already existing) education and childcare facilities, as well as the rich social life of the region (Blues festival, associations, theater, music school in Szombathely). As a building, the Eberau moated castle (currently private property) was mentioned in different contexts (events, luxury apartments, hotel).

Proposed solutions concerned new tourism concepts (like theme hiking/biking trails and intensified wine and e-biking tourism), the expansion of elderly care (including neighborhood initiatives and assisted living strategies) and strengthening local value chains (e.g. better marketing of local regional products).

Regarding the commercial environment, the importance of jobs and business opportunities was considered crucial to become attractive for relocation. In addition, the revitalization of restaurants and coffee houses, the maintenance of the local grocery store (e.g. also as meeting place for people), and a general revitalization of the town center were considered important, together with an expanded mobility infrastructure (connection to urban centers). Eberau's potential as a production site was currently considered limited due to different factors (e.g., concerning infrastructure and location from bigger centers). Unused resources concerned viticulture and crafts, as well as ecologic and natural spaces (e.g. Naturpark Weindylle, guided tours through Nature Park). More concretely, participants considered various energy resources as unused resources (sustainable decentralized supply).

Proposed solutions included the establishment of an event location at the main square and a trade fair with local products (possibly combined with an already existing fair in the region). Regarding costumers, participants saw a potential for Hugarian customers (despite existing language barriers).

Concerning the public sphere of Eberau, overcoming a district-based thinking and strengthening commitment of people (e.g. to associations or social activities) were considered crucial, as well as enhanced small-range mobility (call-collect cab). Unused resources here concerned the rich historical heritage of the region (e.g. about the local aristocracy - Erdödi family) and its membership of the LEADER program.

One proposition was to better include the local Alpine club (located in Oberwart), especially their program (e.g. yoga, hiking for senior citizens, women's hiking, wellness hiking etc.).

The discussion was lively and enriched by breaking established communication patterns between involved stakeholders. The 'building gallery' – an exhibition of the mapped abandoned dwellings in the municipality, steered discussion during the break and generated a range of different ideas for the area – from remote co-working spaces to yoga studios, from intergenerational living opportunities to indoor go cart tracks. These ideas will feed into 20 basic design ideas.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

On June 14, 2025, ZSI hosted the second RurALL community engagement workshop at the municipal office in Eberau. Nine participants (local officials, architects, and homeowners, some of whom had also joined the first session in March) took part in this full-day event. Moderated by Marie-Theres Zirm ([www.cardamom.at](http://www.cardamom.at)), the workshop followed a design thinking sprint format to

encourage structured, creative, and practical group work. It built on previous ideas to explore ways to repurpose dwellings to improve Eberau's quality of life.

The focus was on three selected buildings in the town, each representing a typical local building type (Streckhof – a type of farmhouse for mixed agriculture typical for the area, Kellerstöckl - a type of farmhouse for wine industry typical for the area, town house) and assigned a primary function: residential, commercial, or public. Participants worked in three mixed groups of citizens, architects, organisers, and local authorities. This setup encouraged a broad range of perspectives.

A recurring topic was the lack of shared and public spaces in Eberau. Although there is a strong sense of community, the town's layout emphasizes private property. Existing meeting places are usually tied to consumption with limited opening hours. While many local clubs and associations exist, they tend to operate independently, without coordination or shared spaces. This makes it difficult to create inclusive infrastructure that connects different groups, especially younger people. Participants saw great potential in revitalising the dwellings to create multifunctional places that encourage social interaction and collaboration.

### **Dwelling 1: Townhouse**

This idea draws from existing interest of Hungarian families in the town's educational opportunities (6-14 years). This centrally located building was envisioned as a mix between student housing and a semi-public meeting space ("A Home away from Home"). The upper floor could serve as a dormitory for 6-8 young foreign students, featuring common areas like a "Soul Kitchen" run by older residents acting as mentors. The ground floor would be an "Open Living Room" for events and cultural activities. The concept aims to create a safe but lively space and could also involve local international communities.

### **Dwelling 2: Kellerstöckl**

This traditional building type in the wine hills was reimagined as a rest stop for cyclists and tourists. Because of its remote location and lack of public transport the idea focused on modular indoor-outdoor use, including sleeping spaces, a self-service kitchen, water access, and a bike repair area. The concept is designed for easy, low-threshold use and could become part of a regional network by connecting several similar Kellerstöckl buildings.

### **Dwelling 3: Industrial Hall**

This large hall was imagined to be transformed into a container-based modular system with possible uses including coworking, workshops, storage, and even small-scale housing. The "house within a house" idea allows for a gradual implementation and flexibility. Other ideas included a climbing wall and indoor playground. Local clubs or organisations could rent individual containers, supporting both engagement and financial sustainability.

Throughout the day, discussions remained dynamic and motivated. Rather than pursuing complete renovations, many proposals focused on simple, adaptable interventions. The pragmatic and community-driven approach showcases how blending private, public and commercial uses can support sustainable uses. The presented ideas could serve as lighthouse projects, inspiring broader revitalisation in Eberau and in the region. The workshop laid important groundwork for the further development of the dwelling designs.

## **Comuna Hodod/Romania**

### **Workshop 1 – Liveable Hodod**

The Municipality of Hodod is the associated partner with the PP6 Satu Mare County Intercommunity Development Association– Romania.

On April 16, 2025, a meeting of representatives of the rural community of Hodod with municipal authorities was held in Hodod. The community was represented by the citizens of various occupations, statuses and ages. Were discussed the needs of the local community and opportunities for improvement, especially by using the potential of empty and unused, as well as ruined houses in private ownership and facilities owned by the municipality. The workshop had four objectives: to inform participants about the RurALL project; mobilizing project participants; identifying ideas regarding community needs; collecting first ideas about how to use abandoned/deteriorated dwellings.

The Satu Mare County Intercommunity Development Association was represented at the workshop by the project implementation team, and the event moderator was Ms. Gyüre Rotariuc Noémi Andrea - chief architect at the Satu Mare County Council and expert in the project.

Special target groups have been identified that would benefit most directly from the commissioning of certain facilities. In the previous period, such buildings were mapped on the territory of the municipality of Hodod.

At the meeting, the residents were able to see the mapped buildings and their condition. Proposals for future use and eventual conversion were reached and noted. Each building was presented with key contextual information, such as location, ownership, condition, and potential use. Participants evaluated and rated each building across five dimensions: renovation feasibility, economic viability, community impact, environmental benefit, and structural potential. The workshop also included facilitated discussions focusing on regulations, infrastructure access, and opportunities for functional joint development. The municipality of Hodod as associate strategic partner together with expert conducted the mapping, and in the coming period it will be able to do the designs for reconstruction and revitalisation for selected priority facilities, according to the decision of the community and the municipality through joint consideration. Open discussions followed, with expressed desire to preserve and reconvert former community and cultural buildings as multifunctional community spaces, with shared functions for youth activities, social services, and

cultural events. The workshop combined evaluation with open dialogue, allowing both technical expertise and local community knowledge. The sharing of experience and opinions of the citizens and institutional representatives was very productive and useful. The three designs and business plans will be developed for a mill, the Wesselényi Castle and a traditional blue house).

The first workshop ignited the interest of community members for the future workshop with expert on architecture.

The next meeting of citizens and the municipality will be held at the mid of May 2025, when ideas will be developed about the purpose of priority buildings and the arrangement of space in accordance with the intended purpose.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

The Municipality of Hodod is the associated partner with the PP6 Satu Mare County Intercommunity Development Association– Romania.

On May 22, 2025, a meeting of representatives of the rural community of Hodod with municipal authorities was held in Hodod. The community was represented by the citizens of various occupations, statuses and ages. The results from WS1 were available on the tables (posters). The WS2- Design Thinking Sprint took this process further and developed concrete ideas for the abandoned homes in ASP community. The workshop had four objectives: to discuss opportunities and challenges; to find solutions to common local challenges; to get inspired by the ideas of others and develop together; to develop (viable) prototypes.

The Satu Mare County Intercommunity Development Association was represented at the workshop by the project implementation team, and the event moderator was Ms. Gyüre Rotariuc Noémi Andrea - chief architect at the Satu Mare County Council and expert in the project.

Special target groups have been identified that would benefit most directly from the commissioning of certain facilities. In the first workshop, out of the 40 mapped buildings, of which 23 were abandoned or deteriorated, three examples of private, business and community functions were identified: a mill, the Wesselényi Castle and a traditional blue house. Through community involvement, concrete ideas were developed for the abandoned/deteriorated dwellings in Hodod community. Three working groups were organized to identify some functions of the buildings after renovation. All the groups defined their persona for the identified buildings. For the Wesselényi Castle (private property) mid-age family person. For community property a young person. For commercial an elder person.

Each building was presented with key contextual information, such as location, ownership, condition, and potential use. Participants evaluated and rated each building, facilitated discussions focusing on opportunities for functional joint development. The municipality of Hodod as associate strategic partner together with expert conducted the prototyping activity, and in the

coming period it will be able to do the designs for reconstruction and revitalisation for selected buildings.

Within the working group for the Wesselényi Castle (private property), the following prototypes-ideas were developed: restaurant, event hall and guesthouse, shelter, tourist information center, regional rehabilitation center for people (children) with disabilities, museum, riding center, local library, traditional knightly restaurant of the period. Within the working group for mill (community property) the following prototypes-ideas were developed: a restaurant with traditional dishes and local products, indoor storage of milling equipment, an event and exhibition hall, and a tourist center presenting milling equipment for visitors. Within the working group for blue house (commercial) the following prototypes-ideas were developed: weekend activities for children, accommodation, day-socialization center for the elderly, event hall, tourist information center. Every group presented their prototype to the plenary.

Open discussions followed.

Following the feedback received, the following prototyping results were concluded:

- for the mill, a museum of milling and bakery, by preserving the furniture;
- for the blue house-a center for creation and crafts, a community integration center-social inclusion, on the ground floor of the building-small creative workshops;
- for the Wesselényi castle-revival of crafts, restaurant, ballroom and conference rooms, fairgrounds, recreational activities and festivals, carriage rides, intended to create a tourist attraction area.

## **Mojkovac/Montenegro**

### **Workshop 1 – Liveable Mojkovac**

On June 27, 2025, the first workshop of Mojkovac local community representatives was held, with the participation of local government officials. The event launched a participatory process aimed at identifying sustainable solutions for community development.

Project manager Biljana Radović Fuštić presented the initiative's goals and significance. The facilitation team introduced the agenda and encouraged open dialogue and collaboration throughout the session.

The workshop focused on assessing the capacities of Mojkovac and surrounding villages, understanding local needs, and identifying opportunities and resources that could support sustainable development. Particular attention was given to abandoned or underutilized properties—public, private, and commercial—that could be revitalized to meet current community needs.

Participants included active members from Mojkovac and nearby communities: Polja, Podbišće, Stevanovac, Štitarica, Bojna Njiva, and Lepenac. Attendees came from diverse gender, ethnic, educational, and professional backgrounds, bringing a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences.

A key segment of the workshop addressed previously mapped underused properties with potential value. These were discussed in the context of adaptation and repurposing for the benefit of the community. Participants contributed a wide range of ideas focused on cross-sector cooperation, with several proposals noted as important for the broader development of northern Montenegro.

The atmosphere was one of teamwork and mutual respect. Participants showed strong engagement, creativity, and a commitment to initiatives involving cultural, educational, touristic, and economic development. A common interest emerged in preserving the area's natural and cultural heritage while building local resilience and improving quality of life.

Participants expressed a strong willingness to stay involved in upcoming activities and to contribute to the project's future stages. Their commitment to the initiative and clear understanding of its potential impact were evident. They also acknowledged the importance of involving expert guidance in selecting and adapting the properties.

The event revealed a shared desire for a better future for Mojkovac and an empowered local community. In addition to identifying current challenges, participants demonstrated knowledge of both local realities and broader national strategies. Several conceptual solutions emerged that will be developed further in collaboration with experts.

In conclusion, the workshop successfully initiated meaningful dialogue and active participation among diverse members of the Mojkovac community. It laid a strong foundation for the next steps toward inclusive and sustainable development at the local level.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

Workshop No. 2 – Design Thinking Sprint was held on June 27, 2025, for practical and organizational reasons, taking into account the needs and the rhythm of life and work in Mojkovac.

Project Manager Biljana Radović Fušić reminded the participants of the goals and objectives of the Design Thinking Sprint workshop. The session was conducted with the support of the facilitator-expert team. Representatives of the local Mojkovac community actively participated in the workshop, including members of the local communities of Polja, Podbišće, Stevanovac, Štitarica, Bojna Njiva, and Lepenac. Participants reflected diverse gender, ethnic, and professional backgrounds, with varied education levels and interests. This workshop placed a strong emphasis on deeper reflection and understanding of the real needs and problems faced daily by the residents of Mojkovac. Through the activities, participants succeeded in identifying with the local population and, by applying an objective approach, managed to gain insight into targeted

problems. They clearly demonstrated their knowledge of both local and national policies as well as the legislative framework. The groups were able to define the ideal user, as well as other key stakeholders involved in the solution implementation processes. Through a scoring system, they objectively and collectively selected the solution that offered the most optimal approach to community inclusion, using a multifactorial method. Prototyping was based on brainstorming ideas and sketching, and in the process of materializing their solutions, participants used recyclable materials and natural elements. During and after the pitching of ideas, participants provided feedback and discussed each group's presented solution with the support of the facilitator-expert team. Presenters took into account the feedback and comments from participants and the facilitator-expert team, which they integrated into their prototypes. These prototypes were then tested by connecting the conceptual solutions to the target users through encouraging, user-centered scenarios.

The groups agreed that the existing integrated ideas and solutions generated during the Design Thinking Sprint session should be further developed through feedback loops, discussion, and multisectoral analysis.

The session concluded successfully with the completion of evaluation forms and a closing statement by Project Manager Biljana Radović Fušić, who informed participants about the next steps in the project.

## **Jelšava/ Slovakia**

### **Workshop 1 - Liveable Jelšava**

The community workshop in Jelšava gathered forty residents to imagine how their town could become more liveable through revitalization of abandoned buildings and improvements in public spaces. Using a participatory, design-thinking process with group discussions, idea clustering, and collective presentations, participants explored opportunities for commercial, residential, and community uses, while also identifying pressing needs in public space and infrastructure.

A central concern was the lack of local services and amenities in the town center. Residents suggested introducing a variety of small businesses to bring activity back to the square, such as cafés, restaurants, shops, wellness services, bike rentals, and even a cinema. Tourist accommodations in authentic houses were also seen as a way to stimulate the economy. Residential use of central buildings was approached more cautiously, with the consensus that they are better suited for short-term rentals or hotels rather than permanent housing, due to their deteriorated state and high renovation costs.

Stronger emphasis was placed on cultural and community functions. Proposals included transforming the Reduta building into a cultural hub, creating multipurpose centers for families, galleries and reading rooms, museums of crafts and multicultural heritage, and practical facilities

such as public toilets or even an animal shelter with a café. These ideas reflected a desire for inclusive, intergenerational, and culturally rich spaces that could bring people together.

Public space improvements were also highlighted, with calls for more greenery, shaded resting areas, play spaces for children, exercise equipment for seniors, better pedestrian access, improved lighting and signage, and water features. Residents also emphasized the importance of heritage through memorials, façade renovations, and tourism infrastructure such as walking tours and video guides.

The process itself proved valuable in fostering community engagement and ownership. By combining individual reflection with group brainstorming and collective mapping of potential sites, the workshop created space for dialogue across generations and backgrounds, while also identifying motivated individuals who could carry ideas forward. The event not only produced a wide range of proposals but also demonstrated the effectiveness of design thinking in activating underused spaces and ensuring that local development reflects citizen voices. The outcomes point toward a more vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming Jelšava for both residents and visitors.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

The co-design workshop in Jelšava gathered 29 residents of different ages and backgrounds to reimagine the town square and nearby historic buildings. Using a participatory, design-thinking approach—from individual reflection to small-group work and plenary presentations—participants explored cultural, commercial, and residential uses as well as public-space improvements. An architect supported the process, answering technical questions but leaving ownership of ideas with citizens.

A major concern was the lack of services and amenities. Proposals included cafés, small grocery shops, restaurants, and bike services to restore vibrancy to the centre. At the same time, participants placed strong emphasis on cultural and community spaces: a museum of crafts and history, a historical pharmacy, a gallery with café, and a relaxation garden at the Reduta manor. Transforming a parish building into a prayer and community centre also reflected demand for inclusive, intergenerational spaces.

Residential reuse was discussed with caution. Residents stressed that Jelšava faces not a housing shortage but deteriorating historic buildings with high renovation costs. Short-term accommodation such as guesthouses or small hotels was seen as more feasible than permanent housing, potentially bringing tourism and income.

For public spaces, participants proposed more greenery and shade, safe pedestrian access, benches, family play areas, and exercise equipment for seniors, along with better lighting and signage. These improvements were viewed as quick, practical steps to make the centre welcoming.

The session concluded with an initial “Cultural Square” concept integrating feedback from this and earlier workshops. The process itself built engagement and trust: it gave space to quieter voices, bridged generations, and identified motivated locals to lead next steps.

(Administrative note: attendance is based on the GDPR list, which more accurately reflects participation.)

The workshop showed that design thinking can empower citizens, spark feasible ideas, and strengthen community ownership. By combining cultural anchors, small businesses, and people-friendly design, Jelšava’s residents charted a path toward a more vibrant and inclusive town centre.

## **Opština Despotovac/Serbia**

### **Workshop 1 – Liveable municipality of Despotovac**

The Municipality of Despotovac is the associated partner with the PP9 Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje – Serbia.

On May 16, 2025, a meeting of representatives of the rural community of Despotovac with municipal authorities was held in Despotovac. The community was represented by the citizens of several villages and various occupations, statuses and ages. They discussed the needs of the local community and opportunities for improvement, especially by using the potential of empty and unused, as well as ruined houses in private ownership and facilities owned by the municipality. There are many houses and buildings that are already in need of renovation and reconstruction, and some are very damaged and unsafe. On the other hand, these spaces represent a potential and an opportunity to put into operation that the whole community will benefit from. Special target groups have been identified that would benefit most directly from the commissioning of certain facilities. In the previous period, such objects were mapped on the territory of the municipality of Despotovac, mostly in the villages and a couple in the town.

At the meeting, the residents were able to see the mapped buildings and their condition. Proposals for future use and eventual conversion were reached. The municipality of Despotovac conducted the mapping from its own resources, and in the coming period it will be able to do the designs for reconstruction and revitalisation for priority facilities, according to the decision of the community and the municipality through joint consideration.

Presented dwellings and objects were from the following villages and settlements: Senjski Rudnik, Strmosten, Brestava, Medvedja, Resavica, Veliki Popovic, Bogava, Vojnik, Vitance, Trucevac, Jelovac, Plazane, Miliva and Ravna Reka. There were representatives of nearly all these villages at the meeting. The sharing of experience and opinions of the citizens and institutional representatives was very productive and useful. The representatives of the museum Senjski Rudnik could not participate, however they sent their opinion and proposals through municipal representative who

attended. The Social Welfare Center could not participate either, although they appreciated the project and the activities, so they sent their opinion about social issues and proposals for the public use of certain buildings for the benefit of vulnerable categories. Both Senjski rudnik and the social center stated that they will certainly participate at the next workshop and contribute to the solutions.

The next meeting of citizens and the municipality will be held at the beginning of June, when ideas will be developed about the purpose of priority buildings and the arrangement of space in accordance with the intended purpose.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

The second workshop of Despotovac rural community took place on 13 June 2025, in the secondary Technical School Despotovac, attended by 20 participants who represented their villages and groups. Some of them represented the elementary school and the high technical school and their staff and pupils, social welfare center and their employees and beneficiaries, cultural center, association of agriculture producers, women's association, museum of coalmining, police, retired persons and unemployed persons.

The moderators were representatives of Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje, who applied the methodology of interactive communication, experience exchange, roleplay and interview to motivate design thinking. The goal of design thinking was to identify the key community problems, possible solutions and how the mapped dwellings and buildings could be put to function to serve the purpose of solving the problems. Participants were divided into three groups.

The first group identified and discussed the problems of vulnerable people in all the villages, such as elderly people who live alone, young people who leave foster families and homeless people.

The second group discussed the problems of migrations of young people and the third about lack of job opportunities, especially for entrepreneurs and 50+ women. The two groups agreed that migration and lack of job opportunities are closely interlaced and that the potential of the existing cultural heritage and opportunities for investments in tourism sector are the main solutions.

In prototyping, the participants included all functional, aesthetic, green and inclusion aspects of prototypes/ buildings with a specific purpose. The first group considered the building in public ownership to provide temporary accommodation for the vulnerable groups, primarily the homeless in transit. The second group discussed the reconstruction of the Sokolski dom in Senjski Rudnik. Its purpose used to be community gathering, sports and entertainment. It is abandoned now, and the future purpose should be a hotel restaurant, with space for cultural events. The third group developed a prototype for the abandoned building of a former restaurant Toplica that was famous and well visited during the 70's of the XX century. The ideas for prototypes were all agreed and accepted by all participants.

# Božići – Jelićka / Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Workshop 1 – Sustainable Rural Communities of the Future

On 3 June 2025, a community engagement workshop entitled “Sustainable Rural Communities of the Future – RurALL” was held at the premises of the Božići Local Community (Malo Palančište). The event brought together representatives from four local communities – Božići, Jelovac, Veliko Palančište, and Malo Palančište – with a total of 23 participants, including community leaders, representatives of associations, and local residents.

The workshop was moderated by Mr. Borislav Marić and formally opened by Ms. Kristina Topić, Project Manager for RurALL at the Development Agency PREDA, who presented the overall project objectives and noted that 55 dwellings had been mapped in the Prijedor area as part of the project.

The moderator introduced the success story of Pecka as an example of good practice in rural revitalisation, inspiring participants to explore innovative approaches for reusing local assets. In the group discussions, participants identified the main needs, challenges, and opportunities within their communities. Concrete proposals for reusing mapped buildings included:

- Božići: Establishment of an Educational Centre for Protection and Rescue, proposed by Mr. Ognjen Vukić (Radio Amateurs Club Kozara).
- Božići 2: Transformation of the community facility into a Visitor Centre with facilities for extreme sports, accommodation, and cycling trails in the Kozara mountain area, proposed by Mr. Draško Anđelić (Albatros Club).
- Jelovac: Renovation and functional use of a partially built 300 m<sup>2</sup> community facility to serve social and economic purposes, as outlined by Mr. Radenko Petrić (Zavičajno Udruženje Patrija).

Key themes emerging from the workshop included revitalisation of public assets, development of rural tourism, and preservation of traditional rural lifestyles. Participants stressed that renovated facilities should become community gathering points, helping to prevent decay of shared assets and strengthen local social cohesion.

As next steps, participants agreed to prepare three detailed project proposals for building renovation and at least twenty preliminary ideas for future development. The high level of engagement demonstrated that, despite infrastructure and administrative constraints, local communities possess the vision, determination, and capacity to actively shape their future in partnership with PREDA.

## Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town

On 5 June 2025, the second community engagement workshop took place in Jelička Local Community, covering five local communities – Omarska, Petrov Gaj, Gradina, Jelička, and Marička – with a total of 19 participants. The event was moderated by Mr. Borislav Marić and attended by key stakeholders including Mr. Žarko Tubin, Head of the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Prof. Malina Čvoro, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Geodesy, University of Banja Luka, engaged as an expert within the project.

Following the introductory presentation by Ms. Kristina Topić, Project Manager for RurALL at PREDA, participants focused on the main community facility in Jelička. Prof. Čvoro emphasised its architectural and functional potential, encouraging innovative concepts for its reuse.

Local youth representative Mr. Draško Đurić described the history of the building's renovation, achieved primarily through community contributions, and presented a vision for transforming it into an *open-space hub* for young people – a place for remote work, entrepreneurship, and social interaction. The example of Mr. Milan Zeljić, a returnee from Sweden working in digital marketing, highlighted opportunities for digital entrepreneurship in rural settings.

Participants also identified the area's strong potential for rural tourism, noting assets such as the "Nana Kaas" goat farm and the nearby "Eko Centar Ljekarice" tourist complex. At the same time, challenges were noted, particularly insufficient internet infrastructure, which limits remote work potential.

The discussion reaffirmed the importance of active local stakeholders, including philanthropic support from families such as the Lemić family, whose contributions have been instrumental in community projects.

The workshop concluded with agreement on developing three detailed renovation proposals for selected buildings and generating twenty basic concepts for future projects. The overall sentiment was summarised in the shared conclusion that "Buildings are the means – people are the key", and with strategic partnerships and targeted support, these communities have the potential to become vibrant and sustainable rural hubs.

# Primorje-Gorski Kotar County/Croatia

## Workshop 1 – Liveable Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

The workshop was organized as part of the RurALL project by project partner Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. On June 24, 2025, a workshop was held in the Municipality of Fužine with representatives from all cities and municipalities in the Gorski Kotar region invited to attend. The pilot area includes the cities of Delnice, Vrbovsko, and Čabar, as well as the municipalities of Ravna Gora, Mrkopalj, Fužine, Skrad, Brod Moravice, and Lokve.

Up to 20 people were invited to the workshop, with most confirming their attendance. However, recent local elections had caused changes in local government leadership, and the workshop date coincided with a ceremonial session celebrating Delnice City Day, which most representatives attended. Despite this challenge, key people involved in projects throughout Gorski Kotar participated, including project managers from Local Action Groups, associations, and responsible persons from public companies.

An external consultant designed and led the workshop, presenting previously mapped abandoned buildings from the mentioned municipalities on posters. After introductory presentations and project overview, participants were divided into pairs due to the smaller number of attendees and then worked on developing ideas for the abandoned buildings. The mapped buildings mainly included unused school buildings, a former cinema, an old fire station, and similar structures. Almost every building needs roof replacement, interior and exterior renovation, and landscaping improvements, though some local government units already have initial solutions, such as the Municipality of Fužine.

During the first discussion, participants suggested ideas for buildings according to three types of use: residential, commercial, and public. For residential purposes, they considered converting buildings into affordable housing, hostels, or senior citizens care centers while commercial ideas included ethnographic museum expansion including a co-working space and community gathering area, local craft workshops, and small business incubators. Public use suggestions focused on community centers, cultural venues, and educational facilities. In the second discussion, participants reviewed all eight buildings and expanded their ideas, identified existing problems, proposed ways to attract young people and tourists, and highlighted what each community lacks. The discussions were productive and generated many practical suggestions for revitalizing these abandoned structures to better serve local communities.

The workshop revealed common challenges across the region, including population decline, limited job opportunities for young people, and insufficient tourist infrastructure. Participants emphasized the importance of creating multipurpose spaces that could serve different community needs throughout the year.

All participants expressed interest in the next workshop and confirmed their supervisors' interest in continuing the project. The enthusiasm for the initiative was evident, with many participants already beginning to envision specific uses for buildings in their communities. The next workshop is planned for July, when more concrete ideas will be developed regarding the purpose of mapped buildings, improvement potential, and financial possibilities according to local community needs and purposes.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

The second workshop was organized as part of the RurALL project by project partner Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. On July 29, 2025, a workshop was held in the Municipality of Lokve, following up on the first workshop that identified abandoned buildings with potential for revitalization in the Gorski Kotar region.

The workshop employed a design thinking methodology connected to the New Bauhaus initiative to develop concrete solutions for the mapped derelict buildings. Due to participants' time constraints and various professional and private obligations, the workshop was adapted to provide solutions in a shorter timeframe while maintaining maximum stakeholder participation.

An external consultant facilitated the eight-step design thinking process. After introductory icebreakers that relaxed participants and encouraged creative thinking, attendees were divided into three groups focusing on residential, commercial, and public use of the identified buildings. The workshop centered around a created persona - Matko, a 26-year-old young entrepreneur interested in gardening and reading, with different needs assigned to each group: business development space (commercial), family accommodation (residential), and elderly care for his mother (public).

Through empathy mapping, participants explored what Matko says, thinks, does, and feels regarding each challenge. The commercial group identified his need for business space and mentorship, with fears about business failure but opportunities in rural areas. The residential group focused on his desire for quality housing with good connections to schools and kindergartens, preferring long-term rental models with municipal support. The public group addressed his concern for elderly care, highlighting the lack of adequate day care facilities and professional caregivers.

Each group developed prototype solutions: an incubation center/co-working space with mentoring support for commercial use; a national housing policy model offering long-term rental with purchase options for residential needs; and a municipal fund supporting old house renovation for elderly day care centers with medical and psychological services for public use. Through interactive testing with participants role-playing, solutions were refined and potential obstacles were addressed, including financial sustainability, spatial limitations, and medical staff shortages.

The workshop successfully generated practical, community-focused solutions that addressed real local needs while considering implementation challenges. Participants showed high engagement and commitment to continuing the project development. The methodology proved effective in moving from problem identification in the first workshop to concrete solution prototyping in the

second, creating a clear pathway for future implementation steps in revitalizing abandoned buildings to improve quality of life in Gorski Kotar communities.

## **Sandanski/Bulgaria**

### **Workshop 1 – Liveable Sandanski**

The initial phase of the community engagement process in the Municipality of Sandanski was structured into two events as part of Workshop Series 1 (WS1). The first workshop took place on 20 March 2025 at the BICC Sandanski office and brought together nine experts from various departments of the Municipality, including urban planning, investment, property management, and social services. Each building was presented with key contextual information, such as location, ownership, condition, and potential use. Participants completed individual evaluation forms rating each building across five dimensions: renovation feasibility, economic viability, community impact, environmental benefit, and structural potential. The session also included facilitated discussions focusing on zoning regulations, infrastructure access, and opportunities for functional clustering.

The second event, held on 30 April 2025 at Sandanski's community hall, involved 31 participants from the broader community, including village mayors, civic organisations, and local residents. A simplified version of the evaluation form was used, focusing on three core indicators: renovation potential, economic potential, and impact on the local community. Each building was visually presented, after which participants independently rated its potential. Open discussions followed, with many expressing a desire to preserve and repurpose former schools, kindergartens, and cultural buildings as multifunctional community spaces. Participants emphasised the importance of shared spaces for youth activities, social services, and cultural events.

Both workshops combined structured evaluation with open dialogue, allowing for a rich mix of technical expertise and community knowledge. The process ensured equal voice through individual scoring while fostering inclusive discussions. Documentation included completed evaluation forms by participants from the community, group discussion notes, and photographs that visually captured the participatory process.

The second phase of the process will include another round of workshops (in the format of a two-day workshop), focused on prototyping and co-design, is planned for June 2025 to build on the momentum created.

### **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

The RurALL project's second phase of community engagement in the Municipality of Sandanski successfully demonstrated how strategic workshop design can bridge the gap between community aspirations and technical implementation. BICC - Sandanski, working with the Municipality as an associated partner, organized a comprehensive workshop divided into two complementary parts

on July 29 and August 1, 2025, focusing on brainstorming ideas, solutions and functionalities for 23 previously identified underused or desolated public buildings.

The workshop's two-part structure was intended for managing both the scale of the challenge and the diversity of stakeholder expertise. The first part brought together 24 community representatives, including village mayors and active community members, who possessed specific knowledge of local needs but limited technical expertise. The second part brought together 12 technical experts from municipal departments, architectural firms, and NGOs, with the purpose of translating community visions into implementable solutions.

During the community workshop, participants divided into three groups of eight, each tackling all 23 buildings. This format encouraged cross-collaboration while maintaining manageable discussion sizes. Participants were provided with basic building information but deliberately not overwhelmed with technical constraints so they could express their creativity. The groups used Post-it notes for idea clustering and group discussions. Groups then presented their ideas to the plenary, allowing for cross-group learning and validation of common themes.

The following second part of the workshop, i.e the technical workshop, shifted focus to the three buildings selected for detailed design development. Using structured worksheets covering four key areas – purpose and function, architectural characteristics, management and funding, and New European Bauhaus principles – experts evaluated how to transform community ideas into viable projects. This resulted in one building for residential use to address housing needs, another for commercial purposes to stimulate the local economy, and a third for public use serving broader community functions.

At the end, we can conclude that this two-part methodology worked well for the specifics of the local community and created a good framework for the next project phases by establishing clear community vision and buy-in for all 23 buildings, developing technically sound and realistic plans for 3 priority buildings and building relationships between community stakeholders and technical experts that will facilitate smooth implementation. This further proved the understanding that we have established during the project that effective and efficient rural development requires both bottom-up community input and top-down technical expertise, integrated through carefully designed participatory processes.

# Municipality of Sárvár / Hungary

## Workshop 1 - Liveable Sárvár

On 24 April 2025, the first community engagement workshop of the RurALL project was held at the Mayor's Office in Sárvár, Hungary. The event formed part of the Interreg Danube Region Programme's efforts to tackle depopulation and create attractive living environments for younger generations. The focus was on generating creative ideas and shared community visions for giving new life to pre-selected, underutilised buildings in the city. By transforming these spaces into vibrant, multifunctional hubs, the project aims to retain young people locally while fostering cultural, social, and economic vitality.

### Thematic discussion areas and proposed functions

#### 1. Functions Targeting Young People (highest impact proposals)

The workshop placed strong emphasis on creating facilities that directly meet the needs of younger residents. Suggested functions included:

- Incubator House / Start-up Centre – offering mentoring, co-working spaces, a showroom for local products, and networking opportunities to help young entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses.
- Entertainment Venues – such as community-oriented clubs or music spaces for electronic and contemporary genres, creating safe and engaging nightlife options.
- Youth-Oriented Accommodation – affordable hostel or dormitory-style housing, potentially self-managed by youth groups, to support graduates and young professionals.

#### 2. Community and Cultural Spaces (strong secondary priority)

Another major theme was the development of accessible community and cultural venues that could serve diverse groups. Proposed ideas included:

- Creative Theatre Space – providing opportunities for amateur theatre troupes and cultural performances.
- Multifunctional Community Hall / Small Auditorium – a venue suitable for intimate cultural, educational, and social gatherings.
- Artistic and Exhibition Spaces – including workshops and galleries to showcase local creativity, crafts, and heritage.

#### 3. Additional Complementary Suggestions

Participants also contributed a range of complementary concepts to enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of the revitalised buildings, such as:

- Digital and Intergenerational Learning – courses on digital skills (e.g., “digital grandparents”), e-sports, and life-skills training.

- Youth Product Marketplace – spaces for young creators to sell their products and gain business experience.
- Support Facilities – community accommodation, quiet work areas, and additional amenities to support the main functions.
- Seasonal and Social Events – Christmas markets, open-air cinemas, snack bars, drive-in movie nights, and public sports screenings.
- Urban Convenience Services – 24/7 shops and casual meeting spots to improve everyday quality of life.

### **Shared Vision**

From these discussions, a common vision emerged: to establish a multifunctional space that combines leisure, entrepreneurship, and community engagement in an inspiring and inclusive setting. Such a place would bring together work, creativity, and social life, making it an attractive focal point for both residents and visitors.

## **Workshop 2 – Create solutions for YOUR town**

On 5 June 2025, the second community engagement workshop within the RurALL project was held at the Mayor’s Office in Sárvár. Building on the results of the first session, this workshop focused on refining a shared vision for the future of one of the city’s pre-selected revitalisation sites. The aim was to translate broad community aspirations into more concrete functions, concepts, and operational ideas, with a strong emphasis on retaining young people locally.

### **Starting Point – Shared Vision**

The discussions were guided by a vision agreed during the first workshop: to establish a multifunctional space that blends leisure, entrepreneurship, and community experiences within an inspiring, historically significant setting. This second workshop aimed to break down that vision into actionable proposals, balancing creative ambition with practical considerations.

### **Main Themes, Proposals, and Challenges**

#### **1. Leisure – Creating Local Social Experiences**

Participants proposed a variety of ways to make the site a lively social hub, including:

- Transforming part of the space into a relaxed, youth-friendly venue with a casual atmosphere.
- Providing a hireable community room equipped for birthdays and private events.
- Using the outdoor courtyard as a seasonal events space for open-air cinema, sports screenings, summer evenings, and live music.
- Developing a large indoor cultural hall suitable for concerts, performances, and public gatherings.

## **2. Entrepreneurship – Learning and Gaining Business Experience in a Safe Environment**

- Ideas for fostering entrepreneurial activity included:
- Establishing a co-working and information hub with rentable offices, collaboration spaces, and professional workshops.
- Creating opportunities for student-led ventures, such as social media management, influencer campaigns, and trial runs for small brands or start-ups.
- Hosting business events, networking sessions, and mentoring programmes to connect like-minded young people.
- Involving the local chamber of commerce in supporting a youth enterprise ecosystem.
- Offering small, affordable spaces for micro-businesses in the early stages of development.

## **3. Community and Educational Functions**

Suggestions in this category aimed to connect the site's use with both education and tourism:

- Setting up a hostel that could serve as a practical training facility for local tourism students.
  - Operating in high season for tourism, while in spring and autumn catering to hiking groups or older visitors.
- Providing hands-on training in tourism, hospitality, and financial management.
- Allocating space for craft workshops and exhibitions (e.g., weaving, basketry, pottery).
- Introducing a branded product line linked to the local heritage, complemented by a demonstration garden and small-scale cultivation.
- Offering visitor amenities that support the site's tourism appeal and local community presence.

### **Key Challenges Identified**

- Integrating or adapting current uses of the site to align with future plans.
- Coordinating with long-term renovation projects to ensure compatibility with short-term interventions.
- Defining an operational model and identifying a managing entity capable of year-round activity.
- Addressing seasonal patterns of use and ensuring sustained engagement during the academic year.

### **Conclusion and Outlook**

Participants agreed that the site holds strong potential to become a dynamic, youth-focused community centre if developed with purpose, creativity, and community involvement. The most promising direction is a multifunctional hub combining leisure activities, business development opportunities, and educational and cultural programmes. The goal is to create a flexible, responsive space that meets the changing needs of young people while serving as a valuable shared resource for the entire city—bridging its heritage with its future.

# Evaluation framework for the community engagement workshops

Zavod PIP, in collaboration with external expert and evaluator M. Mayr, designed the evaluation of the Community Engagement work package. The evaluation will take place from May until December 2025. The evaluation framework within project was set by M. Mayr:

**The scope** of the evaluation is a particular activity within the project's broader efforts to achieve its planned outcomes and deliverables: the community engagement workshops. These workshops are conducted in 2025 across 11 municipalities in the partner countries. They follow a 2x2 format, beginning with two consecutive in-person workshops that engage local citizens in mapping and planning future functions for deteriorating dwellings. These are followed by two virtual sessions, incorporating expert feedback to further develop the ideas generated.

**The purpose** of the evaluation is to assess the community workshops in terms of their contribution to the RurALL project's objective(s) – particularly in fostering community engagement, applying NEB principles, and developing sustainable uses for deteriorating dwellings – while also examining their capacity, as individual interventions, to generate impact in selected dimensions, and the adequacy of their methodological approach(es).

The **specific objectives** of the evaluation are set:

- To analyze the quality, outcomes, and impacts of the community workshops.
- To assess the integration of New European Bauhaus (NEB) principles in the workshops, with a particular focus on the inclusion dimension.

- To evaluate the sustainability of workshops' outcomes and their contribution to the project's objective(s).
- To conduct a consolidated and comparative analysis, highlighting key findings and providing recommendations.

# Method

M. Mayr prepared a whole methodological approach that will be used for evaluation: The evaluation will follow a mixed-method approach for comprehensive insights into the community workshops. This approach combines secondary data analysis such as literature and document review with primary data collection methods, concretely community workshops' participant surveys and focus group(s). The integration of qualitative and quantitative sources allows for triangulation of findings, enhancing both the validity and depth of the evaluation. This methodological design supports the evaluation's aim to capture not only outcomes and impacts, but also the experiential, participatory, and value-based dimensions of the RurALL community workshops. The table below indicates the joint structure of the methodological and conceptual design.

<b>ASSESSMENT ASPECT (CIPP)</b>	<b>Content frame</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Method</b>
Context	Inclusion dimension (adjusted LOURENÇO et al. (2024))	Secondary data (projects' documentation, municipalities' information)	Literature and document review, comparable review
Input	Inclusion dimension (adjusted LOURENÇO et al. (2024))	Secondary data (documentation, workshop reports' etc.), focus group (facilitators)	Qualitative analysis
Process	Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) Ladder of Empowerment (Rocha, 1997)(Rocha, 1997)	Participants' survey, focus groups (facilitators, leaders)	Survey analysis (descriptive statistics, frequencies)
Product	Inclusion dimension (adjusted LOURENÇO et al. (2024))	Secondary data (workshop reports' etc.), focus groups (facilitators, leaders)	Qualitative analysis

# Results

A consolidated and comparative analysis, highlighting key findings and providing actionable recommendations, will be prepared as part of the evaluation report. The evaluation report is expected to be completed by December 2025.

# Annex

## Overview on community engagement events

COMMUNITY - COUNTRY	1 <sup>ST</sup> EVENT	2 <sup>ND</sup> EVENT	METHODS
BELTINCI - SLOVENIA	27 May 2025	11 June 2025	CEP + other
EBERAU - AUSTRIA	03 March 2025	14 June 2025	CEP
SÁRVÁR - HUNGARY	24 April 2025	5 June 2025	CEP
BYSTRĚICE – CZECH REPUBLIC	26 February 2025	13 May 2025	CEP
JELŠAVA - SLOVAKIA	9 April 2025	25 August 2025	CEP
COMUNA HODOD - ROMANIA	16 April 2025	22 May 2025	CEP
PRIMORJE-GORSKI KOTAR COUNTY - CROATIA	24 June 2025	29 July 2025	CEP
BOŽIĆI / JELIĆKA - BOSNIA I HERZEGOVINA	June 3 / June 5 2025	3 June 2025	CEP + other
MOJKOVAC - MONTENEGRO	27 June 2025	27 June 2025	CEP + other
SANDANSKI - BULGARIA	20 March 2025 / 30 April 2025	29 July 2025	CEP + other
OPŠTINA DESPOTOVAC - SERBIA	16 May 2025	13 June 2025	CEP + other

## **Detailed workshop documentation**

**Beltinci/Slovenia**

**Bystřice/ Czech Republic**

**Eberau/Austria**

**Comuna Hodod/Romania**

**Mojkovac/Montenegro**

**Jelšava / Slovakia**

**Opština Despotovac/Serbia**

**Božići – Jelićka/Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Primorje-Gorski Kotar County/Croatia**

**Sandanski/Bulgaria**

**Sárvár/Hungary**

## **PPT on Participatory Design**

## **Evaluation questionnaire**

# Annex

## Overview on community engagement events

<b>COMMUNITY - COUNTRY</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> EVENT</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> EVENT</b>	<b>METHODS</b>
BELTINCI - SLOVENIA	27 May 2025	11 June 2025	CEP + other
EBERAU - AUSTRIA	03 March 2025	14 June 2025	CEP
VAS MEGYEI ÖNKORMÁNYZATI HIVATAL - HUNGARY	24 April 2025	5 June 2025	CEP
BYSTRĚICE – CZECH REPUBLIC	26 February 2025	13 May 2025	CEP
JELŠAVA - SLOVAKIA	9 April 2025	25 August 2025	CEP
COMUNA HODOD - ROMANIA	16 April 2025	22 May 2025	CEP
PRIMORJE-GORSKI KOTAR COUNTY - CROATIA	24 June 2025	29 July 2025	CEP
BOŽIĆI / JELIĆKA - BOSNIA I HERZEGOVINA	June 3 / June 5 2025	3 June 2025	CEP + other
MOJKOVAC - MONTENEGRO	27 June 2025	27 June 2025	CEP + other
SANDANSKI - BULGARIA	20 March 2025 / 30 April 2025	29 July 2025	CEP + other
OPŠTINA DESPOTOVAC - SERBIA	16 May 2025	13 June 2025	CEP + other

## **Detailed workshop documentation**

**Beltinci/Slovenia**

**Bystřice/ Czech Republic**

**Eberau/Austria**

**Comuna Hodod/Romania**

**Mojkovac/Montenegro**

**Jelšava / Slovakia**

**Opština Despotovac/Serbia**

**Božići – Jelićka/Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Primorje-Gorski Kotar County/Croatia**

**Sandanski/Bulgaria**

**Vas Megyei Önkormányzati Hivatal/Hungary**

## **PPT on Participatory Design**

## **Evaluation questionnaire**



# Reporting of alternative Format

## Country report of LP1, Slovenia

<b>Date:</b>	27.05.2025.
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Beltinci, Slovenia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Simona Roudi, simona.roudi@obcina-bekltinci.si Kristina Koter, kristina.koter@obcina-beltinci.si
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	17

## **Documentation of the process (1-2 pages, depending on the format)**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Introduction**

The workshop was opened by the LP1, who highlighted the issue of depopulation and the importance of reactivating vacant buildings. This was followed by a message from the mayor, Mr. Marko Virag, about seeing empty buildings as an opportunity for development. The project team presented the project, its goals, and main challenges such as demographic trends and abandoned buildings.

A short discussion followed, where participants shared examples of deteriorating dwellings / vacant buildings with potential.

### **Presentation of building mapping**

The team presented the process and purpose of mapping deteriorating dwellings in the municipality:

- how buildings were identified (using public records, field work, in cooperation with local communities and municipal services),
- challenges in gathering data (inaccessibility of owners, misunderstandings about intentions, etc.),
- results: number of vacant buildings and their distribution across villages.

Photos of identified buildings with basic information were shown in a projection.

### **Analysis of community needs**

Participants were divided into two groups. Each group discussed and wrote down answers to the questions:

- What do I personally need regarding housing issues?
- What do we need as a community (housing, business premises, tourist accommodation, spaces for associations, etc.)?

## Searching for new functions for vacant buildings

Each group received a “gallery of buildings” - photos and basic information about several deteriorating dwellings and gave some proposals and suggestions for a possible new purpose, and depending on the location, discussed a potential new usage while considering the previously identified community needs, and then select the idea that the group supported most strongly.

## Conclusion

At the end, the groups presented their proposals for new uses of the buildings.

The project leader thanked all participants and announced the next steps:

- selection of three buildings to be discussed in more detail at the next workshop,
- invitation to the second workshop, where concrete ideas for new functions of these buildings will be developed.

## Organizational aspects

- Announcements for the workshop were prepared and published on the official website of the municipality as well as on the municipal social media - Facebook.
- Posters with the most important basic information were hung a week in advance on all notice boards in the municipality.
- The invitation was also shared by local media.
- Invitations were also sent directly via email to building owners, municipal representatives, local entrepreneurs, and other interested parties.
- The workshop was organized in a spacious room within the Beltinci old city, equipped with everything for a successful implementation
- Participants sat partly in plenary, partly in smaller circles.
- Technical support was provided (projection, sound system).
- There was a short break with refreshments, which allowed for additional networking and informal exchange of ideas.

The discussion led to the conclusion that there are various needs in the community for all three purposes – residential use, community use, and commercial use. Some of those were:

#### **Commercial use:**

- **Tourist accommodations (for the folklore festival and beyond):**  
Abandoned dwellings could be renovated and converted into charming guesthouses, small boutique hotels, or bed & breakfasts. This would preserve architectural heritage while providing much-needed capacity for festival visitors and tourists throughout the year.
- **Short-term overnight stays for cyclists:**  
Some abandoned houses, especially those along popular cycling routes, could be adapted into simple, self-service accommodations or small hostels. This would make the area more attractive to cycling tourists without requiring major new construction.
- **Hostel:**  
A larger abandoned building in a central location could be transformed into a hostel, offering affordable lodging for young travelers, groups, and cultural visitors. This reuse would revitalize the building and bring life back into its surroundings.
- **Renovation of homesteads with tourist offers:**  
Abandoned farmhouses and homesteads can become agri-tourism destinations, offering local cuisine, workshops, or farm experiences. This both preserves rural heritage and creates new sources of income.
- **Workshops for old crafts:**  
Unused buildings can be repurposed as spaces where artisans teach and practice traditional crafts. Their authentic atmosphere would enhance the cultural value of these workshops.
- **Preservation of cultural heritage for events and workshops:**  
Historic yet abandoned buildings can host events, exhibitions, and traditional craft demonstrations, turning neglected properties into lively cultural hubs.
- **Apartments for workers:**  
Unused residential buildings can be renovated into modest, functional apartments to house seasonal or permanent workers, helping address local labor shortages without the need for new developments.

#### **Residential use:**

- **Houses in the countryside for young families:**  
Abandoned dwellings can be renovated and offered to young families looking for homes with gardens and space. This would prevent decay, protect heritage, and bring new life to rural villages.
- **Free rental proposals for young families:**  
Municipalities could acquire abandoned houses and offer them to young families at symbolic rents or free of charge, in exchange for renovation and long-term settlement.

- **Affordable housing for young people:**  
Renovated abandoned buildings could become affordable rental units for young residents, easing housing challenges and keeping youth in the area.
- **Protected apartments:**  
Some abandoned dwellings can be adapted to provide safe, accessible housing for vulnerable residents, such as elderly people or persons with disabilities.
- **Residential communities for the elderly:**  
Larger abandoned buildings, like former inns or farmhouses, could be converted into shared living spaces for seniors, promoting social contact and mutual support

#### Community use:

- **Sports hall:**  
While an actual sports hall usually requires specific dimensions, an abandoned warehouse, barn, or industrial building could potentially be adapted for indoor sports or training spaces.
- **Spaces for associations (e.g., in the castle):**  
Unused rooms in historic or abandoned buildings could be turned into meeting rooms, rehearsal spaces, or storage for local cultural and sports associations.
- **Study spaces and co-working:**  
Abandoned houses in central areas could be converted into co-working hubs or quiet study rooms, offering internet access and shared facilities for students and remote workers.
- **Spaces for socializing, rehearsals, youth activities:**  
Empty buildings can be transformed into youth centers or creative spaces where young people can meet, organize workshops, and rehearse performances.
- **Village community spaces:**  
Unused dwellings in villages can be turned into multipurpose halls or small community centers, hosting local events, educational courses, or social gatherings.
- **Day centers for the elderly:**  
Former homes or inns could be renovated into daytime activity centers where seniors gather, socialize, and participate in programs.
- **Spaces for social activities:**  
Any abandoned building in a good location could be adapted into a community venue for events, cultural evenings, and gatherings, helping strengthen social connections.

For each of the 13 buildings, the workshop participants proposed several different potential uses.

**Building ID: Lipovci - 001**

**Address, location:** Lipovci 2, 9231

= Village community center in Lipovci

**Proposed new uses:**

- Satellite unit of the Beltinci retirement home
- Social care / day center
- Rooms for handicraft workshops
- Spaces for various purposes for local residents

**Building ID: Beltinci 009**

**Address, location:** Mladinska ulica 26, Beltinci

= Villa Monde

**Proposed new uses:**

- Library (satellite unit) with coworking spaces
- Spaces for activities of various associations
- Social care facilities
- Youth center (close to the school)
- (Leisure) afternoon activities

**Building ID: Beltinci 008**

**Address, location:** Mladinska ulica 8, 9231 Beltinci

= Former pharmacy

**Proposed new uses:**

- Protocol building for municipal needs
- Space for cultural content and events (hidden courtyard, selected cultural programs, etc.)

**Building ID: Ižakovci 008**

**Address, location:** Ižakovci 121, 9231 Beltinci

**Proposed new uses:**

- Multi-family residential building (e.g., for 2 apartments)
- Business premises/offices
- Worker housing
- Hostel

**Building ID: Gančani 003**

**Address, location:** Gančani 15

**Proposed new uses:**

- Tourist farm (with garden, herbal estate, etc.)

**Building ID: Gančani 004**

**Address, location:** Gančani 100

**Proposed new uses:**

- Conversion of the house for residential purposes

**Building ID: Bratonci 004**

**Address, location:** Bratonci 20

**Proposed new uses:**

- Housing for young families
- Renovation of village community spaces (the building has a strategic location) with various additional facilities

**Building ID: Ižakovci 005**

**Address, location:** Ižakovci 150 (Mercator)

**Proposed new uses:**

- Residential house for 2 families
- The plot size allows for the construction of several buildings
- Could serve as a service point/stop point for cyclists, with accommodation rooms and additional infrastructure/equipment for cyclists (Ižakovci, Island of Love, etc.)
- Glamping

**Building ID: Lipa 005**

**Address, location:** Lipa 135 (old school)

**Proposed new uses:**

- Hostel
- Service point for cyclists, bicycle storage, etc. (important strategic point in the village)

**Building ID: Beltinci 006**

**Address, location:** Ravenska cesta 15

**Proposed new uses:**

- Apartments for families, couples, etc.
- Protocol building that carries a "local story" - suitable for folklore festivals, organization of folk evenings, in the courtyard under the "gumlo" (traditional shelter)
- Offices (e.g., additional space for municipal administration, project office, etc.)
- Small shop with local products
- Assisted living apartments
- Residential apartment

**Building ID: Dokležovje 004****Address, location:** Trate 37, Dokležovje**Proposed new uses:**

- Homestead with additional offerings
- Glamping (quiet location, near the Mura River)
- Farm with free-range chickens, goats, etc.
- Homestead available for rent for a weekend/week to experience rural life (experience being the "master" of the farm)
- House/residence for socially disadvantaged/vulnerable groups

**Building ID: Melinci 003****Address, location:** Melinci 49**Proposed new uses:**

- Economic purpose: free-range chickens, goats; for crafts
- Small apartment

**Building ID: Gančani 002****Address, location:** Gančani 43**Proposed new uses:**

- Estate with a herbal garden (large plot)
- Sustainable homestead
- Spaces for workshops (herbalism, culinary workshops (spreads, juices, baking, etc.))
- Spaces for workshops/activities of the employment office, schools, associations, etc.

### **Background information (1-2 pages)**

*Why did we choose this method? (justification, if not RurALL project)*

*Method – What did we do?*

At the first workshop with the local community, we decided to use the World Café method because we wanted to establish an inclusive, relaxed, yet structured dialogue among the diverse participants. This method enabled equal participation of all attendees, encouraged open discussions in smaller groups, and created a space for exchanging different perspectives and experiences.

We aimed to create an informal atmosphere and foster trust among participants, especially since we were addressing sensitive topics such as depopulation, vacant buildings, and the future of the local environment. The presence of property owners of the mapped buildings among the participants required extra care in choosing an appropriate method.

By rotating between tables and recording ideas, we gathered a wide range of suggestions, which provided us with a more comprehensive insight into the community's thoughts and served as a solid basis for the next steps.

Through careful discussion and analysis, the community identified that unused resources – particularly abandoned dwellings and historic buildings – hold significant potential to address key local needs. By repurposing these spaces, we could create tourist accommodations to support events in the municipality and offer short-term stays for tourists, cyclists, and travelers.

The community also mentioned as a good idea to renovate abandoned houses into affordable homes for young families and workers.

Furthermore, larger or centrally located abandoned buildings could be adapted into protected apartments or senior residential communities, ensuring care and inclusion for older residents.

As a main conclusion, the collective vision shaped during this first workshop illustrates how breathing new life into abandoned and underutilized buildings can preserve local heritage, foster long-term economic vitality, and enrich the everyday experience of residents across the community.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of the Czech Republic**

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### Group 1 – Commercial use

During the discussion, participants expressed strong interest in reviving the former bakery building at Bystřice 33. Ideally, they wished to restore its original commercial purpose as a bakery. However, the owner of the property showed no interest in reopening the business and declined a sale proposal from the city due to disagreements on the price. Environmental risks such as an asbestos roof and insulation were also identified.

Other alternative commercial uses proposed by citizens included establishing a gym or a clubhouse for local associations. These ideas reflect a community need for more commercial and semi-commercial spaces that contribute to daily life and wellbeing.

#### Summary:

- Strong community interest in restoring the former bakery.
- Owner not willing to sell; price disagreements.
- Environmental risks identified (asbestos).
- Alternative proposals: gym, association clubhouse.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants discussed the conversion of several abandoned or underused buildings into different types of residential accommodation, adjusted to various target groups:

- **Starter apartments** for disadvantaged groups:
  - Nesvačily 109
  - Mokrá Lhota 11
  - Oběnice – old school building
  - Bystřice – former station master's house
- **Community apartments** (shared facilities for unrelated individuals):
  - Drachkov - granary and administrative building
- **Regular housing for citizens:**
  - Z Zájezdu 5
  - K Líšnu 118
  - Mokrá Lhota 11
  - Mokrá Lhota 95
  - Karla Nového 476
  - Líštenecká 170

The proposals aimed at addressing the shortage of affordable housing and fostering a diverse and inclusive community.

**Summary:**

- Proposals targeted starter flats, community living, and general housing.
- Emphasis on affordability and inclusion.

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants proposed community-focused use but specific examples were not detailed in the report. Based on typical outcomes for this type of discussion, the proposals likely included spaces for cultural activities, education, public meetings, or social services.)

### **Summary:**

- Likely proposals: community centers, cultural halls, educational spaces.
- Emphasis on revitalizing unused spaces for social cohesion.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim?**

### **Group 1 – Commercial use**

- Focus on revitalizing strategic locations like the bakery for small businesses.
- Explore partnerships with entrepreneurs willing to renovate and use the buildings.
- Address environmental remediation needs early in the planning process.

### **Group 2 – Residential use**

- Prioritize adaptation of municipally owned buildings.
- Target available funding for reconstruction and modernization (e.g., insulation, accessibility).

- Encourage mixed-use concepts where housing and services coexist.

### **Group 3 – Community use**

- Create multifunctional spaces usable for local events, education, and leisure.
- Engage volunteers and local organizations in the renovation process.
- Strengthen ties with regional institutions to support sustainable operations.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Focus on revitalizing strategic locations like the bakery for small businesses, considering a public-private partnership model where the city co-invests with entrepreneurs.
- Establish a local "business incubator" in an abandoned building to support small enterprises and startups.
- Implement environmental assessments early and allocate funding for decontamination (especially asbestos removal) to facilitate safe redevelopment.
- Offer financial incentives such as tax reductions, subsidies, or low-interest loans to attract private investors willing to revitalize abandoned commercial buildings.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Prioritize adaptation of municipally owned buildings, facilitating a faster and more controlled redevelopment process.
- Apply for national and EU funding (such as ERDF or social housing funds) to finance extensive renovations including thermal insulation, barrier-free access, and energy efficiency improvements.
- Promote mixed-use housing concepts, combining residential units with local amenities such as co-working spaces, childcare centers, or healthcare facilities.
- Introduce "rent-to-own" models to attract low-income families, allowing them to gradually acquire ownership.
- Encourage cooperative housing initiatives where groups of citizens can collectively manage housing projects in revitalized buildings.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Convert buildings into multifunctional hubs offering cultural events, adult education courses, coworking opportunities, and spaces for youth activities.
- Establish partnerships with NGOs and civic associations to operate and animate the spaces sustainably.
- Apply for grants under regional development and social inclusion programs to fund adaptations and operating costs.
- Organize community volunteer events for the renovation and ongoing maintenance of the spaces, fostering stronger community ownership.
- Involve local schools and educational institutions in using the spaces for lifelong learning and extracurricular activities.

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The high turnout and active participation at the first workshop exceeded expectations. Although initial engagement was cautious, participants quickly became highly involved, openly sharing ideas and engaging in constructive dialogue.

The aims of the RurALL project were explained at the beginning, followed by instructions on how attendees could contribute. Discussions revealed strong local attachment to the studied buildings and a willingness to repurpose them to benefit the community and the local economy.

Municipal representatives actively participated, providing insight into city plans and possible cooperation scenarios. Participants were invited to the second workshop, where they will further develop their proposals with the assistance of experts.

### Summary:

- Very positive community response.
- Clear demand for revitalization of unused properties.
- Active municipal involvement.
- Planning for follow-up workshop with expert support.



# Reporting of Workshop 1 – Lebenswerte Gemeinden

## Country report of Austria

<b>Date:</b>	03.03.2025, 18-21:00
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Eberau, Austria
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Daniela Fuchs/ Maddalena Lamura
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	8, mostly members of local authority

## How can Eberau remain liveable? What are challenges? Living

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Ageing of the community → Enable intergenerational living
- Maintain a minimum level of infrastructure (department store, doctor, bank, kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, post office)
- Job offers to enable people to move in
- Expansion of childcare (renovation of the school building; offer 0.5-14 years + focus)
- Use of the moated castle Eberau
- Regional manager
- Revitalization of the municipality's center - working and living in the center
  - Main square as forecourt to the moated castle
  - Revitalization of vacancies by young families

## Proposals

- Tourism
  - Water (+Wine): Theme trail - the river through the ages
  - Winegrowers' cooperative: wine tasting, wine spring, wine baptism (warehouse; as in Eisenberg, Moschendorf)
  - Cycle tourism: e-bike + charging stations
- Care for the elderly (possibly a hub for the entire Pinka Valley)
  - Organize and expand neighbourhood assistance (e.g. shopping)

- Assisted living, retirement and nursing home
- Strengthen local value chains
  - Market local and regional products better and make them more accessible (e.g. online/delivery for older people without a car)
  - Maintain a minimum level of infrastructure (department store, doctor, bank, kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, post office)
- Use of Eberau moated castle
  - “Living in the castle” - luxury apartments
  - Opening up the castle grounds (moated castle, Pinka, weir system)
  - Opening for events, e.g. provincial exhibition on ecological transformation in the castle





## How can Eberau remain liveable? Commercial function

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- More jobs, businesses as a prerequisite for relocation
- Eberau as a production site
  - Need for raw material/construction supplies via Eberau (infrastructure, halls, building sites)
  - Limited due to infrastructural issues (e.g. tonnage restrictions on route)
  - SMEs too far from larger conurbations (Szombáthely, approx. 25 km?)
  - Hungarian employees
- Revitalize restaurants and coffee houses

- Pastry shop: only well frequented in summer (lack of staff due to low turnover, but opening hours FR+SA mornings), closed down in meantime
- Maintain and refill local shop
  - Important meeting place: local supplier (50m<sup>2</sup>, but 120 people daily)
- Expand infrastructure (connection to urban centers)
- Hungarian customers: Cultural & language barriers (but potential?)
- Revitalizing the town centre
  - Main square: 100 years ago, there was a business in every house, today hardly any remain

## Proposals

- Event location at main square (power, public restrooms)
- Sustainability & platforms (BEDI?)
- Trade fair, e.g. local products (similar to Kramuri, possibly combine)

## How can Eberau remain liveable? Public function

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Change district-based thinking → towards the entire community
- Strengthen (cultural) commitment: club life and culture depend on a few people
- Youth engagement (meeting point youth room in the municipal office, but social activities such as public projects, social projects for the municipality/region, etc. are lacking)
- Expand mobility (especially small range, a kind of BAST+)

## Proposition

- Alpine Club, e.g. Section Südburgenland (Oberwart) or Sections in Vienna (e.g. Edelweiss)  
→ yoga, senior citizens, women's hiking etc.?

## What unused resources does Eberau have? How can they support this aim? – commercial function

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

- Viticulture, crafts
- Hungarian employees
  - Gastronomy and trade: 70% from Hungary
- Energy resources: sun, biomass (en masse); desire for decentralized supply through small biogas plants (combined with district heating plants) □ possibly docking to Güssing
  - Member of Ökoenergieland (eco-energy center)
  - Member of EEE (European Center for Renewable Energies)
- Ecology & natural space
  - Member of Naturpark Weinidylle (Uhudler)
  - Nature Park guided tours (e.g. Loisig, checkerboard flower, ornithology), but no frequency drivers
  - Hunting

## **What unused resources does Eberau have? How can they support this aim? – living**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Location advantage land price (purchase of old buildings vs. price in the rest of Austria)

- Immigration potential: young Hungarian families

Living in nature and tranquillity

Education and childcare facilities (basis for young families to settle here)

Good range of childcare, but could be expanded (renovation of the school building; offer 0.5-14 years + focus)

Maintain/exercise social life (culture) – Associations, Blues festival, Theater (in the castle)

Music school in Szombathely as a local resource (for local population, but also cultural offer)

## **What unused resources does Eberau have? How can they support this aim? – public function**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

There is some historical potential about the Erdödi family and the related jurisdiction (gallows, pillory etc.)

## **Final Discussion**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Elaborate discussions during the process

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL

# Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities

## Country report of Romania

### Workshop 16.04.2025

During the mapping activity, which was completed on December 31, 2024, a series of deteriorated buildings were identified, and essential data about their current condition, as well as their potential future functionalities, were collected. The area of interest was the locality of Hodod, Satu Mare County.

Results of this activity:

- Identification of a total of 41 deteriorated buildings in Hodod Commune that require interventions;
- Classification of these buildings based on the type of damage and renovation needs;
- Selection of 23 buildings that will benefit from basic ideas, detailed projects, and a comparative analysis.

The workshop included presentations, debates on providing new functionalities to deteriorated or abandoned buildings. The workshop had four objectives: to inform participants about the RurALL project; mobilizing project participants; identifying ideas regarding community needs; collecting first ideas about how to use abandoned/ deteriorated dwellings. Through community engagement in working groups, 3 possible functionalities of the buildings after renovation were analyzed:

- private (potential for individual use, single family use and multi-family use)
- commercial (potential for start-ups, small business, tourist services, etc.)
- public (potential for common good, serving community needs).

Participants debated the following questions:

1. How can my community remain livable and worth residents?
2. How can we use unused local resources, like abandoned dwellings or human/economic/natural resources, to achieve this in the next years?

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The main economic activity is agriculture (mainly vegetable and cereals growing, livestock farms), but the support measures are not sufficient for the families to decide to start new agricultural activities as the source of income. The existing agricultural households can still provide for their own needs and generate some income on the market. The best placed products are vegetables and livestock. There are some rural tourism households and also new initiatives for start-up business.

More jobs, businesses as a prerequisite for relocation.

Restaurant and traditional pastry shop.

Revitalizing the town centre.

Event location at Wesselényi castle (power, public restrooms) .

Trade fair, e.g. local products.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Many houses of the old generations and decades ago are now empty and deteriorating due to emigration of younger generations and consequently due to lack of beneficiaries of public services.

Social welfare service pointed out that there is a need for the daytime social shelters for old people who live alone. Residential use of the existing abandoned dwellings for affordable housing initiatives, especially for young families, seniors, or newcomers would make the most benefit.

Some abandoned dwellings in the village near the popular tourist attractions (castles, mill) should be repurposed for rental or hostels for tourists and visitors

Are likely support measures for the private owners of family houses to improve their residential capacities for categorization of the rural tourist households and provide rentals for the tourists and visitors.



## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Change village-based thinking towards the entire district community.

Revitalize and convert empty old historical mill and/or reuse the old community centers (e.g. Wesselényi castle) into new ones with some additional and most needed activities in the village for different age groups.

To create an art&crafts local museum, attracting cultural tourism.



## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Agriculture, viticulture, crafts.

Gastronomy and trade

Renovate and adapt empty houses into small shops, craft stores that serve residents and visitors.

Use empty spaces of empty dwellings for artisan workshops, or craft workshops, showcasing local craftsmanship and attracting tourists.

Use these spaces to establish local pastry or restaurants, and other tourism support services for attracting tourists.

Organize markets or exhibitions within these spaces to promote local products.



## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Living in nature and tranquility

Education and childcare facilities (basis for young families to settle here)

Good range of childcare, but could be further expanded.

Social Integration of Roma people into local community, especially the youth, as important part for the future of locality.



## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Transforming abandoned dwellings into community assets can significantly enhance the quality of life in Hodod commune.

Historical potential: Wesselényi and Degenfeld family castles, historical flour-mill.



## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group discussions took place while searching for the usage of the dwelling ideas. The groups exchange their perspectives of suggested ideas and select a narrow list of functions. A mill, the Wesselényi Castle and a traditional blue house were identified, as well as two specific areas (the row of houses and a white house).

The first workshop ignited the interest of community members for the future workshop with expert on architecture.



**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of Montenegro**

## Overview of who is here – Warm up

Participants introduce themselves: Why did you come here today?

Workshop WS1 began with a welcome address to the participants and an introductory speech by the project manager, Biljana Radović Fuštić, who stated, among other things:

“Thank you for being here today and for joining us in building steps toward the development of our community. Today, we are gathered as part of the RurALL project – Revitalisation of Abandoned and Underutilised Buildings in Rural Areas, implemented under the Interreg Danube Region Programme 2021–2027, with financial support from the European Union. The Municipality of Mojkovac is participating as a territorial partner. The aim of the RurALL project is not to directly fund the renovation of buildings, but rather to work together with the community to: identify local needs, develop realistic ideas for how abandoned spaces can be brought back to life, and create models that can later be used to seek funding through EU funds, local initiatives, or partnerships. We extend our gratitude to the private property owners who have allowed their spaces to be included in this process. Without your contribution, this work would not be meaningful.”

Workshop WS1 was attended by 13 participants from villages in the Mojkovac municipality, who actively took part in the session. The group was diverse—comprising people of different ages, genders, education levels, professions, and hobbies—but all shared a strong desire and motivation to engage in their local community.

Nikoleta Rakočević, a journalist by profession, comes from the village of Podbišće. Her main reason for participating is to help reduce depopulation in Mojkovac. As she explained, the area is affected by a declining birth rate, and preserving and revitalizing villages through various projects is a way to counter this trend. She hopes this will help preserve and save her native village of Podbišće.

Jovanka Nina Merdović, a teacher from Podbišće, is motivated to take part in the workshops because she wants young people to change their perception of rural life, stay in the villages, and in doing so, contribute to their revitalization. She hopes to see community development as a result.

Aleksandar Vuković, from the village of Štitarica, is an agronomist employed in public administration. He expects the workshops to lead to shared solutions among participants. He expressed a desire to once again work with young people, seeing the workshops and the project as an opportunity to retain youth in rural communities, where they can generate income and bring innovation.

Nemanja Vuković, a 16-year-old student at a vocational school for mechanical engineering, comes from the village of Polja. He hopes that the project and the workshops will empower young people to engage in rural tourism. He believes that youth should be encouraged to grow and develop their skills.

Nemanja's old family house was mapped as part of the project, and he participated in the workshop on behalf of his father, who was unable to attend.

Radomir Pantović, a handball coach and president of the Stevanovac Local Community, currently has no specific expectations from the workshops, but he expressed interest in the project and its concept, as he hopes that something positive will happen in Mojkovac.

Ljubomir Vukadinović, from the village of Bojna Njiva, is a retired teacher with an international career and former director of the local ski resort. He returned to Mojkovac to engage in organic agricultural production. He owns large organic fruit orchards, which he processes into premium juices, and is involved in rural tourism. He expects the project and workshops to support young people in the community, to empower them and encourage them to return to rural life. He sees projects like this as an opportunity for rural development and wants to lead by example. He hopes young people will reconnect with nature. His old house has been mapped as part of the project.

Aleksa Majski Rakočević, from Štitarica, is a 15-year-old student at a secondary school for tourism. He is motivated to participate in the project and workshops because he wants more young people to work in tourism, and he sees this project as a great opportunity. Aleksa attended the workshop with his father.

Veljko Rakočević, also from Štitarica, is a dentist with work experience on overseas tourist cruise ships. He is currently engaged in rural tourism. He was drawn to the idea of empowering the community, and he expects that certain properties in Mojkovac will be put to use, contributing to community strengthening and project success. His house has also been mapped.

Radoje Krgović, an economist from the village of Lepenac, is employed in local government. He expects to learn more about the opportunities offered by the program and hopes that it will contribute to improving the quality of life in rural areas and encourage people to return to the countryside.

Jelena Ristić, from Lepenac, works for the Tourism Organization and is also the owner of private accommodation. She hopes to become familiar with the program's possibilities and participate in experience sharing that will help improve the position of young people in rural areas.

Marina Blažević, also employed by the Tourism Organization, comes from Podbišće. From this workshop, she expects positive exchange of experiences and the development of concepts that will revive Mojkovac and stimulate tourism.

Vera Tomović lives in the town but is closely connected to the village of Podbišće. She works at the Cultural Center. She hopes the workshop will proceed as planned and that, through teamwork, they will reach meaningful outcomes. Her house is included in the mapping process.

Zoran Konatar, from Lepenac, works in local government. He aims to contribute with his knowledge, experience, and active participation, to help strengthen the Mojkovac community in the future.

Mirjana Đundić, expert and lead facilitator, Vesna Delić, expert facilitator, Dejana Zindović, associate in the field of architecture and design and Jovana Tomović notetaker were in charge of the workshop.

Following the participant introductions and in accordance with the Agenda and the recommendations from the project guide, participants were divided into three groups: commercial use, residential use, public use.

The method of division was carried out by the facilitator, who distributed color-coded stickers to the participants. The groups were then formed based on sticker colors: blue, pink, and yellow.

**Keywords: cooperation, innovation, development, implementation, optimism**

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group 1 (facilitated by Mirjana Đundić) was composed, after sticker-based regrouping, of the following members: Aleksandar (agronomist), Ljubomir (organic producer), Marina (tourism expert and owner of rental accommodation), Radoje (economist). Based on their knowledge, experience, and understanding of local issues, participants shared observations on how the local community could become livable and worthy of living in. As part of the discussion, they also provided a brief historical overview of Mojkovac's economic difficulties, identifying them as the main trigger for broader challenges affecting other levels of community functioning. The economist shared insights related to economic and infrastructural challenges facing the Mojkovac municipality, and together with the organic producer, contributed a historical perspective on local development. The organic producer and the agronomist highlighted the agricultural potential of the area, emphasizing the lack of connection between local producers and the local market. The tourism expert focused on Mojkovac's natural assets and its agro-tourism potential.

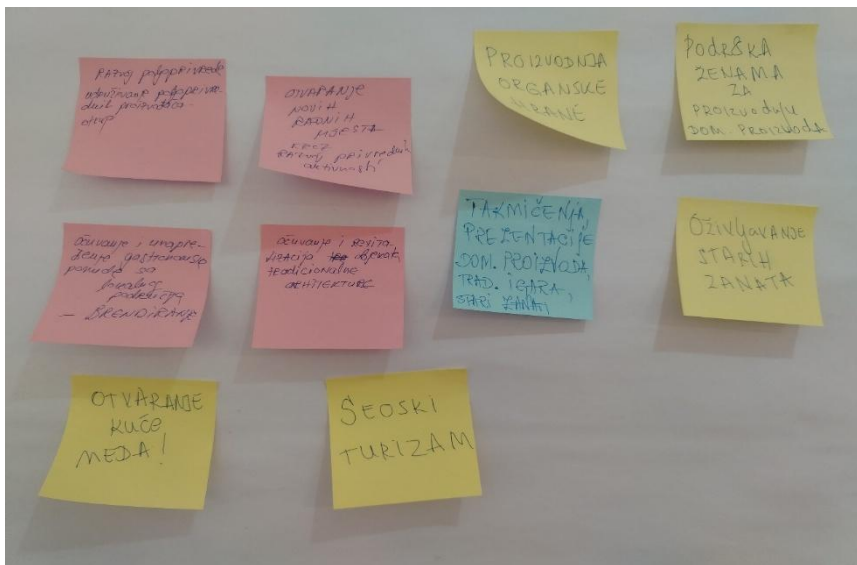
One of the historical facts for which Mojkovac is known is that the present-day town was established on the site of medieval Brskovo, dating back to the 13th century, where coins were once minted. Almost every village in the Mojkovac area has its own historical landmark. In more recent history, Mojkovac was recognized as an industrial town, known for its mining and wood industries, as well as a military equipment manufacturing plant. However, following the closure of most factories during the 1990s, Mojkovac lost its status as an industrial center. Today, only a few small private factories remain active, employing a limited number of people.



Today, the most recognizable characteristic of Mojkovac is its focus on agriculture, particularly livestock farming and fruit cultivation, although this sector remains underdeveloped. Mojkovac has significant potential for the development of tourism and sports, as it is located at the foot of the Sinjajevina, Bjelasica, and Porošćenske Mountains. However, these natural resources are not being properly utilized, as there is no infrastructure that connects tourism with agricultural production, and an additional challenge is the lack of adequate accommodation facilities.

It is essential to consider the creation of new jobs through the development of tourism, particularly rural tourism, the construction of new hotels, as well as the strengthening of agricultural production. Since Mojkovac is no longer an industrial town, there is a clear need to develop a new concept that will enable job creation, as the municipality is facing population decline—driven by a lack of employment opportunities and the absence of a sustainable

mechanism to retain young people. In the villages, the population mostly consists of elderly residents. In addition, the community would be more livable if local agricultural producers were connected, and if the agricultural products made in Mojkovac were marketed and sold in local shops, restaurants, hotels, and agro-tourism facilities. Participants identified the main "culprits" as the national system, which has completely neglected the north of Montenegro, but also as the lack of empathy, cooperation, and coordination among local residents—all of which significantly hinder the progress and development of Mojkovac and its surrounding area. While participants expressed concern about personal interests and opportunism, they also showed a readiness to overcome these challenges.



Note 1. Development of agricultural production, association of agricultural producers, and product procurement

Note 2. Opening of new job opportunities through the development of economic activities.

Note 3. Organic food production

Note 4 Support for women in the production of local products

Note 5. Preservation and enhancement of the local gastronomic offer, along with branding

Note 6 Conservation and revitalization of buildings of traditional architecture.

Note 7. Competitions and exhibitions of local products, traditional games, and traditional crafts

Note 8. Revitalization of traditional crafts

Note 9. Opening of the Honey House.

10. Rural tourism

Ways to Improve the Community and Make It More Livable:

\*Strengthening road infrastructure, which is a fundamental precondition for tourism development. This requires targeted investments, along with zoning regulations in protected areas to ensure construction using natural materials in a traditional architectural style.

- \*Empowering agricultural production through diversification, development of new recipes and technologies, so that producers are not reliant solely on traditional products such as Kolašin layered cheese (Štitarički lisnati sir), but instead offer new value to tourists and the local market, in collaboration with experts.
- \*Developing agriculture by organizing producer cooperatives and establishing systems for product procurement and distribution.
- \*Branding local agricultural products and improving the gastronomic offering.
- \*Providing support to women engaged in the production of homemade goods such as jams, juices, and rakija (fruit brandy).
- \*Supporting women's entrepreneurship, particularly women involved in knitting, weaving, embroidery, and other handicrafts.
- \*Establishing a "House of Honey", which would serve both as a retail and procurement center for honey, and become a regional hub for the northern part of Montenegro.
- \*Promoting traditional crafts through events and competitions such as scythe mowing, stone throwing, and prsten (ring) games.
- \*Developing and promoting rural tourism, with marketing support via digital channels, making local offerings more accessible to a broader audience.
- \*Facilitating the placement of locally produced goods on the local market, ensuring producers have stable access to buyers.

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group 2 (facilitator Biljana Radović Fuštić), after regrouping with stickers, consisted of 5 members: Jovanka Nina (teacher), Aleksa Majski (high school student), Zoran (lawyer), Radomir (handball coach), and Vera (culture worker).

Their observations on how our community can remain livable and worth living in were diverse, reflecting the group's varied composition. The group based their insights on the needs they recognized within their own generation, as well as the presumed needs of other community members.

The teacher spoke about the necessity to offer the youngest children activities and adequate conditions within the rural school and its yard, to prevent them from enrolling in urban schools. The high school student addressed conditions at the secondary school, noting that there aren't enough students, many from his generation have gone to other towns to attend vocational schools, and the reason is that Mojkovac's only high school offers just two study tracks, which is insufficient for the interests and educational needs of his generation. The handball coach spoke from an athlete's perspective, emphasizing that there are not enough sports activities and programs for the youngest children, while there are some for elementary and high school students. He stressed the need to improve sports infrastructure and retain young talents. The culture worker noted that the local cultural institution offers enough cultural content, including the first 3D cinema in northern Montenegro, film screenings three times a week, monthly exhibitions, book promotions, and occasional theater performances. However, attendance is very low to almost nonexistent, highlighting the lack of public interest in cultural events. The local administration employee spoke from the perspective of a public servant, stating that the local government is trying to improve the current situation but is often constrained by a lack of funds and economic activity. He concluded that the definite future lies in tourism and agriculture.



Mojkovac is a town increasingly being abandoned by young people, with mortality rates exceeding birth rates. The needs of the youth cannot be adequately met, and one of the key problems is the lack of activities that would fulfill their educational needs. The secondary school lacks study programs that are attractive to young people, which leads many to leave for other towns to continue their education as early as 14 or 15 years old, and often entire families

relocate from Mojkovac. Children and youth who remain lack sufficient recreational and educational activities. Although Mojkovac has great potential for the development of sports, sports activities, and rural tourism, poor infrastructure and inadequate planning of activities—especially during the winter season (tourists perceive Mojkovac mainly as a summer destination)—along with the lack of attractive secondary school programs, further contribute to emigration. The population, especially in rural areas, has limited digital literacy and weaker knowledge of foreign languages. Since Mojkovac is no longer an industrial town, its greatest advantage today is clean air and untouched nature. Migration began with the closure of factories, resulting in a large number of private properties that are no longer inhabited. These properties can be categorized as follows:

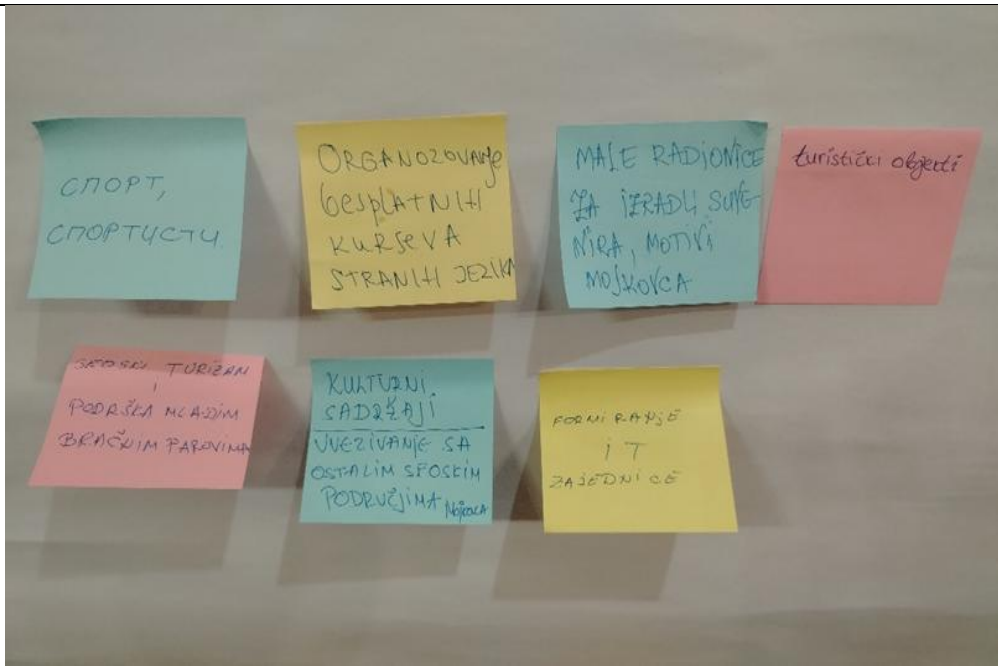
\*Houses in remote villages near the mountains – these houses are completely devastated and have not been visited for decades.

\*Houses in villages and settlements closer to the town – these properties are less neglected but have not been used for years.

\*Family houses used occasionally (e.g., for annual vacations) – these are preserved and fully functional.

\*Functional houses where no one lives due to unresolved property-legal issues or because the owners live in other countries or continents.

\*Teacher's houses that were used before major migrations, now abandoned.



Note 1 Sports and athletes

Note 2 Organizing free foreign language courses

Note 3 Small souvenir-making workshops featuring motifs of Mojkovac

Note 4 Tourism infrastructure

Note 5 Rural tourism and support for young married couples

Note 6 Cultural programs / connecting with other rural areas of Mojkovac

Note 7 Establishing an IT community

Some ways to make the community more livable include repurposing abandoned private properties:

**Rural tourism** represents a developmental opportunity for Mojkovac and Montenegro. Private estates could be allocated to young married couples who would engage in rural tourism, with the obligation to develop not only accommodation but also agricultural production and local food products. Such a model could reduce village depopulation, with the condition that a contract is signed, restricting the use of the property by the young couple to a minimum of five years.

Currently, Mojkovac as a tourist destination lacks a **souvenir shop offering authentic souvenirs**. Historical facts should be leveraged to produce souvenirs that reflect specific historical periods, thereby enriching the city's tourist offer.

**Private houses** could be transformed into **artist colonies**, strengthening the city's cultural scene and opening Mojkovac to artists from various regions. These properties can also serve as educational centers and playrooms for children and youth, which are currently lacking in

Mojkovac. This would address the need for childcare for working parents and create spaces for foreign language learning, as well as for the development of creative and educational activities for young people.

Such properties could also be used for **tourism purposes**, offering authenticity and warmth that other tourist accommodations often cannot provide.

Private properties could serve as workspaces for **IT professionals**, marking a step toward developing a community suitable for **digital nomads**, opening new opportunities for the local economy.

Given that Mojkovac lacks sufficient **facilities for winter sports and recreation** during the winter season, these properties could accommodate tourists interested in snow activities, thereby extending the tourist season and retaining visitors during the winter months.

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group 3 (facilitator Vesna Delić), after regrouping by sticker colors, consisted of four members: Nikoleta (journalist), Jelena (tourism specialist), Veljko (dentist and owner of an agritourism complex), and Nemanja (high school student). The group members discussed ways in which the local community of Mojkovac could become a more livable and valuable place, based on their understanding of the issues, personal experiences, professional perspectives, and individual observations. The high school student reflected on the educational, cultural, and developmental needs of young people, as well as the need for the community to involve as many youth as possible in activities related to tourism and rural tourism as a mechanism for improving the quality of life in Mojkovac. The journalist emphasized community sustainability through cultural and historical heritage, pointing out the untapped potential in this area, which could allow Mojkovac to make a broader social contribution. The dentist and owner of the agritourism complex highlighted the historical background of challenges facing the local community, the importance of local councils (Mjesne zajednice), and the potential within the rural tourism sector. Jelena discussed the importance of tourism and the need to expand certain cultural event.



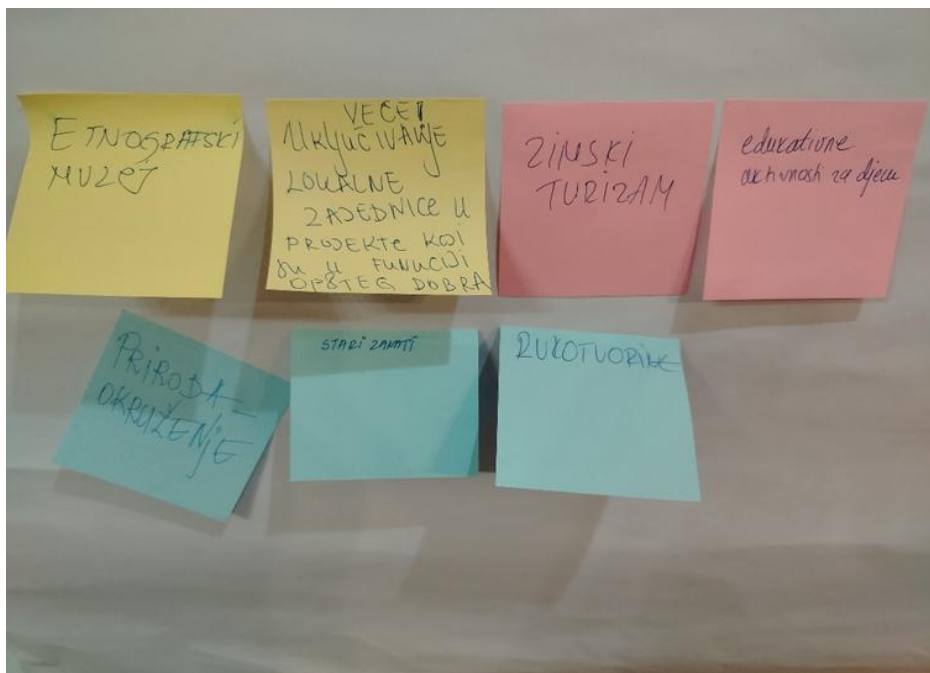
The Municipality of Mojkovac today relies on **tourism and agricultural production—sectors** that require further development. With the closure of factories and poor infrastructure, many residents were forced to seek employment and a different way of life in other cities across Montenegro.

As a result of population migration, the need for organizing events and gatherings in local community centers (mjesne zajednice) and other public-use facilities has diminished. Village schools have been closed, teachers' residences are now abandoned, and state-owned collection centers are no longer operational due to reduced agricultural output. Some vegetable producers are at times forced to destroy surplus yields because there are no established systems for product collection and distribution.

Local community centers once served as hubs of social life, bringing together children, youth, and the elderly. Today, spaces and programs intended for children and young people are virtually nonexistent. Existing events are seasonal in nature, mainly focused on tourism and gastronomy—such as **Mojkovački otkos, Mojkovačka čorbijada, Days of Honey and Healthy Food**. Cultural events are rare, and festivals like the Mojkovac Film Autumn or Mojkovac Fest are

insufficient to represent the rich history and culture of the town to both tourists and local residents.

Mojkovac lacks galleries, museums, and ethnographic museums that could enrich the cultural offer through permanent exhibitions and contribute to the education and cultural development of children and youth. As a result, there is currently no space dedicated to preserving the rich cultural, historical, and ethnographic heritage of Mojkovac.



Note 1 Ethnographic Museum

Note 2 Greater involvement of the local community in projects serving the common good

Note 3 Winter tourism

Note 4 Educational activities for children

Note 5 Nature and environment

Note 6 Traditional crafts

Note 7 Handicrafts

How the Community Can Remain Livable Through the Repurposing of Public Buildings:

\*Vacant buildings can be transformed into ethnographic museums or galleries, where exhibits reflecting the life and history of Mojkovac—such as drawings, records, legends, photographs, sculptures, and authentic artifacts—would be displayed.

\*These spaces could be allocated to children and youth, enabling the organization of educational, cultural, and creative activities. This would enhance education, cultural development, and care for younger generations.

\*Vacant public buildings can also support the development of winter tourism, serving as mountain lodges or accommodation facilities in rural areas, offering nature-based stays for tourists who prefer active holidays.

\*This approach also opens opportunities for the elderly population—especially women—to engage in traditional handcrafts and help preserve local artisanal skills, thereby contributing to the protection of tradition, culture, and the distinct identity of Mojkovac. In addition to infrastructure, stronger engagement and support from the local community is essential for initiatives aimed at the common good, so that both tourists and residents can jointly contribute to preserving cultural identity, fostering tourism development, and improving the overall quality of life in Mojkovac.

*"Following this activity, the participants took part in a session ('Pause and Housing' gallery) dedicated to the mapped sites, during which they reviewed and familiarized themselves with the mapped locations.*



## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The agronomist provided a reflection through discussion on the valorization of the sites for the development of beekeeping and the establishment of a Honey House, taking into account the natural potential and the preserved environment on one hand, and the presence of beekeeping organizations on the other. The organic producer discussed the adaptation and valorization of the sites for the purpose of establishing an agricultural products purchasing center and a cold storage facility, as well as for adaptation and valorization for agrotourism purposes. Radoje reflected, through discussion, on the use of the sites for launching a production process by employing new technologies that reduce production costs and contribute to the diversification of production. The tourism expert emphasized that the purpose of the sites should be viewed in the context of strengthening women's entrepreneurship and the necessity of souvenir shops to complement the tourism offer, as well as the development of rural tourism through support to young married couples.

Mojkovac can leverage its **natural resources** and assets to contribute to the local community and improve conditions for individuals engaged in production, who face daily challenges in organizing the sale and distribution of their products. **A key component in the development of rural areas for commercial purposes is collaboration with the local community, as well as strengthening road and utility infrastructure to facilitate these processes.**



The ways in which abandoned and underutilized buildings can be repurposed for commercial purposes include the following:

\* **Honey House** -An abandoned building that meets technical requirements can be adapted into a Honey House, thereby strengthening agriculture and beekeeping in Mojkovac. There are three beekeeping associations in the municipality, one of which has 80 members, and the area is known for its unspoiled nature and high-quality honey. The Honey House would serve for the collection and sale of honey, as well as for education, workshops, and the work of expert services. Currently, the northern region of Montenegro lacks a facility for processing and purchasing honey in larger quantities. This project would facilitate the placement of honey from Mojkovac and the surrounding region, create jobs for local people, and provide premises for the Beekeepers' Association of the Northern Region. With the support of ministries and NGOs, both production and sales would be significantly improved.

\* **Agricultural Products Purchasing Center**- One of the existing buildings that meets technical standards can be repurposed as a purchasing center for agricultural products. Many producers—particularly potato and vegetable growers—do not have facilities to sell larger

quantities of produce, and there is no nearby vegetable processing plant. The center would purchase surplus produce at fair market prices, stimulate agricultural production, and provide a secure outlet for products. The project could be implemented with the support of the local government and the Ministry of Agriculture.

**\* Cold Storage Facility for Wild and Cultivated Berries-** An abandoned building could be converted into a cold storage facility for collecting wild and cultivated berries, enabling foragers and raspberry growers to sell their fruit at fair prices. The cold storage would supply tourist and hospitality businesses throughout the year and create new jobs for both permanent and seasonal workers.

**\* Small-Scale Facility for Herbal Tea and Dried Fruit Production-** The Mojkovac area is rich in medicinal herbs and tea plants. One building could be repurposed to launch small-scale production of herbal teas and dried fruits. This facility would allow young producers to use modern equipment and innovations in the production process, including solar drying, wild berry freeze-drying, fruit chip production, and mushroom drying. The project could be realized with support from innovation centers and international NGOs.

**\* Space for Women's Entrepreneurship and Preservation of Traditional Crafts-** One of the buildings could be designated for women's entrepreneurship, serving as a space for producing wool items, knitting, embroidery, weaving, garment sewing, and other traditional crafts. These spaces would function not only as workshops but also as places to promote and preserve traditional skills and craftsmanship.

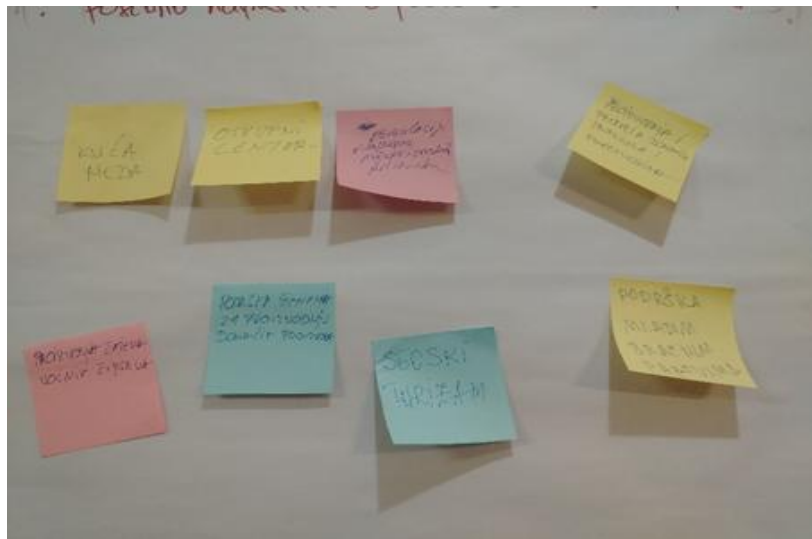
**\* Shops, Souvenir Stores, and Gift Shops-** Buildings can be adapted into retail spaces and souvenir shops where women who produce jams, juices, and other homemade products could sell their goods directly. This would enrich the tourist offering of Mojkovac and could be supported through collaboration with NGOs.

**\* Facility for the Development of Rural Tourism-** One of the buildings could be adapted for the provision of rural tourism services, allowing guests to actively participate in farm activities such as haymaking, fruit and vegetable picking, cheese making, and staying in a traditional rural setting. The facility could also function as a digital center to promote households involved in rural tourism.

**\* Facility for Agritourism and Support for Young Families-** A building could be designated for the development of agritourism, under the condition that it is run by a married couple with

children, who would be engaged in both agriculture and offering tourist accommodation. This would contribute to reducing depopulation in rural areas.

Such an approach would create opportunities to transform abandoned and underutilized buildings into functional spaces for commercial use, thereby enhancing local production, tourism, the preservation of tradition, job creation, and the empowerment of the local community.



Note 1 Honey House (Center for Honey Production and Processing)

Note 2 Agricultural Procurement Center

Note 3 Regulation of the distribution and marketing of agricultural products

Note 4 Production and sale of local products and handicrafts

Note 5 Production of teas and fruit chips

Note 6 support for women in the production of homemade products

Note 7 Rural tourism

Note 8 Assistance programs for young married couples

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The teacher emphasized the abandoned teacher's apartment located in the schoolyard in Podbišće, suggesting that it could be repurposed for child-focused activities. A high school student expressed that it would be great if one of the abandoned buildings could be turned into a space for youth and creatives. The handball coach noted that the buildings could be given to individuals to live and create in, based on a contract system, and that some of the structures located in mountainous and remote parts of the municipality could be converted into mountain lodges, rental accommodations, and similar uses. A cultural worker, who also owns a mapped house, stated that she would be willing to give her house to someone to live in and maintain the surrounding land, provided that the person is ready to invest in renovating it, as it is currently uninhabitable. She would agree to do so for a period of 5 to 10 years, after which she would offer it to someone else—with an emphasis on young married couples who wish to return to Mojkovac or those who want to stay but currently have no roof over their heads. One of her conditions would be to reserve part of the house for herself to use occasionally, while the rest would be available for the tenants. A local government employee expressed skepticism regarding all forms of property transfer, stating that resolving ownership issues is extremely difficult despite good intentions and that there is significant potential for misuse. Following the group work, in the plenary session, participants shared their previous and additional ideas. The following conclusions and proposals were summarized:

Mojkovac possesses resources in the form of abandoned or rarely used private properties that, through repurposing, could be utilized for various purposes, contributing to community development and the local economy. Tourism in Mojkovac has been experiencing significant growth, and in order to offer an authentic rural experience, **granting free use of private properties to young families—under the condition of signing a contract to engage in rural tourism—can serve as a direct measure to reduce depopulation and strengthen the community.** This model provides support to local families while also benefiting property owners living abroad who do not want their properties to fall into disrepair. The project could be further supported through collaboration with the local community or EU funds.

**Private properties could also be repurposed into mini hotels, mountain lodges, or tourist accommodation units for athletes and winter sports enthusiasts.** Such facilities, especially in the area of Štitarica, would enhance the range of activities offered on Sinjajevina mountain.

Their repurposing could be carried out with the support of local government and rural development and tourism funds.

One of the **private buildings could be adapted into a childcare and educational center, which would significantly contribute to community development and help** address the lack of such facilities in Mojkovac. This would allow for proper care of children whose parents are working, while the building could also function as a playroom, birthday party venue, and educational space. Educational activities such as foreign language learning could be offered free of charge for children from Mojkovac. Implementation could be realized through business plans, credit lines, and collaboration with NGOs and local government.



In addition, a **private building could be adapted into a coworking space** for the IT community or a multifunctional venue for seminars and workshops. Through collaboration with coworking spaces outside of Mojkovac and access to business startup loans, this project could create new opportunities for youth and attract digital nomads.

Another private **property could be repurposed into a souvenir shop and workshop for creating wood and metal products, aimed at developing authentic Mojkovac souvenirs** and enhancing the local tourism offer. Currently, Mojkovac lacks a souvenir shop and

recognizable souvenirs. Such a space would allow for the development of small workshops with a medieval theme and the promotion of local craftsmanship. A sustainable business model could be achieved through financing and cooperation with artisan associations.

This approach allows abandoned or underutilized private properties to be repurposed for the development of tourism, education, and the local economy, while simultaneously reducing depopulation and creating new employment opportunities and pathways for the economic empowerment of Mojkovac.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

A dentist and owner of an agritourism facility reflected in the discussion on the potential use of premises belonging to Local Community Offices (Mjesne zajednice), which in the past played multiple roles, particularly in fulfilling the cultural and educational needs of the community. He sees the potential of these facilities in their renovation and restoration to their original functions: culture, education, and information. A high school student pointed out the potential of utilizing the resources of abandoned buildings, especially the former school building in Prošćenje, for the development of winter sports or conversion into a tourist facility, considering the shortage of hotel accommodation, as Mojkovac currently has only one hotel. A tourism specialist expanded on the student's idea, emphasizing that such a facility could significantly enhance the tourism potential of the area given the natural resources—lakes, rivers, and mountains. She also advocated for the valorization of abandoned buildings through their conversion into workshops and souvenir shops featuring local handicrafts, thereby contributing to both the cultural and tourism offer. A journalist highlighted that the adaptation of such buildings should be aligned with the projects of the local government (such as the construction of a plastic replica of the medieval town of Brskovo), and that converting an old building into a gallery or museum could significantly enrich the overall tourism offer of Mojkovac.

Following the group work, during the plenary session, participants presented both previous and additional ideas. Below is a summary of the conclusions and proposals:

Mojkovac, once an industrial hub of northern Montenegro, employed a large number of workers, while the Agricultural Cooperative “Sinjajevina” purchased agricultural products, providing stability for local farming. In such a developed and vibrant town, the cultural and educational needs of the community were met in the facilities of local community centers and similar public spaces.

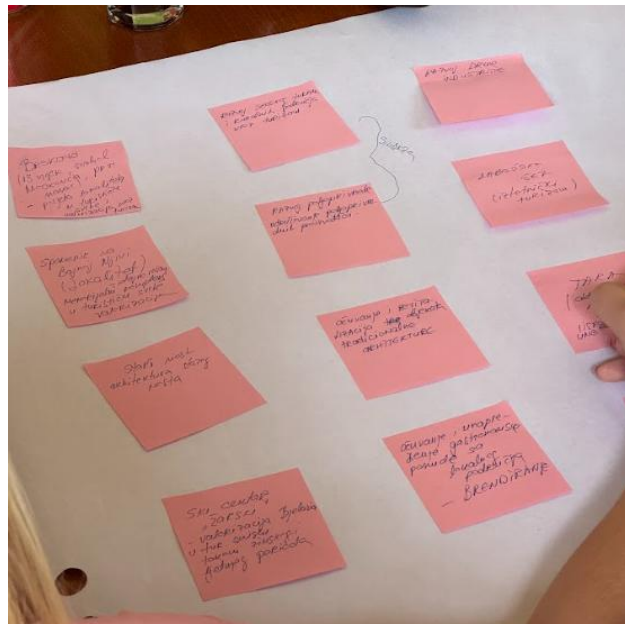
By **restoring the facilities of Local Community Offices**, it would be possible to once again meet the population’s needs for information, education, and culture. Currently, many of these buildings are underutilized or unused—such as those in Podbišće and Stevanovac—while the Local Community Office in Polja is not in use at all. The same applies to business premises in Babino Polje, which, during the peak of local economic activity, hosted cultural and educational activities for workers but are now abandoned. Through adaptation, these buildings could regain their original purpose: to serve the community’s collective cultural, educational, and informational needs, rather than relying solely on individual efforts. Such a project could be supported through funding made available by the local government, or through its direct support and involvement.

Within the territory of Mojkovac, the construction of **a plastic replica of the 13th-century Brskovo** mine is planned as a new infrastructure project for entertainment and tourism purposes. This initiative creates the need for accompanying facilities, such as a gallery or an ethnographic museum, in order to offer a complete cultural-tourism experience. Currently, the **absence of a gallery in Mojkovac prevents local artists from holding exhibitions or displaying permanent collections of their work, which significantly limits the cultural life of the community.** With the suspension of the project to reopen the Brskovo mine, the site remains used exclusively for geological research, while descriptions of ores and mineral resources exist only in scientific journals, without any physical space for educational or recreational presentation. This situation highlights the need to repurpose existing facilities into a museum, thereby creating a space dedicated to the preservation and presentation of local history and geological heritage. **Such an adaptation should be supported by the local community through partnerships and funding programs that promote the development of cultural infrastructure.** The repurposing of old and abandoned buildings for cultural purposes would aim to enhance the overall touristic, cultural, and educational offerings—especially when implemented alongside other local-level projects such as the construction of the medieval town of Brskovo. This type of initiative could be supported through various EU funding programs or through the support, assistance, and investment of the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Culture.

The establishment of **a facility for children and youth to improve access to educational activities** can be realized by adapting existing buildings under the management of the local government, followed by collaboration with the NGO sector. Such a facility would play a key role

in the non-formal education of young people and in strengthening their resilience, offering a space for creative, cultural, and educational activities.

**Facilities aimed at preserving traditional crafts and intangible cultural heritage** (including **traditional knowledge, recipes, and handicrafts**) should be supported through public administration programs, the development of women's entrepreneurship, and the involvement of NGOs. This would enable the safeguarding and promotion of Mojkovac's local traditions and cultural identity, while also enhancing the area's tourism offering.



Note 1. Brskovo is a 13th-century medieval town, historically significant as the site where the first coins were minted in the region.

Note 2 The monument at Bojna Njiva (local site) serves to preserve intangible cultural heritage for tourism purposes and for the promotion of traditional handicrafts.

Note 3 The Old Bridge and the architectural style of the Strog Bridge represent important elements of local cultural heritage.

Note 4 Žarski Ski Center: Year-Round Valorization of the Bjelasica Mountain (Summer and Winter Tourism Development)

Note 5 Development of Rural Tourism and Rural Events

Note 6 Conservation and Reconstruction of Traditional Architectural Buildings

Note 7 Preservation of Culinary Heritage and the Branding of Local Products

Note 8 Development of Tourism through Day-Trip Excursion

**A facility intended for the development of tourism in the form of a mini ski center and a sports training camp** could be established in one of the abandoned school buildings in the Mojkovac municipality. This initiative aims to strengthen winter tourism and promote sports activities for children and youth, considering that Mojkovac currently has only one larger-capacity hotel, which limits the development of tourism and sports infrastructure.

The repurposing of an abandoned school building could be implemented through cooperation with the local government, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Sports, in order to create conditions for organizing accommodation, sports training sessions, and camps during both winter and summer seasons. This would provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in sports programs and camps, while the local community would benefit through the creation of new services and additional employment opportunities.

Additionally, with this type of support, the facility could also be adapted to promote excursion-based tourism, considering the proximity of the Tara River (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Zabojsko Lake, surrounding mountains, and nearby national parks. By adapting the facility and developing supporting amenities, conditions would be created for organizing outdoor schools, hiking and cycling camps, as well as winter and summer camps for athletes and recreational visitors. This would further enrich Mojkovac's tourism offer and contribute to reducing seasonality in tourism.

Support for such a facility could be provided through EU funding programs, the Ministry of Public Administration, and the Ministry of Tourism.

## **Final Discussion**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Group 1 (Commercial Purpose) – Mirjana**

During the work within Group 1, problems were identified and ideas were proposed with the aim of valorizing unused resources, primarily abandoned and neglected properties, for commercial purposes, predominantly addressing their use in agricultural activities. Throughout the joint work and discussions, attention was given to the significance of agricultural production for the local community of Mojkovac, as well as to the potential of natural resources on which this type of production relies. The group consistently highlighted the problems faced by agricultural producers, as well as the dissatisfaction with the current

state of the sector both at the local community and national levels. During this workshop, participants became aware of the urgency and expressed their concerns regarding agricultural issues. Through collaborative efforts, they also presented their observations regarding the creation of communities more suitable for living through the valorization of properties that would support rural tourism and women's entrepreneurship. The group was characterized by cohesion and a collective belief that the repurposing, adaptation, and valorization of properties require focus especially in the agricultural sector, as such a project would yield multiple benefits for the local community. Group members were highly motivated, eager for change, but aware of the challenges, demonstrating a deep understanding of community needs, viewing this project as the only hope for positive change in their community.

### Group 2 (Private Purpose) – Biljana

During group work and consultations with the facilitator, the group identified certain problems and proposed possible solutions. Taking into account the presented properties, their main concern was the issue of ownership — specifically, how a private property owner could entrust the management of their property to a third party while protecting their ownership rights against alienation and damage. The solution they proposed to this problem was to regulate the relationship through a contract lasting a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years, clearly defining all terms between the owner and the future manager.

The second problem identified by this group concerned the dilemma of how a private property could be legally repurposed for uses other than residential, and whether this would be feasible in areas covered by urban plans (such as DUP, PUP, etc.). The facilitator explained that experts, particularly architects, would take this into account during the development of conceptual plans and ideas.

A recurring dilemma during the group discussion was whether to focus on private properties in completely abandoned areas or in areas with a medium to high population density. The group reasoned that it would be better to concentrate on areas with residents, since ideas in completely abandoned locations would be unsustainable due to their isolation from social and health services, as well as from the community's social life.

### Group 3 – Community Use (Public Use) – Vesna

During the work with the third group, the facilitator observed that its members very easily identified resources from the presented properties that could serve public use. Namely, all participants in the workshop emphasized the exceptional capacity of their region, reflected in its natural wealth and the preservation and development of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage: buildings, the historical significance of the area, mining industry, gastronomy, agrarian culture, and traditional crafts.

The facilitator identified a strong desire and motivation among participants to assign as many functions as possible to the properties, which they recognized as an urgent need for the population of Mojkovac. In this context, a certain degree of distrust and fear was also identified regarding whether such initiatives would ever actually happen in their region. This was particularly due to the concept and motto of the workshop being unfamiliar to the participants. For this reason, the facilitator and other facilitators consistently emphasized that the greatest strength lies within the participants themselves and that their ideas are crucial for the eventual realization of such a project in the future.

#### Final Discussion of the First Workshop

The final discussion of the first workshop focused on summarizing conclusions on how to make the rural communities of Mojkovac more livable for the local population. Participants addressed several conclusions related to better cooperation with local self-government and its greater involvement in existing projects concerning infrastructure development, especially roads, water supply, and electricity, as well as demands for the preservation of traditional architectural buildings.

\*Participants are aware of the potential of the rural areas of Mojkovac and the natural resources surrounding them, clearly demonstrating knowledge of national strategies aimed at improving the lives of people in rural communities: through tourism, agricultural production, rural tourism, and empowerment of small producers, aiming to integrate these into a cohesive solution benefiting the entire local community and contributing to the development of the northern region.

\*The problems they addressed and proposed as part of the solution can be categorized into the following areas:

\*Empowerment of children and youth through various educational programs and the development and implementation of solutions aimed at young people (sports, courses, extended school hours), as well as the introduction of new school curricula to meet labor market needs.

\*Empowerment of young married couples, young entrepreneurs, and craftsmen through various programs in the fields of rural tourism development, IT community growth, and crafts.

\*Development of tourism and rural tourism, development of winter sports, and adaptation of facilities for winter sports activities through mini-hotels or excursion tourism.

\*Development of cultural content through various segments such as museums, galleries, and the preservation of traditional skills and intangible cultural heritage.

\*Support for women's entrepreneurship through the revival of traditional crafts, various handicrafts, preservation and enhancement of gastronomic offerings, and development of new brands.

\*Support for agricultural producers through projects such as establishing honey houses and purchase centers for agricultural products.

\*Support for farmers through the improvement and diversification of agricultural production, branding, and rural tourism.



Note 1 rural tourism

Note 2 organic food production

Note 3 Support for women in the production of traditional products, preservation of local craftsmanship, and development of the gastronomic offer.

Note 4 Establishment of a Honey House

Note 6 Sport and athletes

Note 7 Competitions and demonstrations of traditional skills and the development of traditional crafts

Note 8 Preservation of traditional crafts and skills

Note 9 Support for young entrepreneurs

Note 10 Support for young married couples

Note 11 Providing free training programs

Note 12 Implementation of new school programs

Note 13 establishing an IT community

Note 14 Increased investment in ongoing projects

Note 15 Cultural programs and cultural activities

Note 16 Enhancing and expanding the tourism sector

Note 17 Creating new jobs through the development of economic activities

Note 18 Enhanced community engagement in addressing local issues

Note 19 Establishment of a procurement center

Note 20 Preservation of buildings of traditional architecture

### **Note**

*Although the facilitators noticed that the motivation for some participants to attend the workshop was their personal interest—specifically, the selection of their own property for further conceptual design—the facilitation team consistently reminded participants throughout the process that the workshop and the project itself are organized for the common good and for the benefit of the local community. By the end of the working process, all participants fully embraced this mission and goal of the project, recognizing it as being for and by the community.*

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

**Country report of Slovakia  
Workshop 9.4.2025**

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

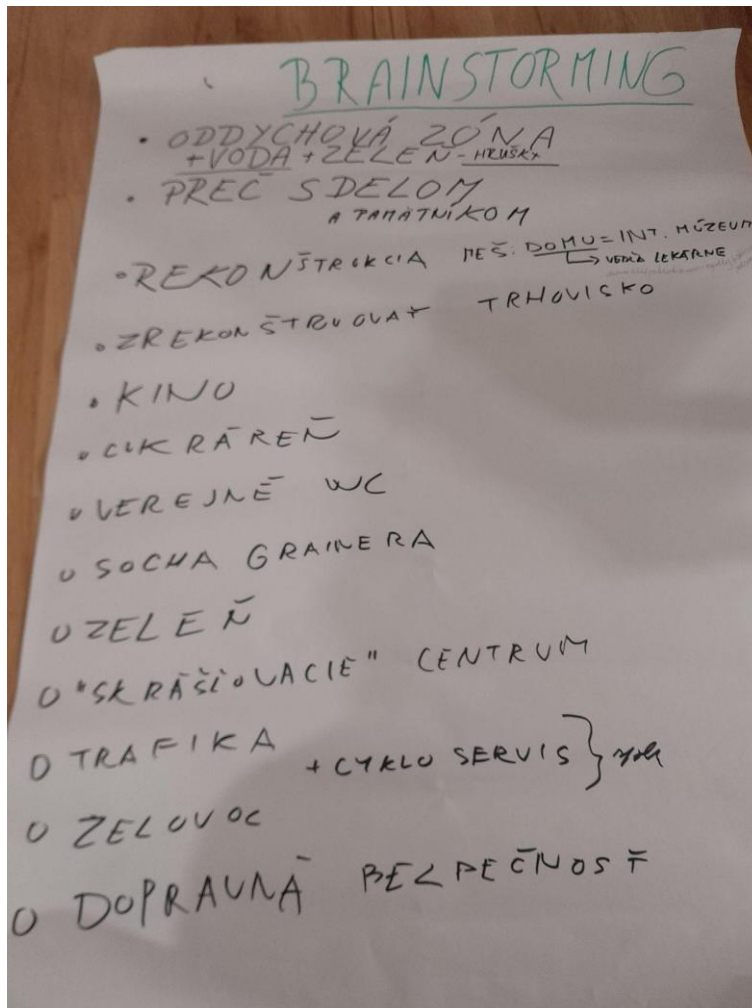
The discussion was centered about the businesses that are currently missing in the town of Jelšava. Citizens brainstormed first individually, then in groups of 5 and later in groups of 10 ideas for commercial enterprises which are missing in the town.

We focused on looking for a function for the town historical center and town square, where the majority of abandoned and deteriorating dwellings are located.

Among businesses which people are missing and could be located in deteriorating/abandoned buildings were:

- Cinema
- coffee, cake shop/ice cream shop which will have a nice terrace where people can sit, especially targeting young families with children.
- restaurant
- bank
- small shops, which were located in the past in the town center (newsstand/tobacco shop, fruit and vegetables, hardware store/tools,
- cosmetician/beautician services
- accommodation (authentic) for tourists
- bike services and shop

After the collection of the ideas, there was a presentation of the ideas and a whole group discussion about the ideas collected and presented by “commercial use group”



## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The discussion was centered around missing residential functions in the town of Jelšava. Citizens brainstormed first individually, then in groups of 5 and later in groups of 10 ideas for residential needs which are missing in the town.

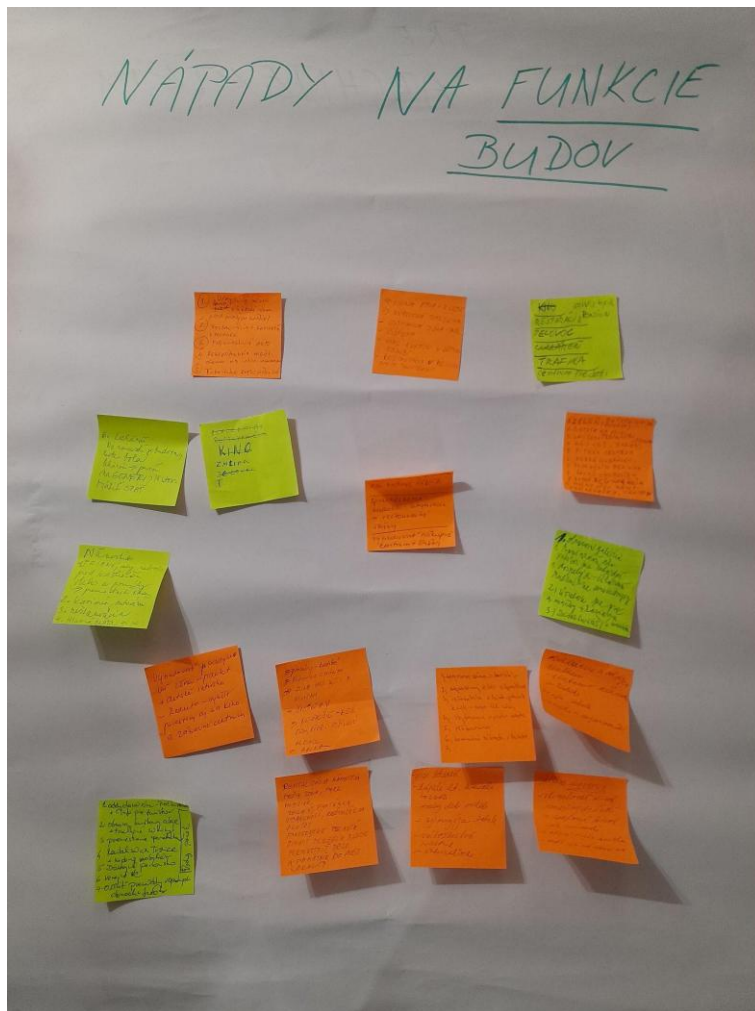
We focused on looking for a function for the town historical center and town square, where the majority of abandoned and deteriorating dwellings are located.

Regarding the residential use of the buildings - since the town is currently renovating the whole apartment building (not in the town center area but in the residential part of the town, there is a large potential to saturate the need for quality flats.

The abandoned and deteriorating buildings in the center of the town were considered more for hotels and temporary accommodations for tourists, rather than permanent residential buildings for local citizens (part of the square has already 2 rows of small family houses around it)

It is questionable if the revitalisation of town square would make it more attractive for residential purposes.

After the collection of the ideas, there was a presentation of the ideas and a whole group discussion about the ideas collected and presented by “residential use group”



## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The discussion was centered around the community uses of the building that are currently missing in the town of Jelšava. Citizens brainstormed first individually, then in groups of 5 and later in groups of 10 ideas for community facilities which are missing in the town currently.

We focused on looking for a function for the town historical center and town square, where the majority of abandoned and deteriorating dwellings are located.

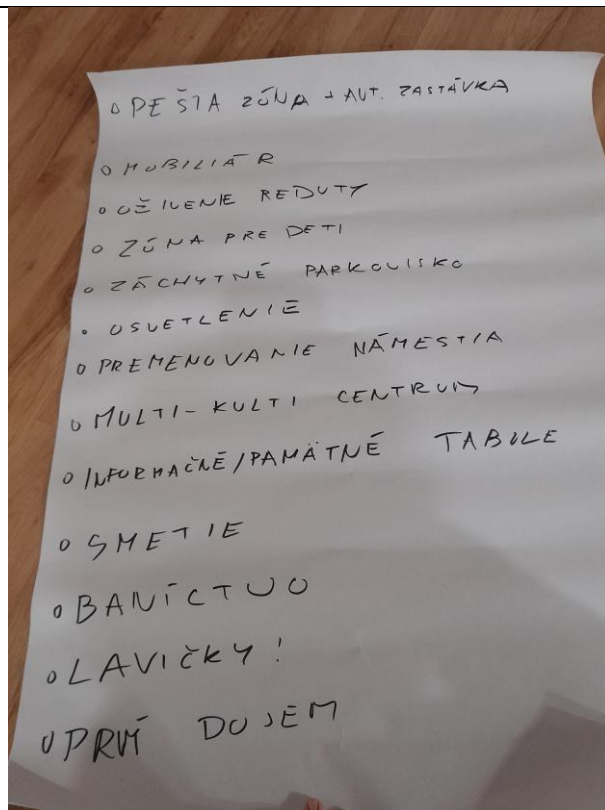
Among communal functions which people are missing and could be located in deteriorating/abandoned buildings were:

The building of "Reduta" (19th century multipurpose cultural hall, place for theater, dances, etc)

- community garden
- resting space in the center in the courtyard of the building
- multipurpose cultural and community space

Other buildings in the town center:

- free time center for kids (where they can take afternoon hobby classes like dancing, languages etc.)
- community center for kids /families
- place for dancing events
- shelter for cats and dogs
- gallery/reading room/caffee place
- museum of local culture, traditions and crafts - interactive and interesting execution of exhibition, commemoration of different communities which were living in town (Jews, Hungarians, Germans , etc)
- cinema
- public toilet
- historical pharmacy (there was the oldest pharmacy in Gemer region since 18th century in Jelšava, suggestion to renew it as a historical exhibition)



After the collection of the ideas, there was a presentation of the ideas and a whole group discussion about the ideas collected and presented by “communal use group”



## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

This topic has been discussed as one with the commercial use for the buildings. The potential buildings that could be used for these purposes were mentioned and are also included into our mapping activity. We did not hold this as a separate discussion but as an integral part for “searching for function” discussion.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

This topic has been discussed as one with the residential use for the buildings. The potential buildings that could be used for these purposes were mentioned and are also included into our mapping activity. We did not hold this as a separate discussion but as an integral part for “searching for function” discussion.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

This topic has been discussed as one with the community use for the buildings. The potential buildings that could be used for these purposes were mentioned and are also included into our mapping activity. We did not hold this as a separate discussion but as an integral part for “searching for function” discussion.

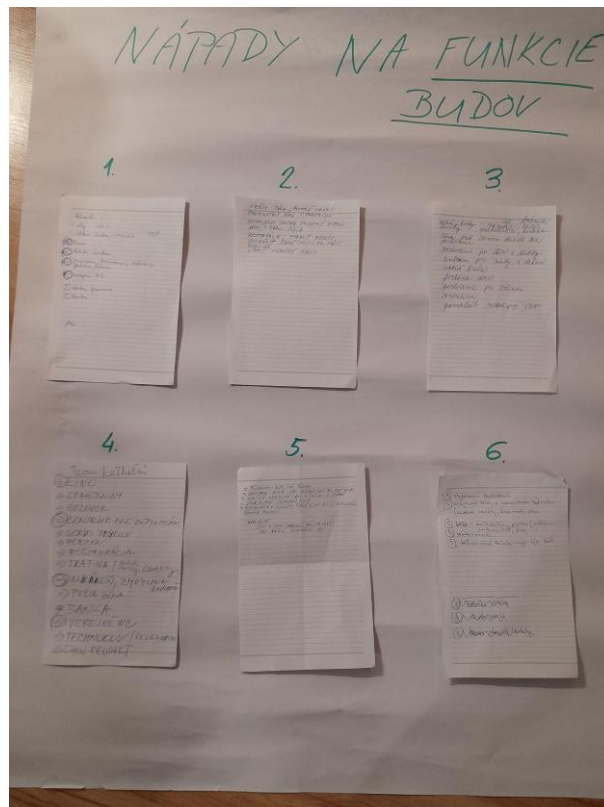
## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*



Small group discussions and whole group discussion took place while searching for the usage of the dwelling ideas. The groups were assigned tasks and later mixed up in order to exchange perspectives and select a narrow list of functions (residential, commercial and communal were functions they were searching). Due to the fact that we decided to focus on the area of the city center around the town squares, we also let people talk about general quality of the public space in the town square and functions that are missing in this context in order to encourage the brainstorming and help them frame the ideas.

40 residents of the town attended the workshop. We had variety of age groups, members of minorities and different educational and professional backgrounds present during the meeting. We identified idea carriers in the community and hopefully sparked the interest for the future workshop with expert on architecture.





# Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities

## Country report of Serbia

<b>Date:</b>	16.05.2025.
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Despotovac, Serbia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Marica Gajić, marica.gajic@redasp.rs
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	18

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The starting point for discussion of the community representatives was that the population of Despotovac is getting older and declining, mostly due to emigration of people in the working ability age. Besides, job opportunities for citizens have not been increasing.

The main economic activity is agriculture (mainly vegetable growing and bee keeping), but the support measures are not sufficient for the families to decide to start new agricultural activities as the source of income. The existing agricultural households can still provide for their own needs and generate some income on the market. The best placed products are vegetables and honey (including honey-based products). The working population of bigger villages is mainly employed in the public sector in the urban area of Despotovac (or in other nearby towns). There are several categorized rural tourism households and some new initiatives for start-up business.

Coal mining is a traditional economic sector in Senjski Rudnik and Ravna Reka. However, this economic activity is declining. On the other hand, the mining settlements have preserved their historical heritage and are a great potential for valorisation in tourism and developing sustainable “museum settlements”.

In the largest villages with over 1000 citizens (three settlements) and several with between 400 and 800 citizens (10-13 villages out of 30), it is shared opinion of the community to continue with population policy measures (support to young families and those with young children in kindergarten and school age) and develop economy diversification and capacity building.

Most of the villages are small (200 to 400 citizens) and some “dying” (less than 100 citizens, old people). Some of these villages are very close to the natural wealth (including Resava cave and Lisine waterfalls and woods), cultural heritage (including Manasija monastery) and industrial heritage of mining (Senjski Rudnik and Ravna Reka mining settlements).

It is urgent to provide social services, economic and job opportunities for the remaining families who live in the mining settlements with preserved industrial heritage with great potential for its valorization.

In the “dying” villages more effort is needed to keep and recover the settlements. It is a curiosity that some of these villages are very close to the famous and visited tourist locations, i.e. Resava cave and Manasija monastery and it should be considered how this advantage can be utilized to make these settlements livable and attractive. Some of these villages used to be famous about local products (such as Jelovac cheese) and have an active women association who produce hand made souvenirs and home-made food. Facilities, equipment and technology should be provided for such producers, as well as their promotion and professional assistance in marketing.

The main measures to be taken are:

- economy diversification through support measures for rural tourism development and creative industries

- support measures and professional assistance in marketing for the small agricultural producers who make unique local products.
- developing sustainable “museum settlements” as tourist offer and attractions, at the same time preserving the community pride and sense of belonging to the community
- capacity building/education for the existing agricultural producers about the innovations and support measures from the national ministry and local community
- provide space for joint meetings, seminars and knowledge exchange of agricultural producers. At first, there were ideas to provide space for each agricultural and beekeeping associations in different villages. At the end, the common understanding was that the facilities for training and presentations should be a joint space in Despotovac center.
- provide space, equipping, training and other support measures for active NGOs and creative women's associations, such as “Old Embroidery” in Plažane village
- invest in tourism infrastructure, especially in the villages close to the natural and cultural heritage of the area, as well as in the area where the traditional cultural manifestations take place
- promote opportunities for digital nomads and similar business categories who seek peaceful natural environment and organic food; and provide facilities and infrastructure for IT and business hubs

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Regarding residential use of the existing potential, there have been several opinions that improving housing and residential situation cannot be considered apart from improving public services and providing economic opportunities for the villages.

In the villages of Despotovac municipality there are two different extremes of buildings:

- Large, new, solid and modern private houses which have been abandoned or underutilized for several years, even decades
- Old and ruined or deteriorating family houses and public buildings (such as community homes and old schools) which are abandoned, but present a historic and architectural heritage

The first ones are private investments of the well-standing families who live in diaspora and once planned to return and start their own business. They have built homes for their own housing and business/office purpose. Such houses are now empty, because the owners unfortunately realized that there is no satisfactory business environment in Despotovac.

The owners are not easily available to discuss potential use of the buildings in community service. However, the municipal officials have made some steps towards improving communication with the owners for future joint investment plans.

The second kind are the houses of the generations and decades ago, which are now empty and deteriorating due to emigration of younger generations and consequently due to lack of beneficiaries of public services (culture centers, schools, outpatient clinics/facilities). Social services have been reduced or put out of operation in some villages, so the citizens move to other villages for school and culture programs. Medical services are provided in most of the smallest villages through field work of medical staff.

Social welfare service pointed out that there is a need for the shelters for old people who live alone and feel insecure, especially those who live in small or "dying" villages.

A couple of buildings use to have residential use, for the school teachers in the village, which used to be a big village with many students, but is now decreasing and without school children. The building is empty and deteriorating. It used to have facilities for both school and teachers' flats. It should be considered that such residential potentials be utilized as hostel and similar housing and rental models for visitors and those who would stay for temporary work arrangements.

Despotovac has sources which could be made attractive for the young population, especially now popular digital nomads who cherish peaceful environment for their work. If combined with providing attractive public space (parks, recreation facilities and good mobility) that could be a start of motivation to move back to the villages.)

Residential use of the existing dwellings would make the most benefit and impact if the following actions and measures were taken:

- Use abandoned dwellings for affordable housing initiatives, especially for young families, seniors, or newcomers:

- Provide accommodation for old people as part of public social service
- provide rental accommodation for young people and digital nomads who want to spend longer period working from Despotovac
- Some abandoned dwellings in the villages near the popular tourist attractions should be repurposed for rental or hostels for tourists and visitors
- create support measures for the private owners of family houses to improve their residential capacities for categorization of the rural tourist households and provide rentals for the tourists and visitors.

- Ensure facilities and access to public services, green spaces and recreational facilities.

- Ensure good roads and communal infrastructure, including Internet and mobile phone networks

- Provide better connectivity – public transport to connect villages and the urban center

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Utilizing empty dwellings for community use can significantly enhance the livability and vibrancy of Despotovac villages. Each village used to have vibrant community centers (culture homes), but the buildings are now deteriorating and with scarcely any cultural, entertaining or educative activities for different age groups.

Some ways to provide public services and programs for the communities are:

Revitalize and convert empty houses and/or reuse the old community centers into new ones with some additional and most needed activities in the village for different age groups.

Some of the villages have a small number of children, but the parents/families remain in the village and provide for the family. The newly reconstructed and equipped space should be dedicated to creative workshops, playgrounds, stages for children's and community performances and interactive learning.

The parents' life quality would be significantly improved if the community provided activities and facilities for their free time with family or while the children are in the children's departments of the community centers.

There are active folklore and other art groups that lack space for their training and performances. The revitalized community centers should provide space and facilities for them.

The village schools that still have (a small number) pupils should provide better conditions and more attractive and creative space motivating the parents and children to attend these schools. Some parents who live in small villages but work in the urban center, rather decide to enroll their children in the urban centre school, because it is more practical for their daily schedule. The schools in the small villages should provide some prolonged stay services so that the children remain in the village school until their parents return from work (16:00 to 17:00 hrs.)

Old people in the villages often feel lonely, isolated and insecure. The Social services center of Despotovac pointed out that there is an increasing number of old vulnerable people who need social inclusion programs and facilities. Community representatives came to a common opinion that apart from the programs for the elderly, the community and social services experts should design some cross-generation activities and programs in the same facilities. That could solve the problems of both old vulnerable people and the families with children who go to kindergarten and school, and the parents travel to work.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Despotovac municipality can utilize empty dwellings for commercial purposes by implementing strategic measures that stimulate local economic activity and attract entrepreneurs. Some of the effective measures and approaches are:

1. Convert Dwellings into Business Spaces and facilities for agricultural producers:
  - Renovate and adapt vacant houses into small shops, craft stores, or markets that serve residents and visitors.
  - Use these spaces to establish local cafes or restaurants, and other tourism support services enhancing community life and attracting tourists.
  - Use these spaces for artisan workshops, galleries, or craft studios, showcasing local craftsmanship and attracting tourists.
  - Organize markets or exhibitions within these spaces to promote local products.
  - Renovate space for use of agricultural producers and honey keepers for their production, meetings and training. For example, the former culture center in the village of Bogava has adequate space for that and many agricultural produces.
  
2. Create Incubators and Co-Working Spaces:
  - Transform empty dwellings into co-working hubs or business incubators for startups, and small enterprises, as well as agricultural producers, creative women associations and civil society organisations.
  - Offer affordable rental terms or subsidies to encourage new businesses to establish themselves locally.
  
3. Develop Tourist Accommodation:
  - Support categorization for rural tourism households, for the owners to adapt vacant homes into guesthouses, to promote rural tourism development and local tourist service providers.
  - Repurpose the existing adequate buildings into hostels and rest areas and accommodation for the visitors, tourists and hikers. For example, the village of Strmosten has deteriorating and empty buildings of the culture center and the schoolbuilding with the flats for teachers (not in function now), The idea of the community and authorities is to repurpose these facilities for the hostel and other accommodation models for the visitors and hikers, because the village is near the resave cave and on the hiking routes.
  - Repurpose the existing adequate buildings into a visitor center and smaller tourist info centers.

- Preserve traditional architecture and local culture in the design and branding to attract visitors.
- 4. Offer Incentives and Subsidies:
  - Provide financial incentives such as grants, tax breaks, or low-interest loans to entrepreneurs interested in repurposing vacant dwellings for commercial uses.
  - Simplify administrative procedures for business registration and licensing.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Despotovac municipality can effectively utilize empty dwellings for residential purposes by implementing a range of strategies aimed at improving community well-being, increasing housing availability for target groups, attracting residents and newcomers. The key measures and approaches are:

1. Establishing Housing policy and repurposing of empty dwellings
  - Provide grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans to the owners or investors for restoring and reconstruction of vacant dwellings and buildings.
  - Prioritize restoring historic or traditional homes to preserve local character. In Despotovac, there are houses that can also be used as a tourist attraction and provide guesthouse accommodation for tourists and visitors besides the housing conditions for the owners and the family. Such examples of the mapped dwellings are private, family house in Brestovo, Bogava and Senjski Rudnik, and ethno-households in Jelovac village.
2. Affordable Housing and Shelters for specific target groups:
  - Develop affordable housing schemes using empty dwellings to accommodate young families, vulnerable old people, or low-income residents.

In Despotovac, there is no lack of housing capacities, on the contrary there are empty new homes due to emigration of local people. However, there is a need for specific target groups who have their homes but need special social care and attention.

Establish shelters or transitional housing for vulnerable groups of the population. Such groups in Despotovac villages are mainly old people with increased feeling of insecurity and loneliness.

The other category are parents with children in school, who travel to work. Community centers should provide programs for the extended stay in school, to cover the period while the parents return from work.

Local government participates in the national program of providing affordable housing for young families who want to move from (big) cities to villages. That is a measure of

attracting young people to move to the villages and recover decreasing rural population. Local government should consider that measure to utilize empty dwellings for other community activities and use, and make life in the villages more attractive to such young families.

### 3. Encourage Private and Public Investment - cooperation with diaspora

- Offer incentives such as tax breaks or reduced registration fees to encourage private investors to convert empty dwellings into livable homes, especially for vulnerable groups of citizens.
- Design mixed-use neighborhoods that combine residential, commercial, and community spaces to create vibrant living environments.

A good potential for this model can be a private investment in Bogava village, with the purpose of a nursing center or a home for the elderly, where the private investor unfortunately gave up his business plan because of unfavorable policy support measures.

### 4. Temporary Housing Programs

- Use some vacant dwellings as temporary housing for newcomers, students, or during community projects.
- Establish policies for short-term rentals that can help fund ongoing maintenance and improvements.

By strategically transforming empty dwellings into livable homes, Despotovac can foster sustainable community growth, enhance social cohesion, and ensure a vibrant, welcoming environment for all residents. Although the restoration projects will imply the New European Bauhaus approach which tend to modern aesthetics, the aesthetic appeal in particular cases must be directed to preservation of cultural heritage of Despotovac.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Transforming abandoned dwellings into community assets can significantly enhance the quality of life in Despotovac. Each village used to have vibrant community centers with culture programs, but the buildings are now deteriorating and with scarcely any cultural, entertaining or educative activities for different age groups. Mapped deteriorating culture centers are in the following villages: Resavica, Veliki Popović, Strmosten, Bogova, Vojnik, Medveđa, Vitance, Tručevac, Jelovac, Plažane, Miliva.

The building of the Culture center in Resavica has several rooms which are not in use at all, especially the basement rooms. Groundfloor has some rented out spaces to shops. In general it is underutilised and needs renovation. The citizens agree that the space should be in purpose for children's games and programs. The village has 120 pupils in school and 35 in the kindergarten (not counting the babies).

This village has a very active folklore troupe which does not have the space for practicing dance and for other activities. This troupe should also be the beneficiary of the space and create cultural programs for the community.

The village of Veliki Popović has the majority of Roma population. This center should be put to purpose of promotion of Roma culture and education, and serve other community groups at the same time. This village has a great number of retired elderly persons, so the activities of the community center should include the entertainment and other programs for them as well.

The village of Vojnik proposed the use of the community center for cross-generation programs, i.e. for space and programs for both old people and children. The space is adequate as well for the library and creative women activities and association of the bee-keepers. This building is adequate for multipurpose, not only for space but the separate electricity counting devices and separate electricity bills for 3-4 users of space.

The village of Medveđa still has many children, and the culture center is proposed to be reconstructed for the use of children primarily, including the playrooms, birthday parties' space, and similar activities of entertainment. It should also include the library and provide programs for other age groups, especially for the parents and grandparents.

The village of Vitance has the vegetable growing as the most developed income generating agricultural and economic sector. The idea is to use a part of the space for the association of agricultural producers, for their promotional, marketing and educational activities.

The village of Tručevac has an "association of knights" who promote the medieval history, culture and the role of the knights, as well as the noble values and traditions. The culture center of this village could be partly given to this association for their use and programs. They cooperate with similar clubs abroad, especially with France, so the space could be designed for such meetings and cooperation program. They organize the knight's manifestation, which is a kind of prelude for the large and famous and very visited knights' manifestation near Manasija monastery. This village has developed rural tourism and agriculture, so the building of the culture center can be multipurpose and well utilized for various community groups and programs.

The village of Plažane is a big village with an elementary school from 1 to 8 grade, and pupils from two villages. However, the school does not have the prolonged stay program for the children of parents who work in Despotovac or elsewhere and travel to work. The village has a very active folklore troupe and the women's association. A culture manifestation takes place in this village in May every year. The community (culture) center needs to be renovated and can be a multipurpose space.

The village of Miliva has a lot of potential for tourism and culture development. It has a frequently visited picnic site, a couple of restaurants, playground, church, hunting lodge, and an open stage. However, the culture center is in a very bad state and needs reconstruction. The space could be multipurpose and contribute to community growth.

Although there are other types and other purpose buildings in the villages with growing potential, the existing community (culture) centers are the best existing potential to use for multiple purposes and contribute to community building and growth.

The key strategies and measures to utilize abandoned spaces for community use effectively are:

1. Community Centers and Social Hubs:

- Restore old deteriorating community centers into new centers for social gatherings, cultural and art events, and educational workshops.
  - Offer programs for youth, seniors, and diverse interest groups such as artists, agricultural producers and engineers, for their development and bonding.
2. Promote sustainable practices, improve the local environment, and provide recreational areas.
    - Although Despotovac municipality and the villages have large green areas there is not enough well-arranged areas for recreation and culture programs. The vicinity of reconstructed facilities should provide such spaces as well.
  3. Educational and Skill Development Centers:

Establish training centers or workshops to enhance skills of agricultural producers, beekeepers, start-up businesses, clubs and NGOs. Partner with local schools or NGOs to provide continued education.

4. Preservation and Cultural Projects:
  - Restore historically or architecturally significant dwellings as museums or cultural sites.
  - Promote local heritage and tourism.

The priority sites are mining settlements with preserved historical and architectural heritage (Senjski Rudnik and Ravna reka). Some villages in the vicinity of the mining settlements have preserved ethno-houses and areas.

5. Health and social services
  - Provide space for social housing and services for the most vulnerable groups such as old people who feel lonely and anxious. The Social Services Center of Despotovac noted that the number of such old people in Despotovac municipality is growing.
  - There was a suggestion to provide outdoor patient facilities in all villages, but it was concluded that the whole area is well covered by mobile teams of medical staff. The problem is not the adequate space, but the medical staff (lack of staff in general, in Despotovac). The citizens stated that they are mainly satisfied with the way medical services are provided in the villages. The municipal representative said that the mobility of medical field teams can be improved soon (providing more ambulances and other vehicles).

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

To ensure villages in Despotovac remain livable and attractive for residents, a comprehensive approach is needed that combines preserving community life, supporting rural economy diversification, improving infrastructure, social and public services and creatively repurposing abandoned dwellings.

The key strategies and measures are the following:

### 1. Maintaining Livability in Villages:

**Invest in Infrastructure:** Upgrade roads, utilities (water, electricity, internet, mobile phone networks), and public services to meet residents' needs and provide all services for visitors and tourists.

**Improve transportation links** between villages and from village to town center (to nearby towns as well) for work, education, and healthcare.

**Support Local Economy:** Promote agriculture, small businesses, creative industries and tourism to generate income and employment.

**Foster Community Engagement:** Organize cultural, social, and educational events to strengthen community bonds. It will also encourage people to participate in community meetings and decision-making processes.

**Preserve Environment and Heritage:** Protect natural landscapes and historical sites to attract visitors and inspire pride among residents and community belonging.

**Promote natural and cultural-historic heritage**

**Promote Quality of Life:** Ensure access to healthcare, schools, recreational areas, and social services.

### 2. Repurposing Abandoned Dwellings:

**Private Use:**

**Renovation for Residences:** Encourage owners or investors to restore homes for private living or vacation homes, as well as to improve standards for the categorized rural tourism categorization.

**Rental Opportunities:** Facilitate rental agreements to attract newcomers or seasonal residents, bringing vitality and tourism to villages.

**Public Use:**

**Community Centers:** Turn abandoned buildings into spaces for cultural activities, meetings, libraries, extended after school activities for children whose parents travel to work, educational programs, and entertainment.

**Shared Facilities:** Use dwellings for public services like clinics, extended stay of preschool and elementary school pupils, libraries, museums or training centers.

**Business Purposes:**

**Small Enterprises:** Provide space for workshops, artisan studios, or retail outlets supporting local crafts and products, also for agricultural producers and beekeepers.

**Rural tourism and agriculture:** Develop rural tourism by transforming dwellings into accommodations or farm stays.

**Incubators for Startups:** Use vacant spaces for local entrepreneurs and startups, stimulating economic activity.

Recommendations for implementation:

**Incentivize Renovation:** Offer grants, tax breaks, or low-interest loans for restoring abandoned dwellings.

**Simplify Regulations:** Reduce bureaucratic barriers for property reuse and development.

**Engage the Community:** Include residents in planning to ensure projects meet local needs and foster ownership.

**Influence Funding Opportunities:** Seek support from national programs, EU and other donor funds, or NGOs focused on rural development.

In summary, maintaining the vitality of Despotovac's villages involves a balanced mix of infrastructure development, community engagement, and innovative reuse of abandoned dwellings. By transforming these spaces into housing facilities (home for the elderly, extended stay of school pupils, renting rooms, tourist accommodation etc.), vibrant community centers, or business and agriculture hubs and training centers, villages can grow economically and socially, preserving their cultural heritage while adapting to modern needs.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prijedor**

### **Development agency of the city of Prijedor “PREDA”**

**Location: Community building MZ Božići on June 3, 2025**

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Participants recognized tourism and outdoor recreation as significant commercial opportunities. Kozara Mountain was highlighted as a valuable asset for nature-based tourism. The Albatros Club proposed a strong idea to transform the existing MZ Božići 2 building into a Visitor Center. This center would include facilities for extreme sports, accommodations, and nature-based tours. The proposal draws inspiration from the Pecka Visitor Center model.

### **Summary:**

There is significant potential for developing rural tourism, particularly if existing dwellings are converted into visitor centers and activity hubs. The community demonstrated strong willingness to support such initiatives, especially through clubs and informal associations.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

The discussion emphasized the importance of repurposing abandoned buildings for social housing and community-supported living. In MZ Jelovac, one building is already being informally used by a vulnerable family. Local leaders proposed identifying more properties that could be adapted for returning youth or multi-generational living arrangements. However, challenges such as ownership rights and insufficient basic infrastructure (including electricity, water, and heating) remain.

### **Summary:**

Participants recognize a clear opportunity to revitalize rural communities by transforming vacant buildings into housing solutions, particularly for vulnerable or returning populations. However, infrastructure limitations continue to pose a significant barrier.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Community buildings are considered vital for fostering local identity, facilitating gatherings, and ensuring continuity within the community. Participants highlighted the significance of developing multi-functional spaces that can serve various purposes, including education, meetings, cultural events, and programs for youth. A noteworthy example is the “Patrija” association from Jelovac, which constructed a 300 m<sup>2</sup> facility using private donations. They are now looking for guidance and funding to transform this space into a genuine community center.

### **Summary:**

Revitalized dwellings can serve as the backbone of community life if they are adapted for flexible use. Collaborations among local associations, residents, and city administration are essential to achieve this.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Participants proposed converting abandoned public buildings into tourist infrastructure. Discussions included establishing a Visitor Center, as well as creating cycling and hiking trails around Kozara Mountain. Additionally, there were suggestions for spaces to support small local businesses, such as souvenir production and eco-friendly products.

### **Summary:**

Dwellings and community buildings possess significant potential for commerce, especially in sustainable tourism and local entrepreneurship, if they are properly connected to infrastructure and support systems.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Suggestions included providing adapted housing for young families and those returning, as well as creating "starter homes" for individuals willing to move to rural areas. Participants emphasized the necessity of forming partnerships with city institutions to address property ownership and enhance utilities.

### **Summary:**

Unused dwellings could promote demographic revitalization if legal and infrastructural barriers are addressed. Exploring social housing models or cooperatives may be beneficial.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

There is a general agreement that public buildings should not be allowed to fall into disrepair. Instead, they should be transformed into spaces that foster connection and development. Some proposed ideas include establishing youth centers, civil protection education centers, and flexible open areas. Support is necessary for developing these ideas and preparing projects.

### **Summary:**

Abandoned buildings can serve as a valuable resource for community development if local communities are supported in their management and programming.

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants acknowledged that challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and bureaucratic hurdles are significant. However, they also recognized a wealth of untapped energy within local communities. A strong message emerged: *"While buildings serve as tools, it is the people who are the true key to change!"*. The community demonstrated that they are motivated, organized, and ready to take action; what they now need is institutional support to turn their ideas into reality. The workshop successfully brought together stakeholders from four different public communities, generating not only innovative housing ideas but also long-term visions for creating livable, connected rural communities.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prijedor**

### **Development agency of the city of Prijedor “PREDA”**

**Location: Community building MZ Jelićka on June 5, 2025**

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Participants highlighted the natural potential of the Jelička area and its proximity to both Prijedor and Banja Luka as significant advantages for developing rural tourism. The existence of private initiatives such as the goat farm “Nana Kaas” and the nearby “Eko centar Ljekarice” was recognized as a solid foundation for future growth. Suggestions included establishing partnerships between local producers and tourism providers, as well as incorporating abandoned dwellings into the hospitality infrastructure.

### **Summary:**

Agro-tourism and eco-tourism have significant commercial potential. With effective branding and proper infrastructure, unused properties could be transformed into guest accommodations, workshops, or local product displays.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

The discussion highlighted the increasing trend of young people returning from abroad to rural areas. One such example is Milan Zeljić, who now works in digital marketing from Jelička. Participants suggested that existing homes be adapted for remote work and modern rural living. They emphasized the importance of improving internet connectivity, utilities, and creating shared workspaces.

### **Summary:**

Return migration injects new life into rural areas. Vacant homes can be transformed into residences for young families or remote workers if equipped with digital infrastructure and essential services.

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

There was a significant emphasis on enhancing the MZ building's role as a community hub driven by youth. Draško Đurić, a youth activist, proposed transforming the space into an open-concept centre that would support various youth activities, training, and creative projects. This concept includes remote workspaces, educational programs, and opportunities for social gatherings.

### **Summary:**

The Jelićka community views public buildings as a means to engage young people and foster a vibrant social life. There is a strong demand for multi-use spaces that accommodate work, education, and events.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

The discussion centered on transforming underutilized rural assets into revenue-generating community spaces. Participants proposed repurposing buildings for visitor services, workshops for crafts and local products, or facilities to support weekend tourism.

### **Summary:**

With strong backing from local families and a tradition of self-sufficiency, the community is prepared to transform ideas into pilot projects if provided with planning, branding, and investment.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Some buildings were identified as suitable candidates for conversion into starter homes or co-living spaces for young people. Local youth expressed interest in staying or returning, but cited internet access and other services as barriers.

### **Summary:**

Unused dwellings could provide attractive and affordable housing for youth and returnees, provided that both digital and physical infrastructures are improved.

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### **Discussion summary:**

Community participants proposed a plan to preserve the MZ building as a valuable public resource, envisioning its transformation for modern purposes such as community learning and teleworking. They highlighted the importance of creating flexible and inclusive programming to better serve the diverse needs of the community.

### **Summary:**

Existing buildings should adapt to meet modern community needs, particularly those of younger residents. The community is receptive to experimentation and pilot projects.

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The Jelička workshop showcased a strong sense of community spirit, particularly among youth and returnees. Participants expressed pride in what they have already accomplished using local resources and shared a clear vision for enhancing rural living with modern solutions. Although infrastructure, especially internet connectivity, remains a challenge, the willingness and ability to take action are evident.

The workshop highlighted that the livability of rural areas relies on both physical spaces and social engagement. People desire more than just renovated buildings; they seek places that serve meaningful purposes and reflect their values. The overarching message was clear: communities like Jelička are not waiting for solutions—they are actively creating them.

Message is: *“The buildings are tools, but people are the key — and here, the people are ready.”*

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities**

**Country report of Croatia  
PP7 Primorje-Gorski Kotar County**

## How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The group work and discussion began with a reminder of the natural beauty of Gorski Kotar region, highlighting attractions that may not be sufficiently recognized. The session aimed to raise awareness among local stakeholders about the values they possess and which could serve as their advantage in attracting population, not only for tourism but also for permanent residence.

The discussion emphasized several key regional advantages:

- **Excellent connectivity** - proximity to major centers Zagreb and Rijeka
- **Coastal proximity** - close access to the sea
- **Clean natural environment** - a place of pristine nature that relaxes, rejuvenates, and promotes healthy living
- **High environmental quality** - characterized by clean air and water
- **Low-stress living environment** - representing everything that people from large urban centers are increasingly seeking.

The workshop facilitator highlighted their advantage as a "no-stress area" where it is pleasant and good to live. This positioning directly responds to current trends where urban dwellers seek refuge from city pressures and are drawn to sustainable, health-conscious lifestyles.

Groups were formed in pairs from the stakeholders present, while the workshop facilitator/external consultant and the project team member remained outside the groups to guide the discussion. Each pair of stakeholders received specific tasks and instructions from the workshop facilitator.

All groups were presented with additional guiding questions to help develop their ideas:

1. What is missing in your community?
2. What activities would attract young people?
3. What would tourists want to see/experience?
4. What services would make life easier for the elderly?
5. Imagine someone gives you €100,000,000. What would you do with that empty building?
6. If your children/grandchildren stayed in the village, what would they need?
7. What makes you proud of your place? How can this be utilized?
8. Which buildings have the best location/access?

Group 1 focused on developing commercial use concepts for mapped objects. Their detailed proposals by location are as follows:

### 1. Stara kuglana Mrkopalj (Old Bowling Alley Mrkopalj)

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Business space/facility** - A facility for business process support and management
- **Small congress center** - Venue for corporate meetings and professional gatherings
- **Team building center** - Specialized facility for corporate team development activities

These represent alternative commercial uses that could leverage the existing recreational infrastructure, each targeting different market segments - from local business development to corporate retreat services.

### 2. Delnice – Cinema Hall

#### Proposed Function:

- **Revitalized cinema complex** - Restoration and modernization of existing cinema facilities

Addressing the cultural and entertainment needs of both residents and visitors, creating a community gathering space while preserving cultural heritage.

### 3. Skrad – Šiler Skrad Complex

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Hostel accommodation** - Budget-friendly lodging for tourists and travelers
- **Boutique hotel** - Premium accommodation targeting discerning visitors
- **Ski center** - Winter sports facility development
- **Interpretative center** - Educational facility showcasing local heritage and nature
- **Burnout recovery accommodation** - Specialized lodging for business professionals experiencing workplace stress

These represent diverse development options for the complex, each addressing different market needs, from budget tourism to specialized wellness services and educational tourism.

### 4. Vrbovsko – Veliki Jadrč District School

#### Proposed Function:

- **Day care center for seniors** - Facility providing daytime care and social activities for elderly residents

Addressing demographic challenges by providing essential services for the aging population,

enabling seniors to remain in their communities while accessing necessary support.

### 5. Brod Moravice – Male Drage School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Hostel** - Accommodation facility for travelers and tourists
- **Local products sales center** - Retail outlet promoting regional producers and artisans

These options provide alternative approaches to utilizing the space, either supporting tourism development or creating economic opportunities for local producers.

### 6. Lokve – Building Near Cemetery

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Business hub** - Central facility for business operations
- **Center for small craftsmen and entrepreneurs** - Shared workspace and support facility for local businesses

These represent different approaches to supporting local business development, from providing basic infrastructure to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

### 7. Fužine – Lič District School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Business facility for entrepreneurs** - Professional workspace and meeting facilities
- **Incubation center for start-ups** - Support facility for new business development

These are alternative business development concepts that could serve different entrepreneurial needs in the community.

### 8. Ravna Gora – Kupjak School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Spa center** - Wellness and therapeutic facility
- **Coworking spaces** - Flexible workspace for remote workers and professionals
- **Start-up support facility** - Business development and incubation services

These represent different approaches to modern facility use from wellness tourism to supporting contemporary work arrangements and business development.

Group 1's commercial use proposals demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contemporary trends and community needs. The suggestions strategically balance economic

development by creating diverse revenue streams through tourism, business services, and local entrepreneurship support, while simultaneously addressing demographic challenges through facilities that serve aging population needs and attract younger residents with modern amenities and business opportunities. The proposals effectively leverage regional assets such as natural beauty, clean environment, and strategic location to create competitive advantages, and respond to current market trends including post-pandemic shifts toward wellness, remote work, and sustainable living. The proposals show innovative thinking in repurposing existing infrastructure while creating synergies between different user groups (tourists, residents, businesses, seniors). This approach maximizes resource utilization while building a resilient, diversified local economy that can maintain community liveability and attractiveness for current and future residents.

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Following the same contextual framework established in the workshop, Group 2 developing residential and care-focused uses for the mapped buildings. Their detailed proposals by location are as follows:

### **1, Stara kuglana Mrkopalj (Old Bowling Alley Mrkopalj)**

#### **Proposed Functions:**

- **Affordable housing** - Housing for people with lower income status

### **2. Vrbovsko – Veliki Jadrč District School**

#### **Proposed Functions:**

- **Day care center for seniors** - Facility providing daytime care and social activities for elderly residents
- **Residential home for elderly** - Full-time care facility for senior citizens

These options address the critical needs of an aging population by providing different levels of care and support, enabling seniors to remain within their community while accessing appropriate services.

### **3. Fužine – Lič District School**

#### **Proposed Function:**

- **Day care center for seniors** - Facility providing daytime care and social activities for elderly residents

This proposal responds to demographic challenges by providing essential community services that support aging in place, allowing elderly residents to maintain their independence while receiving necessary care and social interaction.

#### 4. Ravna Gora – Kupjak School

##### Proposed Functions:

- **Residential home for elderly** - Full-time care facility for senior citizens
- **Apartments for young families** - Affordable housing targeted at attracting and retaining young families

These represent alternative approaches to addressing different demographic needs, either providing specialized care for seniors or creating housing opportunities that could help reverse population decline by attracting young families to the area.

Group 2's residential use proposals demonstrate a clear focus on addressing housing needs and care requirements. The suggestions strategically target two critical population groups: the elderly who need various levels of care and support, and young families who require affordable housing options to establish roots in the community.

The proposals effectively address housing affordability, which is essential for maintaining population levels and attracting new residents. By suggesting affordable housing and apartments for young families, the group recognizes that economic accessibility is crucial for residential sustainability. Simultaneously, the comprehensive approach to senior care ranging from day care centers to full residential facilities acknowledges the reality of an aging population while ensuring that seniors can access appropriate care facilities.

Group 2's proposals show innovative thinking in repurposing educational infrastructure to meet evolving residential and care needs while creating solutions that support both vulnerable populations and housing development. This approach maximizes the utility of existing buildings while addressing fundamental requirements for residential sustainability: affordable housing, appropriate care facilities for different age groups, and recreational opportunities that enhance residential attractiveness.

#### How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group 3 concentrated on developing community-focused uses that would serve as social, cultural, and educational hubs for the local population. Their detailed proposals by location are

as follows:

### 1. Stara kuglana Mrkopalj (Old Bowling Alley Mrkopalj)

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Mountaineering lodge** - Facility serving hiking and outdoor recreation enthusiasts
- **Youth center** - Social gathering space for young people
- **Educational center** - Learning and skill development facility
- **Cinema** - Entertainment facility serving the local community
- **VR digital entertainment center** - Modern technology-based recreation facility
- **Cinema and multimedia center** - Combined entertainment and educational facility
- **Sports and business complex** - Multi-purpose facility combining recreation and professional activities

These represent diverse approaches to creating community gathering spaces that could serve different age groups and interests, from outdoor recreation enthusiasts to young people seeking modern entertainment and educational opportunities.

### 2. Skrad – Šiler Skrad Complex

#### Proposed Functions:

- **School in nature** - Outdoor education facility for children and adults
- **Mountaineering lodge** - Accommodation and services for outdoor recreation enthusiasts

These options leverage the natural setting to create educational and recreational facilities that promote environmental awareness and outdoor activities, appealing to both residents and visitors.

### 3. Vrbovsko – Veliki Jadrč District School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Senior citizens center** - Facility providing activities and services for elderly residents
- **Public community center** - Multi-purpose space for various community activities
- **Communal gathering space** - Informal meeting place for social interaction

These alternatives focus on creating inclusive community spaces that serve different demographic needs, from specialized senior services to general community gathering facilities.

### 4. Brod Moravice – Male Drage School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Educational or interpretive center** - Facility for learning and cultural education
- **Local heritage collection** - Museum showcasing regional history and culture
- **Workshop space for traditional crafts and customs** - Facility for preserving and teaching traditional skills
- **Permaculture center** - Educational facility focused on sustainable agriculture and living
- **Educational center** - General learning and skill development facility

These proposals emphasize cultural preservation and sustainable education, creating facilities that maintain local traditions while promoting environmental awareness and continuous learning.

### 5. Lokve – Building Near Cemetery

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Fire station storage** (currently under renovation) - **Space for local associations** - Meeting and activity space for community organizations
- **Fire department museum** - Educational facility showcasing local firefighting history and safety education

These options support community organization activities and preserve local emergency services heritage while providing educational opportunities about public safety.

### 6. Fužine – Lič District School

#### Proposed Functions:

- **Museum** - Cultural facility showcasing local history and heritage
- **Educational center** - Learning and skill development facility
- **Community kitchen** - Shared food preparation and social dining facility
- **Technology center for youth** - Modern facility providing digital skills and technology access

These represent different approaches to community education and social services, from cultural preservation to modern technology training and communal food services.

Group 3's community use proposals demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural infrastructure needed to maintain community cohesion and attract residents of all ages. The suggestions strategically address social connectivity by creating gathering spaces for different demographic groups, from youth centers to senior facilities, while simultaneously preserving and promoting local culture through museums, heritage collections, and traditional craft workshops.

The proposals effectively balance modern amenities with cultural preservation, recognizing that sustainable communities need both contemporary attractions (VR centers, technology facilities) and connections to their heritage (traditional crafts, local museums). The emphasis on educational facilities reflects understanding that lifelong learning opportunities are essential for community vitality and resident satisfaction.

The inclusion of specialized facilities like permaculture centers and community kitchens shows innovative thinking about sustainable living and social cooperation. These facilities not only serve practical needs but also foster community bonding and environmental consciousness, which are increasingly important for attracting environmentally aware residents.

Group 3's proposals show strategic thinking in creating interconnected community infrastructure that supports social cohesion while addressing practical needs. This approach maximizes the utility of existing buildings while building essential community assets: cultural preservation facilities, educational opportunities, recreational spaces, and social gathering places that enhance community identity and resident satisfaction. It should be noted that for some mapped buildings, the group was unable to develop community use proposals due to space limitations, lack of suitable community need in specific locations, or the existence of similar facilities already serving those areas.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Group 1's analysis of unused resources revealed several strategic approaches to commercial development that could transform abandoned dwellings and buildings into economic assets:

The group identified that many abandoned buildings possess valuable infrastructure elements that can be repurposed for commercial use with minimal investment. Former educational facilities, for example, already have large spaces suitable for conferences, workshops, and business events. The existing layout of classrooms can be adapted for coworking spaces, training centers, or small business incubators.

Rather than completely rebuilding, focus on adaptive reuse that maximizes existing structural elements while adding modern amenities needed for commercial operations.

The group recognized that abandoned buildings in well-connected locations could serve as business hubs that attract entrepreneurs and remote workers. These facilities could offer modern technology infrastructure, meeting spaces, and professional services in a natural, low-stress environment.

Transform unused buildings into professional spaces that combine the appeal of rural location with urban-level business amenities, targeting the growing remote work and digital nomad markets.

Abandoned dwellings and buildings could be converted into tourism-supporting commercial enterprises such as boutique accommodations, interpretive centers, or specialized retail outlets for local products. This approach creates direct revenue while supporting the broader tourism economy. Use abandoned buildings as platforms for tourism experiences that showcase local culture, crafts, and natural attractions while generating commercial income.

The group identified opportunities to create specialized commercial services that serve both local residents and visitors. This includes wellness centers, professional services, and specialized retail that takes advantage of the region's natural assets and strategic location.

Develop niche commercial services that capitalize on the region's unique characteristics while addressing gaps in local service provision.

The group discussed implementing a phased approach to commercial development, starting with lower-investment, higher-impact uses that can generate initial revenue and demonstrate viability before expanding to more complex commercial operations.

Phase 1: Basic commercial uses requiring minimal renovation (storage, simple retail, basic services)

Phase 2: Enhanced commercial facilities (restaurants, accommodations, professional services)

Phase 3: Specialized commercial complexes (conference centers, wellness facilities, business incubators)

The group recognized that successful commercial development of abandoned buildings would require partnerships between local government, private investors, and community stakeholders. These partnerships could share renovation costs, operational risks, and ongoing management responsibilities.

The group emphasized the importance of creating sustainable business models that generate long-term economic benefits while respecting the natural environment and local community values. This includes focusing on businesses that employ local residents and source materials and services locally. The group identified that successful commercial use of abandoned buildings requires addressing basic infrastructure needs including reliable internet connectivity, adequate utilities, and accessible transportation links. The group discussed the need for supportive regulatory frameworks that facilitate the conversion of abandoned residential buildings to commercial use while maintaining appropriate safety and zoning standards.

The group explored various financial mechanisms for supporting commercial development, including public-private partnerships, grants, low-interest loans, and investment incentives that could make projects financially viable.

The emphasis on adaptive reuse rather than complete redevelopment shows practical thinking about resource constraints while maximizing the value of existing infrastructure. The phased development approach reflects understanding that commercial development must be financially sustainable and risk-appropriate for the local context.

The group's focus on creating business ecosystems rather than isolated commercial ventures shows sophisticated thinking about economic development. By proposing interconnected commercial activities that support each other and the broader community, the group demonstrates understanding that sustainable economic development requires detailed planning and stakeholder collaboration.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The municipalities within the Gorski Kotar region can effectively utilize abandoned buildings for residential purposes by implementing targeted strategies that address demographic challenges while creating sustainable community infrastructure. The transformation of these unused resources, including former educational facilities, recreational venues, and other abandoned structures, requires coordinated policy development, financial mechanisms, and community engagement approaches specifically tailored to the region's mountainous terrain and aging population dynamics.

Municipal authorities should develop housing policies that prioritize the conversion of abandoned buildings into residential and care infrastructure. This involves providing grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans to municipalities, non-profit organizations, or private investors willing to undertake restoration projects. The policy framework must recognize the diverse architectural heritage of these buildings, from former educational facilities to recreational venues like the old bowling alley in Mrkopalj, many of which represent significant cultural assets within their communities. Rather than pursuing complete modernization, restoration efforts should preserve the distinctive architectural characteristics while adapting internal spaces for residential and care functions, maintaining the visual continuity that defines these rural settlements.

The region faces distinct demographic challenges that abandoned building conversions can directly address. Young families require affordable housing options that encourage them to establish roots in these communities rather than migrate to urban centers. Converting portions of former recreational facilities and educational buildings into family apartments creates housing opportunities while maintaining affordability through reduced acquisition costs compared to new construction. The spacious interiors of buildings like the former bowling alley provide excellent opportunities for creating multiple residential units while maintaining community gathering spaces.

Simultaneously, the aging population requires specialized care facilities that enable seniors to remain within their familiar communities rather than relocating to distant urban care centers. The conversion of various abandoned buildings into senior day care centers addresses the isolation and support needs of elderly residents who maintain their independence but require social interaction and basic care services. These facilities can utilize former classrooms, recreational spaces, or community areas as activity centers, administrative areas as

consultation rooms, and open spaces as therapeutic environments. Full residential care facilities for seniors can transform existing structures or create new residential configurations, providing comprehensive care while maintaining connection to the local community.

Private and public investment in these conversion projects requires targeted incentives that recognize both the social value and economic challenges of rural development. Tax breaks, reduced registration fees, and streamlined permitting processes can encourage private investors to undertake conversion projects, particularly for senior care facilities where operational sustainability depends on long-term viability. Mixed-use development approaches can create vibrant community centers that combine residential spaces with commercial activities, community services, and recreational facilities, capitalizing on the diverse spatial configurations offered by different building types.

Partnership development with diaspora communities represents a significant opportunity for the region. Many former residents who have relocated to urban areas or abroad maintain emotional connections to their home communities and may be willing to invest in projects that preserve and revitalize these places. These partnerships can provide both financial resources and expertise while creating investment opportunities that benefit both the diaspora investors and local communities.

Temporary housing programs using converted spaces can provide immediate revenue streams while buildings undergo phased renovations. These programs can accommodate seasonal workers, students participating in rural education programs, or professionals working on community development projects. Short-term rental policies can generate ongoing maintenance funds while providing flexible housing options that adapt to changing community needs.

The success of these conversion projects depends on creating operational models that ensure long-term sustainability. This includes establishing maintenance cooperatives where residents contribute skills and labor, developing partnerships with healthcare providers for senior care facilities, and creating community governance structures that ensure these facilities remain responsive to local needs. By strategically transforming abandoned buildings of various types into functional residential and care infrastructure, the Gorski Kotar region can address demographic challenges while preserving community character and creating sustainable development pathways that support both current residents and attract new community members.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The conversion of abandoned buildings into community centers addresses the critical need for social gathering spaces that have been lost through demographic decline. The former bowling alley in Mrkopalj presents exceptional opportunities for creating multi-generational community hubs due to its large, flexible interior spaces. These venues can accommodate diverse activities

simultaneously, from youth programs and VR entertainment to educational workshops and cultural events. The key implementation strategy involves creating modular space configurations that allow different community groups to utilize the facility according to their specific needs and schedules.

Educational buildings across the region offer natural advantages for community center conversion since their classroom structures readily adapt to workshop spaces, meeting rooms, and specialized activity areas. Converting these spaces requires installing modern technology infrastructure to support digital learning initiatives while maintaining flexible layouts that accommodate traditional craft workshops and cultural programs. The integration of commercial-grade kitchen facilities enables community dining programs and food preparation workshops, creating spaces for social bonding and skill sharing.

The establishment of museums and heritage centers requires careful planning to ensure proper preservation conditions while maintaining accessibility for community education. Former school buildings can house local heritage collections by converting classrooms into exhibition spaces, utilizing their educational atmosphere to complement cultural learning programs. Administrative areas transform into research and documentation centers for local history projects, while storage spaces become artifact preservation areas with appropriate environmental controls.

Technology centers for youth require significant infrastructure upgrades, including high-speed internet connectivity, modern computer equipment, and flexible learning spaces that support both individual and group activities. These facilities can coexist with traditional craft workshops, creating unique intergenerational learning opportunities where older community members share traditional skills while younger residents provide technology training. This cross-generational programming model maximizes facility utilization while strengthening community bonds.

The operational sustainability of community facilities depends on developing governance models that ensure long-term viability while maintaining community ownership. Establishing community management cooperatives allows residents to contribute skills, labor, and financial resources while maintaining democratic control over facility programming and operations. These cooperatives can generate revenue through facility rentals, educational programs, and cultural events while keeping costs affordable for community members.

Partnership development with regional organizations, educational institutions, and cultural groups provides essential resources for ongoing programming and facility maintenance. Mountaineering lodges and outdoor education centers can generate revenue through visitor accommodations and guided programs while serving local recreation needs. These partnerships create sustainable funding streams that support facility operations while attracting visitors who contribute to local economic development.

The creation of multi-purpose community complexes maximizes the utility of larger abandoned buildings while serving diverse community needs. Sports and business complexes combine recreation facilities with professional meeting spaces, creating venues that support

both community wellness and economic development activities. These facilities can host regional conferences, cultural events, and business meetings while providing daily recreation opportunities for residents.

Community kitchens and shared dining facilities address both practical needs and social connectivity by creating spaces where residents can prepare meals together, share traditional recipes, and maintain cultural food traditions. These facilities support vulnerable populations while strengthening community networks through regular social interaction and mutual support systems.

The implementation of these community facility conversions requires coordinated efforts between municipal authorities, community organizations, and regional development agencies. Success depends on creating operational frameworks that balance community ownership with professional management, ensuring that converted facilities remain responsive to local needs while maintaining the standards necessary for long-term sustainability and community pride.

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The final discussion revealed crucial insights about the practical implementation of abandoned building conversions across the Gorski Kotar region, highlighting both the significant opportunities and systemic challenges that must be addressed to achieve successful community revitalization. The dialogue emphasized that while communities possess clear visions for transforming these spaces, multiple interconnected barriers require coordinated solutions at local, regional, and national levels.

The discussions demonstrated remarkable consistency in community priorities across different locations. Young people and tourists would be attracted by well-designed multifunctional spaces that offer modern amenities alongside traditional cultural experiences. The old bowling alley in Mrkopalj exemplifies this potential, where participants envisioned event spaces, youth centers, conference facilities, and team-building venues that could serve both local residents and visitors. Similarly, the Delnice cinema represents opportunities for multimedia entertainment that bridges generational gaps through video games, cultural events, and digital programming specifically targeting younger demographics.

Communities consistently identified gaps in their current infrastructure that abandoned building conversions could address. The lack of quality event venues, accommodation facilities, and spaces for intergenerational activities emerged as common themes. In Vrbovsko, the need for childcare facilities and senior day care services reflects demographic realities where working families require support systems. The emphasis on nature-based experiences in Skrad highlights the region's natural assets while addressing the shortage of accommodation facilities for visitors seeking peaceful retreats.

The discussions revealed that legal and regulatory frameworks represent the most significant obstacles to successful conversions. Spatial planning requirements, building codes, and reconstruction permits create complex bureaucratic processes that discourage community

initiatives and private investment. These regulatory challenges are compounded by property ownership issues, as demonstrated in Lokve where unclear legal status prevents facility development. The requirement for specialized technical standards in buildings serving vulnerable populations, such as senior care facilities, adds additional layers of complexity and cost.

Financial constraints emerged as equally problematic, with communities lacking resources for both initial renovations and ongoing operations. The poor condition of many buildings requires substantial investment in restoration that preserves traditional mountain architecture while meeting modern functionality requirements. Transportation infrastructure limitations, particularly in Skrad and Brod Moravice, create additional barriers by limiting accessibility for both residents and visitors.

The path forward requires addressing these challenges through coordinated action at multiple levels. Regional development strategies must prioritize regulatory simplification and streamlined permitting processes for community facility conversions. This includes developing specialized guidelines for historic building renovations that balance preservation requirements with modern functionality needs. Financial mechanisms such as regional development funds, public-private partnerships, and diaspora investment programs can provide the capital necessary for initial conversions.

Community capacity building represents another critical component, as several locations identified the lack of skilled personnel and innovative ideas as limiting factors. Training programs for facility management, cultural programming, and small business development can help communities develop the expertise needed to operate these facilities successfully. Mentorship networks connecting communities with successful conversion examples can accelerate learning and reduce implementation risks.

### **Next Steps and Implementation Priorities**

The immediate priority involves conducting detailed feasibility studies for the most promising conversion projects, beginning with facilities that have clear community support and fewer regulatory obstacles. The old bowling alley in Mrkopalj and the Delnice cinema represent strong candidates due to their structural condition and community enthusiasm. Parallel efforts should focus on advocating for regulatory reforms that simplify conversion processes while maintaining necessary safety and quality standards.

Establishing regional coordination mechanisms can help communities share resources, expertise, and marketing efforts. Joint programming initiatives between converted facilities can create visitor circuits that increase tourism impact while strengthening regional identity. Community engagement processes must continue throughout implementation to ensure that converted facilities truly serve local needs while attracting external visitors.

Success depends on recognizing that building conversions represent only one component of broader community development strategies. These facilities must be integrated with economic development initiatives, transportation improvements, and regional marketing efforts to achieve their full potential as catalysts for community revitalization. The ultimate goal extends beyond simply repurposing buildings to creating sustainable community ecosystems that

support current residents while attracting new community members who contribute to long-term vitality.

interreg  
Danube Region



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL



# Reporting of alternative Format

## Country report of Bulgaria

<b>Date:</b>	28.05.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Sandanski, Bulgaria
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Plamen Todorov
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	20.03.2025 and 30.04.2025

## Documentation of the process (1-2 pages, depending on the format)

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

As part of the community engagement process under the RurALL project, we began by identifying a total of **57 publicly owned or underused buildings within the Municipality of Sandanski**. This was done in close cooperation with local authorities and based on municipal data. To support the evaluation process, we developed two tailored assessment tools: a detailed evaluation form for municipal experts, which included five criteria (renovation potential, economic viability, community impact, environmental benefit, and feasibility), and a simplified version for community members focusing on three core indicators (renovation potential, economic potential, and impact on the local community).

The community engagement process started with an information session/presentation of the project which was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 to present the RurALL project, its key activities and expected outcomes. The participants were then introduced to the project methodology, concept and activities, as well as with an outline of the planned community engagement process.

### Initial event for presenting the project

Date: 20.11.2024

Number of participants: 32



## **Community engagement workshop (WS1) – divided into two events**

Workshop with experts

Date: 20.03.2025

Number of participants: 9



## **Workshop with the wider community**

Date: 30.04.2025

Number of participants: 31



### **Background information (1-2 pages)**

*Why did we choose this method? (justification, if not RurALL project)*

*Method – What did we do?*

The process itself started in March 2025 with the first Community Engagement Workshop (WS1) which was divided into two events to combine technical expertise with community perspectives, ensuring inclusive and balanced decision-making. While experts focused on practicality and feasibility, the community contributed social relevance and ideas for future use.

The first was an expert workshop held on 20 March 2025 at the BICC Sandanski office, which brought together 12 participants from relevant departments of the Municipality of Sandanski. Participants represented urban planning, investment, social services, architecture, and municipal asset management. Each building was presented with essential data (location, condition, size, ownership, and use), and participants completed individual evaluation forms rating each building across five criteria: renovation feasibility, economic viability, community impact, environmental benefit, and structural potential. Discussions focused on technical and policy considerations such as clustering, infrastructure access, legal constraints, and financial viability.

The second event, held on 30 April 2025 at the community hall of the Municipality of Sandanski, brought together 31 participants, including mayors of smaller villages, local civic actors, and residents. Each object was presented visually with key facts, followed by individual evaluation based on three simplified indicators: potential for renovation, economic potential, and impact on the local community. Participants appreciated the chance to voice concerns and ideas. Many expressed attachment to former schools and cultural centres, advocating for multifunctional reuse (e.g. for youth, seniors, events, or co-working).

During both workshops, each building was presented with visual materials and key contextual information, after which participants filled in their individual evaluation forms / evaluation grids. Both events also included facilitated group discussions to reflect on the proposed uses of the buildings and to surface local needs and priorities. The entire process was documented through completed forms, discussion notes, and photographs that captured both the participatory dynamics and the tools used.

The data collected from both groups will inform the next stage of the project, which involves aligning shortlisted buildings with purpose, solutions, content ideas, etc. The second series of the community engagement workshops is planned for the second part of June 2025.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 1 – Livable communities Country report of Hungary**

## How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

### Discussion

### Focus:

This group concentrated on identifying *missing commercial services and business concepts* in Sárvár that could contribute to making the town more liveable—especially from the perspective of younger generations.

### Key Ideas and Suggestions:

#### 1. Student-Operated Hostel (Educational & Touristic Value)

- Idea to establish a small-scale hostel that could be operated by local students during their vocational training or internships.
- The model could serve dual purposes: providing affordable accommodation (e.g., for hikers on the Blue Trail – “Kéktúra”) and offering students practical business experience.
- One potential location mentioned was the **former convent (Zárda)**.

#### 2. Themed Accommodation for Blue Trail Tourists (Backpackers)

- Sárvár is well-located on national hiking routes, but currently lacks dedicated facilities for backpackers.
- A simple, practical lodging option (perhaps even seasonal) could attract nature-oriented tourists and diversify local tourism.

#### 3. Youth-Oriented Catering Establishments

- There was a strong emphasis on the lack of casual, creative hospitality venues catering specifically to young people.

- Suggestions included:
  - Cafés with modern atmosphere
  - Youth bars or ruin pubs
  - Open-air community bars in the castle courtyard
- These venues could become meeting points and strengthen the town's attractiveness to younger residents.

#### 4. **Additional Suggestions from Clustering:**

- **Youth Market and Pop-Up Shops:** Seasonal spaces for young entrepreneurs to sell self-made products.
- **24/7 Convenience Store in the Castle Courtyard:** A practical improvement for local life quality.

#### **Whisper Groups & Plenary Clustering:**

- Participants worked in small groups (whisper groups) to brainstorm, then brought their ideas into the plenary where they were grouped into three main commercial themes:
  1. *Youth Hospitality & Accommodation*
  2. *Gastro-Social Community Spaces*
  3. *Youth Entrepreneurship & Everyday Services*

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

## Discussion

## Focus:

This group explored how abandoned or underused buildings in Sárvár can be repurposed to serve residential needs, particularly in a way that attracts and retains young people. The underlying vision was to create a *vibrant, youthful town environment* that fosters interaction, creativity, and community life.

## Key Concepts and Discussion Points

### 1. 🏠 Youth-Centered Residential Functions

- Participants stressed that creating *living spaces that are more than just accommodation* is essential.
- There was a strong preference for **community-based, lively housing concepts**, rather than sterile or isolated units.
- A **vivid, “living” city** was envisioned—where young people can live, co-create, and feel ownership.

### 2. 🏠 Renovation of Existing Buildings for Shared Housing

- **The former convent (Zárda)** was discussed as a potential youth residence or dormitory, with flexible, low-cost living arrangements.
- Preference for **modular living spaces**: private bedrooms with shared kitchens, lounges, and study areas.
- The concept included *student-managed operations*, as part of training or civic service.

### 3. 👥 Community-Integrated Living Models

- **Interdisciplinary residential hubs** were proposed—where artists, students, digital nomads, and young entrepreneurs can live and work under one roof.

- Such places would promote both cross-sector learning and creativity.
- This aligns with broader goals of **urban vibrancy** and **knowledge-based renewal** of rural towns.

#### 4. 🏠 **Reactivation of the Former Media Building**

- Seen as suitable for a **quiet, shared housing concept** with community rooms and co-living potential.
- Could support temporary residents (e.g., young professionals, interns, Erasmus students).

#### 5. 🛠️ **Student-Led Renovation Projects**

- A unique idea was proposed to involve local vocational schools in the **renovation process** itself.
- This would provide real-world experience to students in architecture, construction, and design, while reducing costs and creating emotional ownership.

### **Clustering & Presentation Highlights**

During the plenary clustering phase, three thematic clusters were identified:

1. **Youth Residency & Co-Living Concepts** – Focused on flexible, modern living.
2. **Educational + Housing Hybrids** – Combining training with accommodation use.
3. **Community Lifestyle Enhancement** – Housing as part of a broader ecosystem of work, creativity, and social life.

### Summary Conclusion (Group 2 – Residential Use):

The group concluded that rethinking residential functions in unused buildings is *not just a matter of housing*, but a strategic tool for **urban rejuvenation**. By creating **interdisciplinary, community-integrated living spaces** for young people, Sárvár can become a place that **breathes innovation, life, and social connectedness**. Abandoned dwellings, if transformed wisely, can be catalysts for a **vibrant and resilient urban future**.

### How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

#### Discussion

#### Focus:

This group explored how abandoned or underused buildings in Sárvár could be transformed into vibrant **community spaces** that support local identity, intergenerational interaction, cultural creativity, and social inclusion. The overarching idea was to use existing resources as anchors for **community-driven revitalization**.

### Key Ideas and Concepts

#### 1. 🏡 Cultural and Artistic Community Spaces

- One of the most discussed ideas was the **transformation of part of the Nádasdy Castle's rear wing** into a **creative community and cultural center**.
- Proposed functions include:
  - Small performance space for amateur theater groups
  - Workshop rooms for crafts, dance, or music
  - Gallery and exhibition area (e.g., in the attic)

## 2. Multifunctional Social Hubs

- The group emphasized the need for flexible-use spaces that serve **various age groups and needs**:
  - Community lectures and debates
  - Social events, club meetings
  - Quiet areas for study, reading, or informal co-working

## 3. Youth-Oriented Cultural Venues

- The **former mazzorett room** (behind the TV building) was suggested as an ideal site for a **youth-oriented cultural venue**, e.g.:
  - Ruin pub
  - Dance space or concert room
  - Informal gathering space in the evenings

## 4. Intergenerational Activities

- Suggestions also included **digital skills training for seniors**, family workshops, and **programs where generations learn from each other**.
- These would promote community solidarity and reduce isolation among the elderly.

## 5. Seasonal Events and Activation of Spaces

- The community could use these spaces for **temporary and seasonal events**, such as:
  - Christmas markets

- Open-air movie nights
- Youth festivals or thematic weekends

### Clustering and Group Synthesis

In the plenary session, the following clusters emerged:

1. **Creative & Cultural Reuse** – focusing on art, expression, and heritage
2. **Social Cohesion & Intergenerational Inclusion** – through learning and events
3. **Youth Engagement & Informal Spaces** – energizing public life with informal, relaxed community uses

### Summary Conclusion (Group 3 – Community Use):

The group strongly agreed that abandoned buildings represent more than physical space—they can become **platforms for social connection and cultural energy**. By reactivating them with community-centered functions (theater, exhibitions, youth pubs, quiet learning areas), Sárvár can cultivate a stronger local identity, improve quality of life, and build **a more inclusive, dynamic community life**. These functions would be highly adaptive and foster citizen participation.

### Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

### Overview of the Plenary Session:

During the final plenary, all three groups presented the outcomes of their sessions, followed by an open-floor discussion among all participants. Key themes were clustered on flipcharts using post-its and short comments. The moderator helped synthesize ideas and identify strategic directions moving forward.

### Key Cross-Cutting Messages:

#### 1. 🌐 A Shared Vision: A Youthful, Vibrant Sárvár

- Across all groups, there was a consistent call for making Sárvár **more attractive to younger generations**.
- The vision is not only to stop depopulation, but to **build a town that inspires people to stay, return, or engage**.

#### 2. 🏠 Creative and Purposeful Reuse of Buildings

- Each group identified specific abandoned or underused buildings with high potential:
- These spaces were seen as central assets in **turning ideas into action**.

#### 3. 🏢 Multifunctionality and Community-Led Operation

- Several ideas emphasized **flexible use of space** (e.g., one building serving as a hostel, community venue, and training site).
- There was strong support for **youth and student participation in management and operation**, fostering responsibility and relevance.

#### 4. 👥 Building Bridges Across Generations

- Both residential and community concepts encouraged **intergenerational dialogue**, such as digital literacy courses for seniors or shared community events.

- Creating places where **different age groups naturally meet** was seen as a key to long-term social cohesion.

## 5. 💡 From Brainstorming to Prototyping

- Participants expressed motivation to **move beyond ideation** and start co-designing concrete concepts.
- The idea of forming **working groups for each building/function pair** was proposed for the next session.

### Conclusion and Next Steps:

The workshop successfully created a **collective foundation for future planning**, where stakeholders, youth, and the municipality share a common direction. The discussions highlighted that the solution to rural depopulation is not only infrastructural, but also **social, emotional, and cultural**.

📅 **Next Workshop Date:** 5 June 2025

📍 **Location:** Sárvár, Mayor's Office

🎯 **Focus:** Co-designing selected building-function concepts, outlining preliminary usage plans and community operation models



# Reporting of Workshop 2

## Country report of LP1 – Municipality of Beltinci, Slovenia

<b>Date:</b>	11.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Beltinci, Slovenia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Simona Roudi, simona.roudi@obcina-beltinci.si Kristina Koter, kristina.koter@obcina-beltinci.si
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	16

## **Documentation of the process (1-2 pages, depending on the format)**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The workshop began with a welcome greeting and introduction by LP, outlining the goals and purpose of the meeting- developing concrete proposals to bring new life to three of the mapped deteriorating dwellings within the Municipality of Beltinci. The mayor of the Municipality of Beltinci, Mr. Marko Virag, addressed the participants briefly, emphasizing the importance of community involvement and cooperation for the future of the identified dwellings.

All participants then introduced themselves, sharing their names, where they came from, and their role in the community (such as property owner, citizen, municipal council member, representative of a local association, potential investor, director of an institution, etc).

Following the summary of the conclusion from the first workshop was presented, highlighting the community's shared vision of reusing abandoned resources to support tourism, housing and community spaces.

Further on, a building in one of the settlements of the Municipality was presented by a representative of the local community. The presentation was made by Jožef Ferčak, the president of the local community of Lipa. The building, located at Lipa 135, was formerly a school. It had been identified and mapped as a building with potential within the framework of the RurALL project. The local community has already started searching for a new function for the building, and renovation plans are being prepared. The building was recognized in the project as one with potential and will continue to be included in project activities. The proposed new function addresses one of the needs identified during the first community workshop – the establishment of accommodation facilities or a hostel, which would serve cyclists, hikers, small excursion groups, and other visitors. The presentation included the current state and situation of the building, the community's needs that the building could potentially serve, updates on actions taken, and plans for the future. This served as an example of good practice and a guideline for the upcoming workshop.

Following this, LP has announced all three selected buildings, and for each, photographs, maps, and key contextual information were presented:

- ◆ Historical background, architectural features, and location
- ◆ Past uses and current condition
- ◆ Significance for the local community

- ◆ Present challenges, ownership status, and opportunities for reuse

With this introduction we wanted to spark ideas and encourage participants to think creatively about each building's potential.

Following the introduction, participants were asked to form three groups, with each group focusing on one of the selected buildings.

Each group received an information folder containing:

- ◆ A description of the building's history, location, and current condition
- ◆ Photographs and spatial data
- ◆ A parcel plan, if available
- ◆ A working sheet with guiding questions

The working sheet included six thematic areas:

-contents and programs (what uses would be realistic and beneficial for the community, how could programs be combined to keep the building active at least 200 days per year)

-space and functionality (how can the renovation make the building more functional, are extensions or improvements to the surroundings needed)

-management (who could manage the building-municipality, institution, association; how could it function sustainably)

-partnership (which local, regional, or national partners could be involved, who could use the building)

-impact on the community (what social, economic, or cultural benefits would the renovation bring; who would it improve the quality of life and community relations)

-funding (what funding sources are possible: EU or national grants, donations, sponsorships, public-private partnerships, users' own resources...)

With the support of moderators, each group brainstormed, discussed, and came up with concrete proposals and ideas.

After the discussion period, each group presented its main conclusions and proposals in a 7-8 minute summary. The presentations covered possible programs, renovation ideas, potential partners, and funding options, as well as expected benefits for the local community.

Conclusions for location 1 – Beltinci, Mladinska ulica 26

### **1. CONTENT / PROGRAM**

The building could be effectively used by various associations (retirees, youth, cultural and tourist associations, etc.) for administrative work and organizing events. The program could include sports activities (bowling, bocce), cultural events, lectures, literary evenings, and workshops. With a carefully coordinated schedule (mornings, afternoons, weekends), the building could be in use for at least 200 days a year.

### **2. SPACE AND FUNCTIONALITY**

It is proposed to renovate the interior to increase the functionality of individual spaces, to arrange a covered terrace for social gatherings and events in all weather conditions, and to build a covered sports area for bocce or other activities. Landscaping the surroundings would also improve comfort and allow for additional content. There is also consideration of building extensions or auxiliary facilities to meet further needs.

### **3. MANAGEMENT**

Potential managers could be the municipality, a public institution, an association, or a consortium. The building could operate as an intergenerational center. It is recommended to establish an access system (e.g., code lock) and publicly available schedule of use.

### **4. PARTNERSHIPS**

Key partners could include the municipality, local community councils, local associations, LAG projects (e.g., for revitalizing public multi-purpose spaces), Interreg, the Eco Fund, and other national sources. Users could be associations, companies, and individuals.

### **5. IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

The renovation would increase opportunities for socializing and intergenerational cooperation, promote a healthy lifestyle and recreational activities, strengthen solidarity, and enhance the attractiveness and quality of life in the area.

### **6. FUNDING**

Renovation: EU and national funds (cohesion funds, LAG projects), Eco Fund, donations, sponsorships, and own funds.

Operation: membership fees, donations, sponsorships, income from events, and public calls for cultural, sports, and social programs.

Conclusions for location 2 – Beltinci, Ravenska 15

### **1. CONTENT / PROGRAM**

- Feasible and valuable activities: accommodation offering the experience of traditional life, artist residencies, creative camps and workshops, culinary workshops, cultural events.
- Program combinations to ensure at least 200 days of use: long-term residencies, seasonal camps, weekend workshops, morning activities for visitors and school groups, evening open-air events.
- Complementing content by time: mornings for sensory trails and culinary workshops, afternoons and evenings for cultural events, year-round residencies, camps and public events in warmer months.

### **2. SPACE AND FUNCTIONALITY**

- Renovation preserving authentic Pannonian architecture, adapted for artists and visitors.
- Conversion of farm buildings into living units, renovation of auxiliary buildings for sanitary facilities and outdoor kitchen.
- Possibility of extensions for additional programs.
- Creation of sensory paths, herb gardens, thematic points, and ensuring privacy for resident artists.

### **3. MANAGEMENT**

- Potential managers: ZTKŠ Beltinci, ZRIRAP; option for public-private partnership.
- Sustainable model combining public co-financing, residencies, workshops, sponsorships.
- Integration into cultural and creative networks and cross-border cooperation.

### **4. PARTNERSHIPS**

- Local: associations (for example Association Aquila), Beltinci Municipality, ZTKŠ, cultural and culinary program providers.
- Regional and national: museums, artist networks, ministries.
- Users: artists, camp participants, event visitors, tourists, school groups.

### **5. IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

- Cultural: revitalizing heritage, richer cultural offerings.
- Social: community bonding, intergenerational cooperation.
- Economic: increased tourism, support for local providers.
- Preservation of local identity and Pannonian architecture.

## **6. FUNDING**

- Public funds: ministries, LAG Pri dobrih ljudeh, Interreg, Creative Europe.
- Donations and sponsorships.
- Public-private partnerships.
- User fees: residencies, workshops, events.

Conclusions for location 3 – Lipovci 2, Lipovci

### **1. CONTENT / PROGRAM**

The proposed content is realistic and beneficial for the local community. It includes establishing a daily center or an intergenerational center where people of different ages can meet, learn, and spend time together.

To ensure the building is in use for at least 200 days a year, it would be possible to organize various workshops and courses. These could include music workshops, handicraft workshops, art colonies, computer and cooking courses, and a winter program with film screenings. The content could also be supplemented by renting the space for private celebrations and events, which could take place during weekends, evenings, or outside regular program hours.

### **2. SPACE AND FUNCTIONALITY**

The renovation of the building should aim for greater functionality by furnishing it with new and modern equipment adapted to the needs of each space. The outdoor area could be improved with a canopy and a natural hedge to provide shade.

It would also make sense to redesign the surroundings by planting trees, arranging a park area with benches and tables, and adding a living hedge to create a more pleasant outdoor environment.

Additional spatial improvements could include installing solar panels, building an access ramp for people with disabilities, and adding a covered entrance to a summer garden to make the space more accessible and usable throughout the year.

### **3. MANAGEMENT**

The building could be managed by local associations in cooperation with the local community council (KS).

For long-term operation, the building would need a clear management plan and a well-prepared annual program to ensure financial and organizational sustainability.

### **4. PARTNERSHIPS**

Several partners could participate in revitalizing the building. This could include local, regional, and national partners through exchanges and cross-border cooperation projects related to culture and culinary arts.

The building could be used by local associations for meetings and activities, and could host lectures and courses on topics such as agriculture, cooking, and music, thus serving different user groups and strengthening local networks.

## 5. IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The new program would have positive effects on the local community. Socially, it would connect different generations and strengthen ties among residents. Economically and culturally, it could stimulate local activity, attract visitors, and support cultural life in the area. Revitalizing the building would help improve the quality of life, increase the attractiveness of the village, and enhance community cohesion by providing a central space for shared activities.

## 6. FUNDING

Possible sources of funding for renovation could include the EKO fund, voluntary contributions and donations from residents, and sponsorships from local craftspeople and businesses (for example, carpenters and joiners who could help produce equipment).

Additional sources could come from public calls for funding at the European, national, and regional levels (such as EU or LAG funds), donations, sponsorships, public-private partnerships, and user contributions from people and organizations using the building.

LP1 summarized the workshop.

→ The community generated diverse, creative, and feasible ideas to give new life to the three selected buildings

→ Consensus was made that unused spaces can become valuable sources for tourism, housing for young families and workers, cultural and educational programs, and social activities

→ Renovation should respect the buildings' history and architecture while adapting them to a bit of a more modern need

## **Background information (1-2 pages)**

*Why did we choose this method? (justification, if not RurALL project)*

*Method – What did we do?*

Based on previous experience with organizing similar events, we decided to conduct a shorter version of the workshop, lasting 2.5 hours. The participants included building owners, local community representatives, citizens, members of associations and institutions, as well as retirees - all of whom have various other commitments. Since participants are generally unwilling to take leave from work or use their weekends for such events, we scheduled the workshop on a weekday afternoon (Wednesday at 5 p.m.), after most people have finished their work obligations. Experience from the first workshop showed that people in our area have low motivation to participate in longer workshops, so a duration of around two hours is recommended. The shorter workshop format allows for more focused and efficient work by addressing key topics and questions, thereby increasing participant engagement and productivity.

We chose the focus group method for our workshop because it allows us to gather diverse perspectives and rich, detailed insights through facilitated group discussions. This method encourages interaction among participants, enabling them to build on each other's ideas and reveal more nuanced viewpoints. It was particularly effective for exploring how individuals think and feel about the topic, uncovering collective attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, focus groups fostered a dynamic and comfortable environment that promoted open dialogue, making it ideal for brainstorming and testing reactions.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Czech Republic

# Reporting Workshop 2 “Prototyping solutions”

## Country report of Czech Republic

<b>Date:</b>	13.05.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Bystřice, Czech Republic
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Marek Třeštík, marek.trestik@euda.eu
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	15

## Overview of who is here – Warm up

Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.

The workshop began with a warm-up session where each participant briefly introduced themselves, the organization they represent, and their interest in the project. The diverse composition of the group allowed for a well-rounded discussion incorporating multiple perspectives.

- **Municipality of Bystřice** – Representatives presented the city's intent to reactivate unused public assets and better engage the population in local planning processes.
- **Civic Associations** – Participating NGOs voiced the need for inclusive, accessible spaces for their activities, particularly those addressing social exclusion.
- **Residents** – Included young adults, seniors, and families who expressed interest in improving livability and retaining local youth.
- **Entrepreneurs** – Local business owners and newcomers interested in exploring opportunities for small-scale, place-based enterprise.
- **Regional Development Agency** – Provided facilitation and expertise on funding instruments and long-term planning.

### Key expectations from participants:

- Build community-driven solutions
- Identify sustainable and feasible ideas
- Link local heritage with modern functions
- Increase local ownership of spatial transformation

**Keywords collected:** Revitalization, Community Needs, Sustainability, Inclusion, Innovation, Ownership, Adaptability

## Understanding the problem (Step 1)

Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.

### Group 1 – Commercial Use

- **Main Issue:** Several centrally located buildings with commercial potential are abandoned. Despite interest from the public, private owners are reluctant to negotiate, and business infrastructure is lacking.
- **Framing Question:** What financial and organizational tools can we use to attract micro-enterprises and services into unused commercial buildings?

### Group 2 – Residential Use

- **Main Issue:** There is a significant mismatch between available empty buildings and rising demand for affordable housing, especially for young families, seniors, and vulnerable groups.
- **Framing Question:** How can we effectively transform disused municipal buildings into safe, accessible, and diverse forms of housing?

### Group 3 – Community Use

- **Main Issue:** Bystřice lacks a central, open, multifunctional civic space that fosters culture, education, and intergenerational interaction. Unused buildings present this potential, but need clear concepts and user commitment.
- **Framing Question:** What kind of community functions can be realistically sustained in repurposed public buildings to increase social inclusion and engagement?

## Asking people (Step 2)

Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.

Each group carried out informal interviews with other participants. Key insights:

- **Infrastructure condition** varies: Some buildings have good basic utilities (e.g. electricity, water), others need extensive refurbishment (e.g. Drachkov).
- **Ownership status** influences feasibility: Public buildings like the old school or Dům u Jelena offer flexibility, while private ownership (e.g. bakery) complicates implementation.
- **People's needs** are hybrid: Most residents and stakeholders are interested in mixed-use models (e.g. living + working + leisure).

- **Information deficit:** Many citizens are unaware of ongoing planning processes or potential funding opportunities (e.g. CLLD, IROP).

### Define common ground (step 3)

Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.

Finalized "Point of View" statements, used to anchor prototyping:

- **Group 1 (Commercial):** How might we convert heritage or central commercial buildings into entry-level business infrastructure for local entrepreneurs and service providers?
- **Group 2 (Residential):** How could we turn vacant, municipally owned buildings into starter housing options that are inclusive, cost-efficient, and climate-conscious?
- **Group 3 (Community):** How can we co-design multifunctional civic spaces that serve as catalysts for community culture, informal education, and solidarity?

Participants also mapped values to be preserved (heritage, access, affordability) and identified stakeholders to involve (schools, housing agency, senior associations).

### Find ideas (step 4)

Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

Participants wrote over 60 post-its. The top clustered and prioritized ideas:

Group 1 – Commercial Use

- Renovation of the old bakery into a café-incubator (bakery + pop-up shop + business support)
- Community grocery store in Nesvačily 109, operated by a social cooperative
- Cultural brewery and local product shop in Drachkov granary

Group 2 – Residential Use

- *Reconstruction of the Oběnice school into a mix of starter flats and wellness facility for seniors*
- *Adaptive reuse of the station building as co-living units for seasonal workers or young couples*
- *Energy-efficient retrofitting program for old residential houses*

#### *Group 3 – Community Use*

- *“Dům u Jelena” transformed into a local arts & crafts museum with co-working zones*
- *Hangár turned into community workshop for youth, including aviation/modeling education*
- *Cultural & social club in the former school building: music, library, activities for elderly*

### **Prototyping (step 5)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

*Groups created visual and conceptual mockups using large-format paper and floor plan sketches.*

- *Old bakery plan included ground-floor business and training space, shared utilities, accessible entrance*
- *Residential prototype included 4-6 units per floor with shared amenities, integrated green space*
- *Community hub featured modular space with stage, gallery wall, and a co-managed kitchen*

*Each group prepared a short pitch and “user story” sketch.*

### **Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

*During presentations:*

- **Group 1** received strong support for a community-run business incubator but was advised to check zoning and hygiene requirements for food production.
- **Group 2** got positive feedback for combining housing with health-oriented spaces. Experts highlighted the potential to apply for CLLD/IROP calls focused on social inclusion.
- **Group 3's** cultural space concept was well received, especially by youth and seniors. One concern was long-term sustainability; proposed solution: co-management by local NGOs.

## Integrating feedback (step 7)

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

- *Teams added layers of governance (e.g. association-based or cooperative management structures)*
- *Updated cost estimates and staged phasing for complex renovations*
- *Incorporated intergenerational programming (e.g. elderly mentoring youth, shared workshops)*
- *Digitally enhanced proposals via simple app prototype idea (room booking, events calendar)*

## Testing the prototype (step 8)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

*Simulation of 3 user journeys:*

- **Young family** moves into starter flat in Oběnice, uses nearby childcare and library space
- **Senior citizen** participates in music classes and lunch club in the new community hub
- **Young entrepreneur** opens a pilot bakery, gets mentoring in the incubator model space

*This simulation validated spatial flow, daily rhythm, and potential for multi-use optimization.*



# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Austria

<b>Date:</b>	14.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Eberau, Austria
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Daniela Fuchs ( <a href="mailto:fuchs@zsi.at">fuchs@zsi.at</a> ), Maddalena Lamura ( <a href="mailto:lamura@zsi.at">lamura@zsi.at</a> ), Amira Al Meklef ( <a href="mailto:almeklef@zsi.at">almeklef@zsi.at</a> )
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	9 (+ 4 organisers)

## Country report of Austria

<b>Date:</b>	14.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Eberau, Austria
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Daniela Fuchs ( <a href="mailto:fuchs@zsi.at">fuchs@zsi.at</a> ), Maddalena Lamura ( <a href="mailto:lamura@zsi.at">lamura@zsi.at</a> ), Amira Al Meklef ( <a href="mailto:almeklef@zsi.at">almeklef@zsi.at</a> )
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	9 (+ 4 organisers)

### Overview of who is here – Warm up

Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.

1. J. Weber (Mayor; interested in project collaboration)
2. D. Gumhalter (Local councillor; village development, bringing people together, ‘living here together’)
3. W. Ströbl (Building owner; interested in building conversion (primarily commercial use))
4. A. Putz (Building owner; interested in building conversion (primarily touristic and public interest))
5. Bernd (?)G. (Entrepreneur/real estate; looking to develop a renovation platform)
6. Tobias Lang (Student-Diploma; academic interest in topic)
7. Lukas Unger (Architecture student at TU Graz; personal and academic interest in topic)
8. Irene Berto (Civil technician; interested in regional development)
9. Benjamin Sasdi (Architect; interested in regional development)

## Understanding the problem (Step 1)

Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.

### 1. Industry Hall:

#### - **Problems/challenges:**

- Large area, difficult to work with its entirety
- Separate office wing
- Aesthetic atmosphere
- Own use vs. shared use?
- Can the previous industrial use be revived?
- Is there an interest towards building things on your own?

#### - **Question:**

- Would you build your own project (e.g. window frames) under supervision?
- Would you be interested in a common home office space?

### 2. Townhouse:

#### - **Problems/challenges:**

- Vacant for 20 years
- Car repair shop warehouse (too cramped)
- Very central, its function would be of public interest
- Café next door shut down

#### - **Question:**

- Which target group should be offered services/spaces at the main square?

### 3. Kellerstöckl:

#### - **Problems/challenges:**

- No public transport
- Lack of meeting places
- Is there an interest towards a touristic function?

#### - **Question:**

- Would you want to spend the night alone (or with others) in a Kellerstöckl?

## Asking people (Step 2)

Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.

## Define common ground (step 3)

Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

### **Industry Hall:**

Cluster 1: Interest in hobbies and workshops

- Hobby: Grilling, Cooking, trying out crafting hobbies
- Request for professional and detailed introduction
- Potential for further knowledge transfer
- Interest for workshops

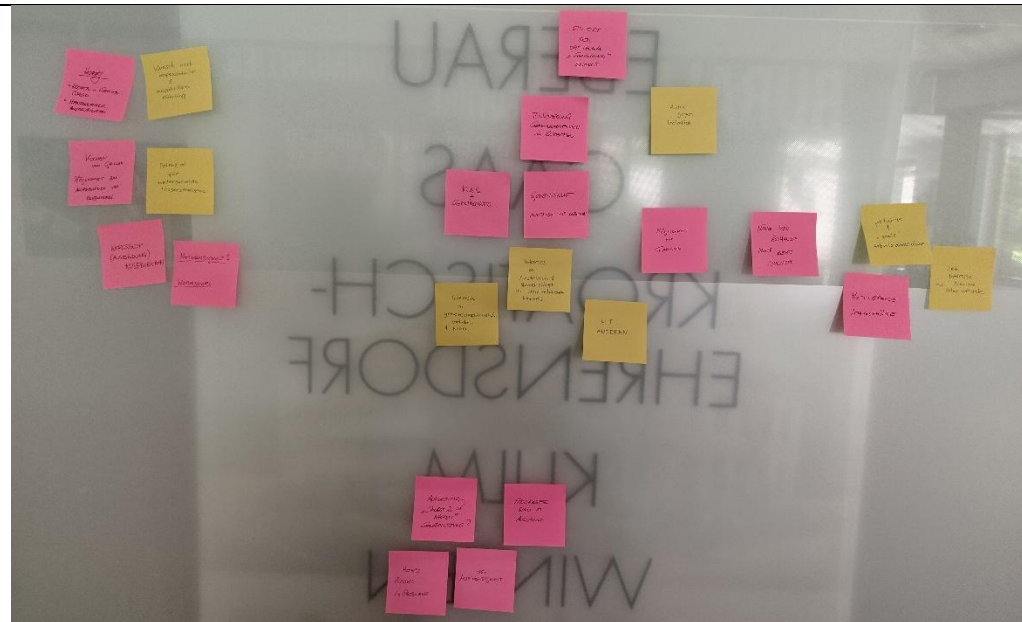
Cluster 2: community and atmosphere

- Approaching partial renovation projects as a community
- Courses in a community
- Interested in exchange and community in the immediate vicinity
- with others
- possibilities for families
- proximity to home but without isolation
- productive and "cool" atmosphere
- motivational atmosphere

Cluster 3: lack of interest and necessity

- a lot of effort
- high risk; lots of problems?
- skilled workers available abroad
- no interest; everything that is needed can be found at home

**Point of View:** *What could be developed in the factory hall for Lilli (35, self-employed graphic designer) so that she can develop to her full potential?*



## **Townhouse:**

### Cluster 1: Creative Spaces

- Space for creative uses: hobbies, design, crafts
- Inter-municipal creative classes
- Combination of living and working for artists

### Cluster 2: Co-learning

- intergenerational: bringing younger and older people together
- exchange skills (co-kitchen, knowledge sharing)

### Cluster 3: Connection

- a space to meet
- co-space
- a space without consumerism but with possibilities

### Cluster 4: Touristic values

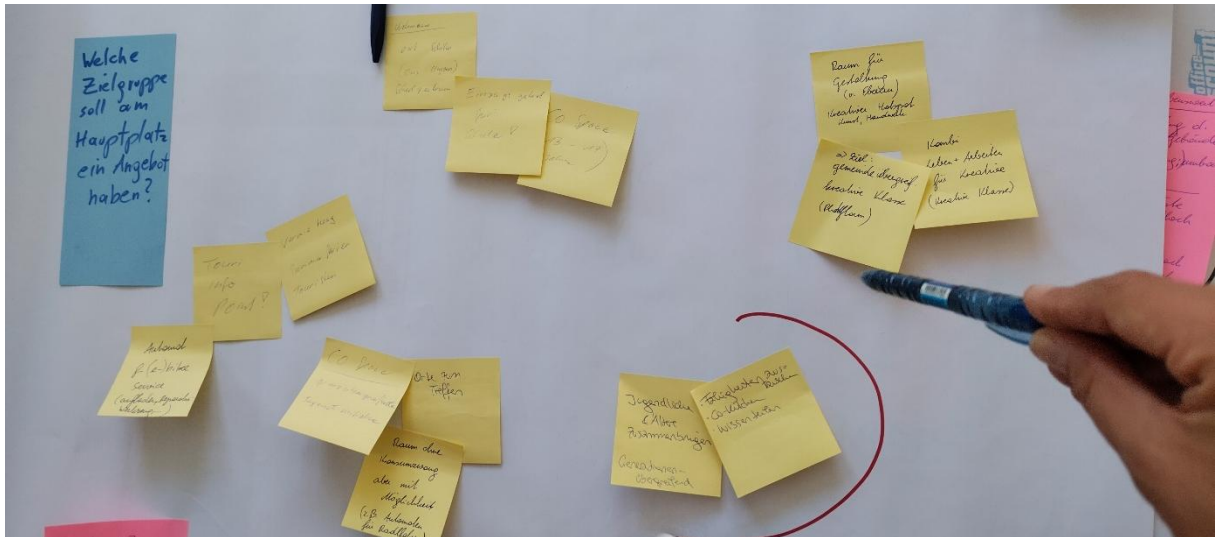
- touristic information point
- vending machines (e.g. for a type of (e-)bike station)
- connection between tourists

### Cluster 5: Student demographic

- proximity to school

- assisted living spaces for young people
- Co-Space for students
- Living spaces for external students

**Point of View:** What could be changed in the house for Fanny (student from Budapest, 13 years old) so that she doesn't feel alone (separated from her friends) when she goes to school here?



### **Kellerstöckl:**

#### Cluster 1: Educational

- educational wine-growing
- learning by doing
- Wine experience in a wine idyll (history and education)

#### Cluster 2: Nature experiences

- Experiences in nature (e.g. astrology)
- Bird watching

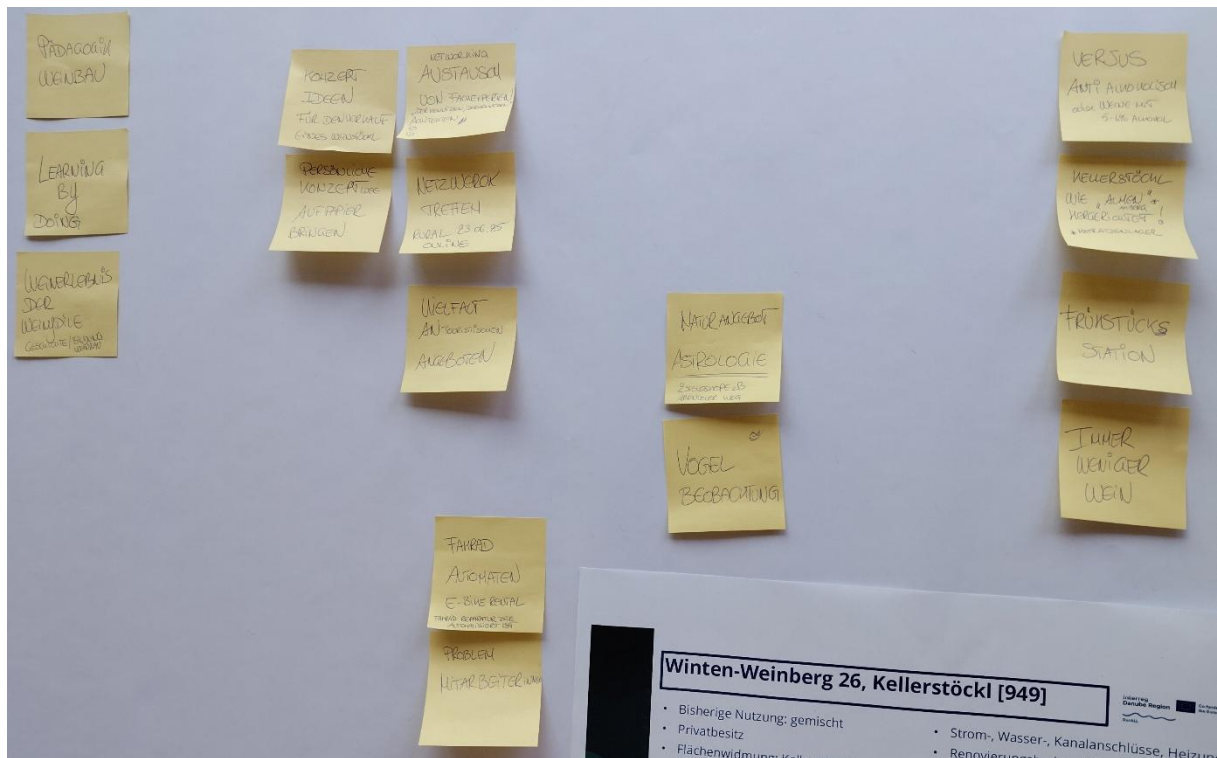
#### Cluster 3: Self-service stations

- Automated (e-)bike rental
- Not enough employees

#### Cluster 4:

- Breakfast station

**Point of View:** What could be developed for Martina (40, employed, married, no kids) at the Kellerstöckl so that she can live there really well?



### Find ideas (step 4)

Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

### Industry Hall:

Cluster 1:

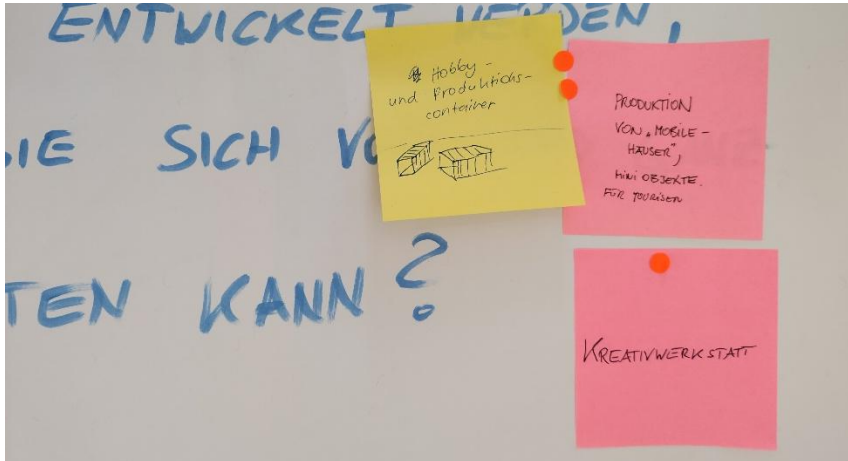
- Hobby- and production containers
- Production of “mobile” houses
- Experimenting fields
- Creative workshops
- Market place for art and crafts
- Recording studio & stage/cinema
- Possibility to join workshops

Cluster 2:

- Startup for freelancers
- Multimedia atelier
- Decentralized co-working
- Community based catering & Partyservice
- Vegetable & fish cultivation

Cluster 3:

- Open material storage
- Private storage facility (to make space for changes)



**Townhouse:**

Cluster 1:

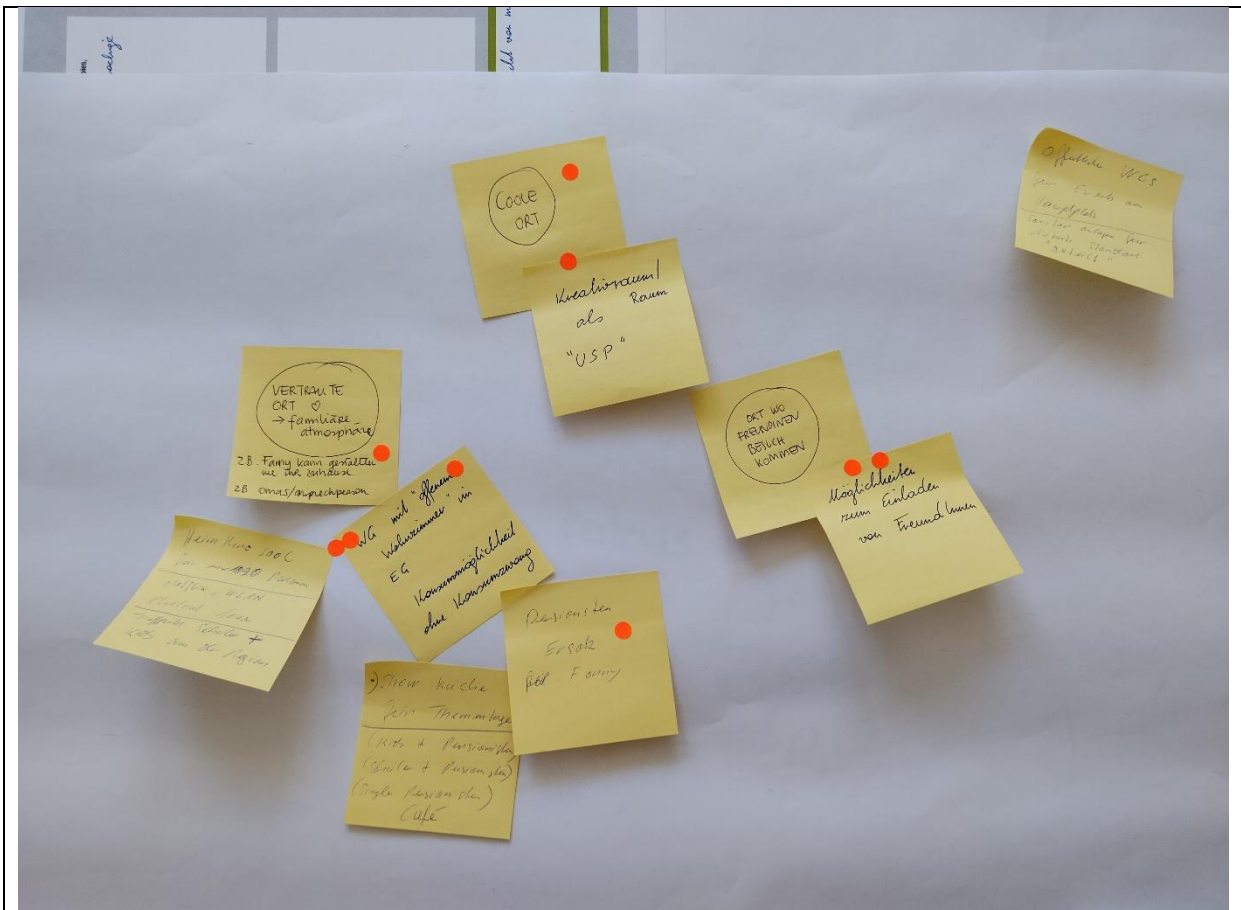
- Cool Space
- Creative space as 'USP'
- Space where friends can come visit
- Possibility of inviting friends over

Cluster 2:

- Public restrooms

Cluster 3:

- A familiar place with a family atmosphere (freedom of decorating personal space, grandmas/grandpas as caretakers)
- Shared apartment with open living space, without obligation to consumerism
- Home cinema
- Show kitchen



### Kellerstöckl:

#### Cluster 1:

- BAST (Bus)Taxi Station
- Carsharing

#### Cluster 2:

- Wifi connection + computer access
- drinking fountain and water feature
- bike repair station

#### Cluster 3:

- astronomy (point) in garden
- bird watching
- open-air observatory
- open air cinema
- hiking paths



Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.



### Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)

Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.

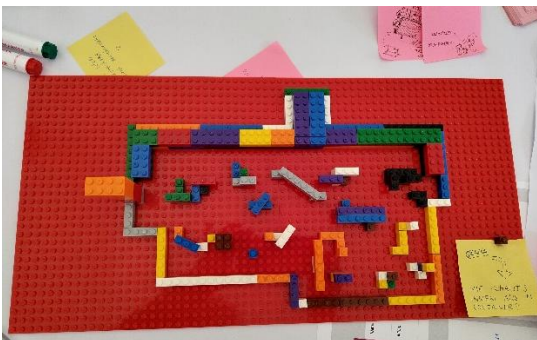
Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.

#### Industry Hall:

- **Idea:** Prefabricated containers (e.g. shipping containers) 'house within a house' with independent uses (co-working – co-creation – storage – workshop – living – ...) can be linked together to form a flexible, gradual activation according to requirements

#### **Feedback/discussion:**

- Coworking in rural areas is difficult
- Boulder hall
- Startup/pop-up place – to try out businesses
- Indoor playground
- Escape room
- Tiny house (name needs to enhance image)

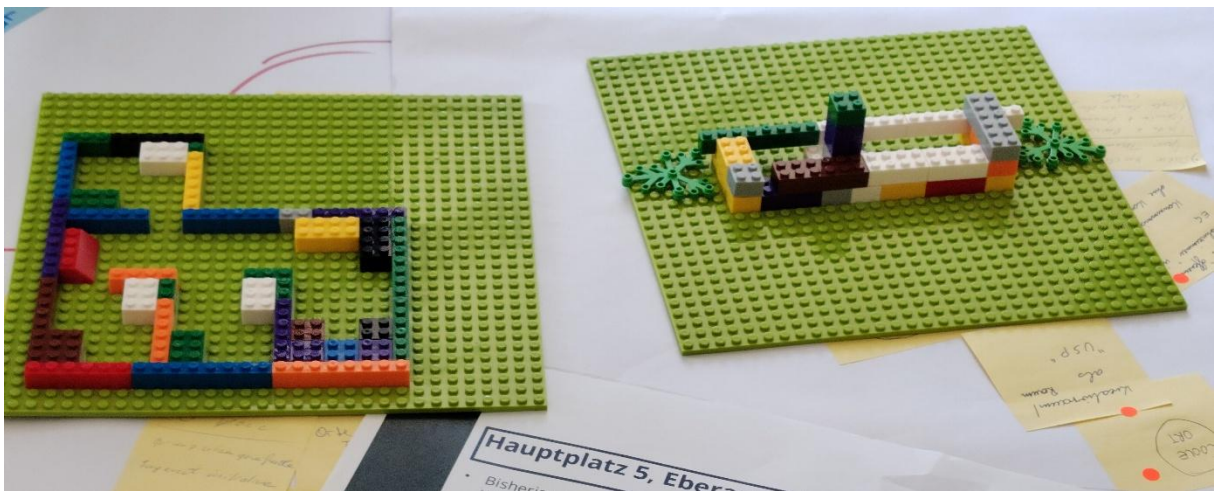


#### Townhouse:

- **Idea:** *Boarding school like a home for 6-8 young people (familiar, cosy, family-like, personal retreat) with guest accommodation (family and friends); meeting place + living space*
- Connecting axis between main square and school
- Ground floor: 'shared living room' + 'soul kitchen' kitchen run by older residents ('carers'/'rent-a-grandma/grandpa'/caregivers) and youth meeting point 'open living room' (concerts, readings, library, consumption-free)

#### Feedback/discussion:

- Separation of public and private (e.g. tourists)
- Airbnb (during the holidays), always move out?
- Friend packages
- Supervision?
- Engaging Hungarian community in Burgenland



#### Kellerstöckl:

- **Idea:** *Bicycle station & relaxation oasis on several levels (indoor-outdoor living), open to all, mainly self-service, for lingering and/or staying*
- Existing: fountain, tree shade, sanitary facilities
- Planned exterior: hammocks/swings, open-air cinema/open-air observatory
- Planned interior: simple sleeping places like on the Way of St. James (bunk beds: 4P.), modular furniture (movable table and coffee station), open-air shower, bicycle repair station downstairs (e.g. also tyre sales)

#### Feedback/discussion:

- How are services/self-service organised?
- Rent on demand
- Networking with other Kellerstöckeln (a kind of information/availability platform like on the Way of St. James/Jakobsweg)



### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

[not applicable]

### **Testing the prototype (step 8)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

[not applicable]



# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Romania

### Workshop 22.05.2025

<b>Date:</b>	22.05.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Hodod, Romania
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Paul Dancu, dankupali@yahoo.com
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	15

Country report of Romania

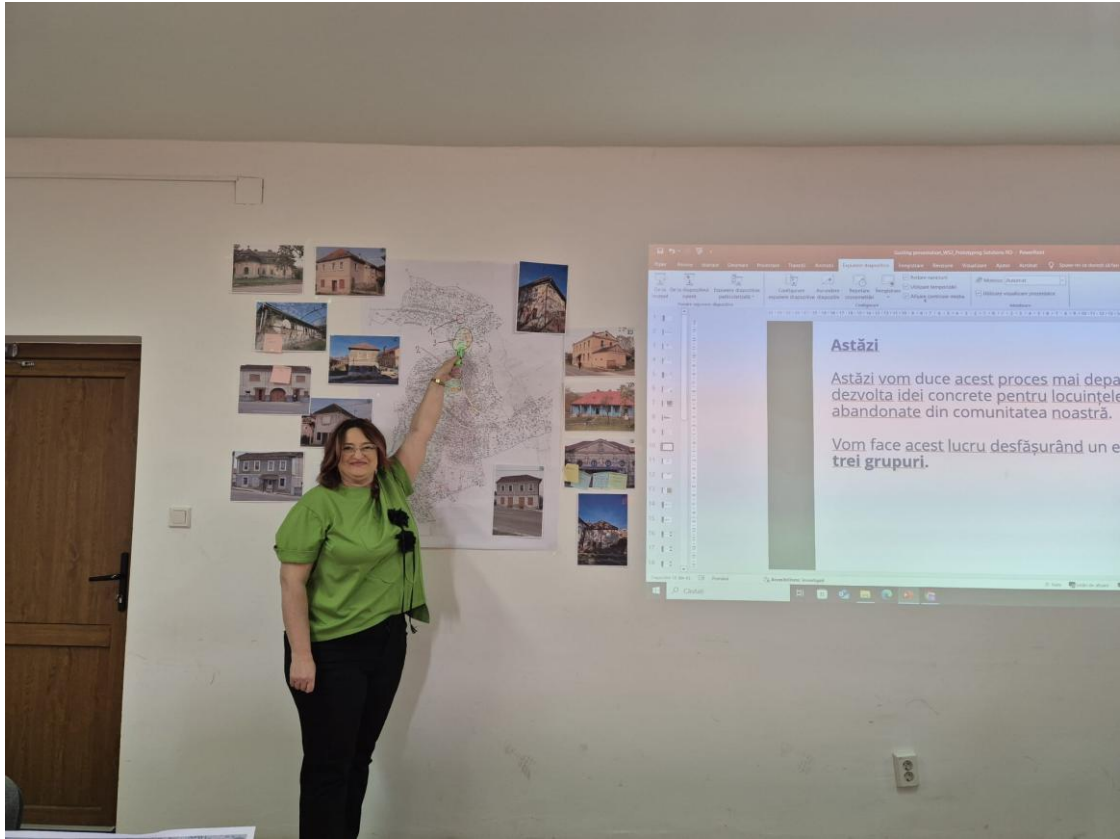
<b>Date:</b>	22.05.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Hodod, Romania
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Paul Dancu, dankupali@yahoo.com
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	15

**Overview of who is here – Warm up**

*Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.*

In the first workshop was discussed how Hodod commune-ASP can become or remain livable. Were assumed three functions for housing (private, business, community) and discussed how abandoned housing can support a livable community. Were identified the first preferences for housing to be prototyped. The results from WS1 were available on the tables (posters). The WS2- Design Thinking Sprint was taken this process further and developed concrete ideas for the abandoned or deteriorated dwellings in Hodod community. PP6 together with ASP do this by carrying out an exercise in three groups. The WS2 was attended by PP6 and ASP Project Team , employees of Municipality as well by expert and community members. The WS2 was leaded by expert, Noémi Andrea Gyüre Rotariuc.

In the first workshop, out of the 40 mapped buildings, of which 23 were abandoned or deteriorated, three examples of private, business and community functions were identified. A mill, the Wesselényi Castle and a traditional blue house were identified, as well as two specific areas (the row of houses and a white house).



## Understanding the problem (Step 1)

*Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.*

Through community involvement, concrete ideas were developed for the abandoned housing in the Hodod community. Three working groups were organized to identify some functions of the buildings after renovation.

Within the working group for Wesselényi Castle (private property):



Within the working group for mill (community property):



Within the working group for blue house (commercial function):



## Asking people (Step 2)

*Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.*

The expert asked every group participants to take notes individually on the posters.



All three posters were filled by the groups.

## Define common ground (step 3)

*Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

All the groups defined their persona for the identified buildings. For the Wesselényi Castle (private property) mid-age family person. For community property a young person. For commercial an elder person.

## Find ideas (step 4)

Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

Within the working group for the Wesselényi Castle (private property), the following prototypes-ideas were developed: restaurant, event hall and guesthouse, shelter, tourist information center, regional rehabilitation center for people (children) with disabilities, museum, riding center, local library, traditional knightly restaurant of the period.



Within the working group for mill (community property) the following prototypes-ideas were developed: a restaurant with traditional dishes and local products, indoor storage of milling equipment, an event and exhibition hall, and a tourist center presenting milling equipment for visitors.



Within the working group for blue house (commercial) the following prototypes-ideas were developed: weekend activities for children, accommodation, day-socialization center for the elderly, event hall, tourist information center.



### **Prototyping (step 5)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*



## Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

Every group presented their prototype to the plenary.

For the Wesselényi Castle (private property):



The feedback from participants was that the other buildings are more suitable as day-socialization center for the elderly or tourist information center.

For mill (community property):



The feedback from participants was that the event center is more suitable for the Wesselényi Castle.

For blue house(commercial):



The feedback from participants was that the event center is more suitable for the Wesselényi Castle.

### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

The expert together with the Mayor of Hodod (ASP) developed further the ideas in line with funding opportunities from available programmes.



## Testing the prototype (step 8)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

Following the feedback received, the following prototyping results were concluded:

- for the mill: a museum of milling and pub, by preserving the furniture;
- for the blue house: a center for creation and crafts, a community integration center-social inclusion, on the ground floor of the building-small creative workshops;
- for the Wesselényi castle: revival of crafts, restaurant, ballroom and conference rooms, fairgrounds, recreational activities and festivals, carriage rides, intended to create a tourist attraction area.



# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of [Montenegro]

<b>Date:</b>	27.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Mojkovac, Montenegro
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Jovana Tomović e-mail: tomovicjovana96@gmail.com
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	13

## Overview of who is here – Warm up

*Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.*

The Design Thinking Sprint workshop (Prototyping solutions ) was held on the same day as Workshop No. 1 – Livable Communities, and the presentation of the project objectives and the address to participants were conducted during the previous activity by the project manager Biljana Radović Fuštić. During the Design Thinking Sprint workshop, she thanked the attendees and reminded them of the project's significance for the Mojkovac community. The goals, methodology, and workshop agenda were presented to the participants by Mirjana Đundić, expert and lead facilitator. The project team remained unchanged: Vesna Delić, expert facilitator; Dejana Zindović, associate in the field of architecture and design; and Jovana Tomović, notetaker, were responsible for conducting the workshop.

The participants, in the same composition, expressed their expectations for this working segment:

Nikoleta Rakočević – journalist from the village of Podbišće, emphasized that she likes the workshop concept and the project idea itself. She hopes the ideas will be sustainable and that the community will be enriched through a shared goal.

Jovanka Nina Merdović – teacher from the village of Podbišće, expects the participants to reach the best solutions for the presented buildings, which will, through their identity, beautify Mojkovac and attract tourists and young people.

Aleksandar Vuković – agronomist from the village of Štitarica, expects the workshop to proceed as the previous one did and that they will be one step closer to a solution aimed at retaining people.

Nemanja Vuković – student from the village of Polja, expects ideas to be presented that can provide support to young people.

Radomir Pantović – handball coach and president of the local community of Stevanovac, did not have expectations at the previous workshop but, having become more familiar with the idea and concept through direct work there, he now expects this workshop to produce concrete solutions that will serve the community.

Ljubomir Vukadinović – retired teacher and owner of a mapped house in the village of Bojna Njiva, expects the identification of solutions to the problem.

Aleksa Majski Rakočević – student from the village of Štitarica, expects support for ideas in the field of tourism.

Veljko Rakočević – dentist and owner of a mapped house in the village of Štitarica, expects the same energy as in the previous workshop.

Radoje Krgović – economist from the village of Lepenac, wishes to contribute ideas to the workshop.

Jelena Ristić – tourism expert from the village of Lepenac, expects interactivity and hopes that the project, the workshop, and all future activities will be long-lasting so that enthusiasm does not fade, which she wants to avoid.

Marina Blažević – tourism expert from the village of Podbišće, wants to contribute through her own participation and hopes to empower the community.

Vera Tomović – cultural worker and owner of a mapped house from the village of Podbišće, would like this project to empower young married couples.

Zoran Konatar – lawyer from the village of Lepenac, wishes for as many people as possible to get involved and connected through this project.

**Key words:**

***perseverance, unity, people, development, idea, community, youth, solution, connection, hope, problem***

## **Understanding the problem (Step 1)**

*Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.*

As the main issue that affected the Mojkovac community and brought significant challenges and problems, all three groups identified the closure of factories and the transitional period that began in the 1990s. Since that time, people have been facing issues related to employment and subsistence, forcing entire families to relocate to other cities such as Podgorica in the central region, which has led to depopulation. All three groups emphasized the need to support projects related to rural tourism and tourism in general. Group 2 and Group 3 highlighted the inadequacy of sports facilities and infrastructure for preparatory sports activities (such as mountain lodges, hotels, hostels, sports resorts, and excursion areas), pointing out that Mojkovac, as a mountain town, lacks the necessary space for the development of winter sports. Problems in the field of tourism and rural tourism are primarily observed in the **inadequate connection between local resources and accommodation providers**. One of the recurring challenges is poor guest registration and record-keeping, which complicates evaluations and statistical analysis in this sector. **Communication-related issues often arise due to insufficient knowledge of foreign languages**. Additionally, **providers of tourist and agrotourism accommodation do not collaborate with each other**, particularly during the summer season **when demand is higher**. As a result, reservations are sometimes not fulfilled because there **is no established practice of referring guests between hosts**. Due to the growing interest in tourist and agrotourism accommodation, **existing capacities are insufficient to accommodate guests**, making the expansion of tourist units a key priority in this segment. Furthermore, **agrotourism providers often lack creative capacity to attract visitors during the off-season through diverse and**

**engaging content.** In mountainous border areas, there are **no mountain lodges, resorts, campsites, or excursion areas that would attract extreme sports enthusiasts and mountain lovers.** Because of the lack of such facilities in the mountainous and border regions, mountain tourism has not been developed, which is why **Mojkovac does not have a winter tourist season. Athletes do not have access to dedicated training spaces.** Despite the presence of sports clubs, **athletes are often forced to leave Mojkovac to prepare for competitions,** due to the complete lack of infrastructure and clubs focused on winter sports. The absence of these resources has rendered the winter season essentially nonexistent. All of these tourism and sports-related challenges further exacerbate the existing situation within the local community.

In addition to this, the groups pointed out the following issues:

**Group 1.** Discussion centered on the challenges faced by agricultural producers who lack appropriate venues or facilities to sell their agricultural products and wool, due to the closure of agricultural cooperatives and procurement centers that were once state-owned. Although there are incentives available at both the local and national levels, a long-term solution has yet to be found for farmers who produce goods but have no outlet for their distribution. On one hand, there are incentives aimed at developing and improving agriculture, while on the other hand, larger commercial producers face significant obstacles in terms of selling or distributing their products. **As a result of this imbalance, some are forced to destroy, discard, or feed their products to livestock.** Organic producers—who are most numerous in Mojkovac compared to the rest of Montenegro—face fewer challenges, as they are oriented toward the online market across the country and engage in small-scale household processing (producing premium-quality goods in limited quantities). **Local and national supermarkets import agricultural products, leaving domestic producers without opportunities to sell to these retail chains.** Producers of fruit-based homemade goods—especially **women making juices, jams, liqueurs, and rakija—are forced to sell by the roadside, lacking designated spaces to properly offer their goods to customers.** A significant number of beekeepers (organized into three associations) also **lack facilities for both selling and processing honey,** despite the high demand on the domestic market. The existing “House of Honey” in Biogradska Gora National Park is designed for tourists, is not yet operational, and is too remote to serve as a viable solution. Moreover, it cannot meet the needs of honey procurement and processing on a broader scale. Current agricultural solutions are primarily targeted at individual producers, with support focused more on increasing production than on enabling the sale and market placement of products. The proposed solution is to form a unified agricultural organization that would address the issue of surplus product sales collectively.

**Group 2** stated that they first encountered significant issues during the period of factory closures, which led to population outmigration from Mojkovac. As a result, **most village schools were shut down—and this trend continues.** The **educational system is not aligned with labor market demands,** and most young people leave for other cities to continue their education, as the municipality of Mojkovac only has elementary schools and one secondary school, with no institutions of higher education. Secondary school **programs are being phased out or offer only three-year vocational tracks instead of full four-year programs.** Previously, children and youth had gathering spaces through the Children’s and Youth Alliances, and the kindergarten operated at full capacity. Nowadays, **children and young people face**

**challenges related to care and supervision, as both parents typically work.** They are often cared for by older siblings or grandparents. In addition to the lack of organized, high-quality leisure time, another major issue is the local population's **poor command of foreign languages**. The only logical and practical solution discussed was the establishment of a language learning center, primarily aimed at young people. Spaces once designated for youth gatherings and community activities no longer exist, as the project that previously supported them has ended, and no long-term replacement has been found. **Young people involved in theater require additional support and dedicated space, as do those engaged in sports.** Young professionals working in the IT sector also **lack co-working space for developing local projects**. Some of them have relocated from larger cities to Mojkovac, drawn by its values as an ecological town. Children from rural areas **face additional challenges due to the lack of public transportation, which makes access to the town—and thus, education, socialization, and informal learning—nearly impossible.** The group approached the discussion from a perspective grounded in personal experience and professional insight, as some participants were teachers or former athletes. The group also included owners of private facilities who expressed willingness to adapt or donate their properties for tourism purposes—particularly rural tourism—or any other use that would benefit the local community.

**Group 3.** described the issue of inadequate cultural offerings, which were once organized within the framework of local community councils. **Museums and galleries have never existed in Mojkovac**. Artists particularly visual artists do not have a space to continuously exhibit their work. Mojkovac has a rich historical and cultural heritage, yet **there is a real risk of intangible cultural assets being lost.** The absence of such cultural infrastructure further weakens Mojkovac's tourism offer, as foreign visitors have no opportunity to view ethnographic collections, artifacts, or mineral samples—despite the fact that the Brskovo mine had existed for centuries until its closure in the 1990s.

The group emphasized the need to strengthen the **tourism offer through the promotion of traditional handicrafts**, especially since many women and individual artisans lack space to display and sell their handmade items. **The need for projects such as an ethnographic museum** aligns with the municipality's official initiative to build a replica of the medieval town of Brskovo. The group referred to examples of ethnographic museums in other cities across the country and abroad. The discussion was shaped by practical experience and professional insight, as the group consisted of individuals working in tourism and public administration. According to the group, **addressing the lack of cultural content would create opportunities for economic empowerment and enrich the overall tourism offer.**

All three groups emphasized that solving problems in one sector would contribute to resolving issues in others, as all sectors are closely interconnected.

## Asking people (Step 2)

*Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.*

**The results of the activity are presented through the following questions:**

- Can young people be retained in rural areas?
- Are farmers considering expanding their production?
- Could people involved in rural tourism expand their offerings by acquiring animals, opening small fishponds, or organizing rural workshops for tourists, such as cooking traditional meals or hay gathering?
- Are rural roads and infrastructure adequate?
- Is it possible to restart production in Mojkovac?
- Could purchasing a juice press solve the problem for fruit producers?
- Could opening the headquarters of an agricultural cooperative solve the procurement issue in Mojkovac?
- Could purchasing a lyophilizer (freeze dryer) diversify honey-based product production?
- Would young people be more motivated to stay in rural areas if rural tourism received greater support?
- Since we are not satisfied, are tourists satisfied with the current tourism offer?
- Could vacant private houses and estates contribute to the development of tourism and agriculture?
- Can cultural identity save tourism?
- Can environmental problems, such as the town landfill, affect tourism development?
- What do you think about youth-oriented content in Mojkovac?
- To what extent would a Youth Center contribute to children's education, especially during the winter months?
- Could opening a space for making souvenirs and handicrafts help solve the problem of female unemployment?

- Could creating a space for the IT community help bring people back to Mojkovac?
- Could the Ethnographic Museum consist of several creative units within a single unified space?
- Do children from rural areas have equal development opportunities?
- Would depopulation in Mojkovac decrease if new jobs were created?
- Are local community councils currently promoting tourism and culture, and do they need to be transformed?
- Do older people in rural areas have time to learn foreign languages, or do children and young people have more time for that? Can insufficient knowledge of foreign languages affect the quality of the tourism offer?

### Define common ground (step 3)

*Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

Groups, based on prior knowledge and interviews, discussed the needs of people and attempted to provide answers to the posed questions. The group of questions related to infrastructural solutions, such as the construction of roads and transport infrastructure, cannot be resolved by the participants themselves; however, they can address these issues at the local level and through other mechanisms of local and state protection, including potential environmental problems such as landfills near the city.

From the group of questions and provided answers, we reached common conclusions, utilizing note cards to create PERSONAS.

**Group 1** – The main issue addressed by this group is the insufficient support for agricultural producers who are partially empowered through government programs but lack venues to sell their products. The community lacks infrastructural facilities that support the sale or processing of agricultural products, honey, or the creation of new products (such as honey with freeze-dried fruit, cheeses with blueberries). A potential facility would enable the sale of agricultural products at a favorable price, thereby increasing income. Although engaged in agriculture, farmers face significant financial difficulties due to a lack of funds. The average agricultural producer is typically a married man aged between 20 and 60, a family person with at least three children. Such an individual is either an agricultural engineer, an uneducated farmer, a high school graduate, or a retiree. Due to

the large workload, there is no time for hobbies, as farming is both their job and hobby. They approach problem-solving individually. Greater involvement in community programs would motivate them if there were an established foundation in the community, such as an Agricultural Producers Association and a purchasing center, where they could receive necessary training. The goal of the association would be to reduce production costs while increasing the selling price of products offered on the market.

The image shows a handwritten survey form in Croatian. The sections and their content are as follows:

- Ime (Name):** [Handwritten name]
- Zanimanje (Occupation):** [Handwritten occupation]
- Godine (Age):** 25 - 60
- Porodični status (Marital status):** [Handwritten status]
- Biografija (Biography):**
  - sociodemografski detalji
  - polje
  - spol

[Handwritten text: "Poboljšanje proizvodnje koje proizvodi veliku sumu je vrlo teško, i jako mi je teško jer ima veliki trošak i finansijski problemi"]
- Problemi i prepreke u saradnji sa zajednicom (Problems and obstacles in cooperation with the community):**

[Handwritten text: "Problem je u tome da je proizvodnja, loša infrastruktura i nedovoljna pomoć države"]
- Relacija prema angažovanju (Relation to engagement):**

[Handwritten text: "Moj interes je u angažovanju za razvoj ove proizvodnje i da ja mogu da doprinesem i na ovaj način ja bih se više angažovao"]
- Motivi za angažovanjem u zajednici (Motives for engagement in the community):**

[Handwritten text: "Upravljanje, manje cijena kojima proizvodi i bolji kvalitet koji će biti bolji kvalitet proizvoda, edukacija"]
- Citat vezan za kontekst (Quote related to the context):**

[Handwritten text: "Ne daje dobra, ali dosta!"]

Farmer (Agricultural engineer/ Person without occupation/ Retiree/ High school graduate

Married, 25–60 years old

Biography: The agricultural producer is a father of three children, and life is very difficult for him because he has a large family and financial problems.

Problems & Obstacles to engage with community: The problem is selling his products, poor infrastructure, and insufficient government support.

Relation to engagement: A purchasing/collecting facility would help him preserve his product, sell it at a better price, and in that way contribute more to the community.

Motives to engage in the community: Cooperation (forming an association) would lead to lower production costs and better product quality, which could be sold at a better price, education.

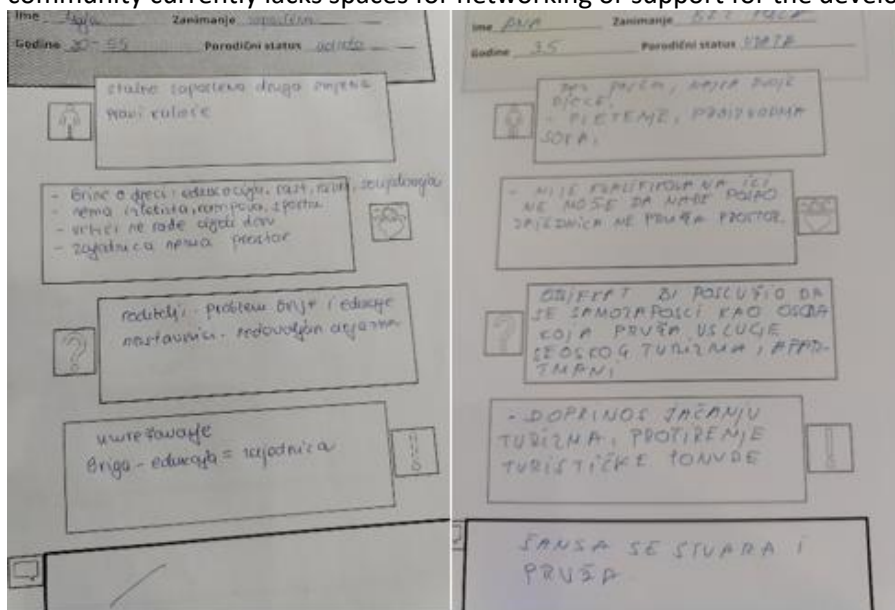
Quote related to the context: „It doesn’t give good, but much”.

**Group 2** -Addressed problems affecting children and young people who lack space for proper social and cultural development. Previous projects have not provided an effective long-term solution for youth care. While these projects were active, children and youth were regular users of such services. A particular issue affects working parents who have no adequate place for childcare in the afternoon, as kindergartens are closed during that time and there are no day-care centers. Children and youth in rural communities do not have equal opportunities for socialization. There is a lack of content related to sports, recreation, or activities that encourage creativity. An additional issue in the tourism sector is poor knowledge of foreign languages. The average age of a tourist accommodation owner is around 50, and they generally do not have time for language courses or digital literacy training, and language schools do not exist in the area. If a foreign language school were opened as part of an educational center for children and youth, this could help solve the

problems faced by tourism workers and owners of tourist facilities. At the same time, there are unemployed or underemployed teachers and education professionals.

Children and youth also lack appropriate spaces for winter sports development and areas that would foster winter tourism. These regions do not have mini hotels or hostels that meet the needs of young athletes pursuing sports development and careers.

Apartments and rural households in Mojkovac are often overbooked, and there is no shared online platform to track the number of visitors. Many apartments do not offer an authentic rural experience that attracts tourists from distant countries (e.g. working in the fields, cheese-making, cooking local dishes). On the other hand, there are abandoned properties that could be used for such purposes, as well as private houses whose owners have long lived abroad. At the same time, there are young individuals and young couples facing employment challenges. Putting these abandoned buildings into use could help resolve unemployment for this population group. The community currently lacks spaces for networking or support for the development of such ideas.



**LEFT PICTURE:**

Occupation: Employed

Age: 20-55

Marital status: Married

She is employed and works the second shift.

Her hobby is baking cakes

Problems & Obstacles to engage with community: Care for children, education, growth and development, socialization, lack of recreational areas and sports facilities, kindergartens are open all day, the community does not have a dedicated space.

Relation to engagement: Parents face problems with childcare and education, teachers show insufficient engagement

Motives to engage in the community: networking,

**RIGHT PICTURE:**

Care- education= community

Occupation: Unemployed

Age: 35

Marital status: Married

Hobby: knitting, making juice

Problems & Obstacles to engage with community: Not qualified or unable to find a job, the community does not provide space

Relation to engagement: The facility would serve for self-employment as a person providing rural tourism services, apartments

Motives to engage in the community: Contribution to strengthening tourism, expanding the tourist offer.

Quote related to the context: ;Opportunity is created and provided”

**Group 3**-Based on the previously raised questions and ideas, discussed culture and the fulfillment of tourist needs. Tourists do not have the opportunity to experience and see the true spirit, culture, and tradition of Mojkovac. On the other hand, there are buildings that could serve this purpose, as well as cultural workers who currently have no space to carry out their activities. Opening a museum or gallery would create opportunities for the improvement of Mojkovac, tourism, and the empowerment of the northern region.

Ime: Aleksa  
Zanimanje: Istorik  
Godine: 28 Porodični status: Oženjen

**Biografija**  
Oseba je visoko obrazovana, ima 12 godina istorije, etnografije, antropologije. Bila bi zaposlena u muzeju kao što radim ja.

**Problemi povezani sa zajednicom i zajednicom**  
Nedostatak razumevanja i potrebe za stvaranjem etnografskog muzeja. Nema se od lokalnog stanovništva predmeti, ta bi se moglo naći na problem u komunikaciji i saradnji.

**Motivacija prema angažovanju**  
Oseba bi upravljala objektom i bila odgovorna za njegovu funkcionalnost.

**Motiv za angažovanje u zajednici**  
Doprinos zajednici u stvaranju kulturnog identiteta i zaštite.

Ostalo važno za razmatranje

Occupation: Historian

Age: 28

Marital status: Married

Biography: The person is highly educated in the fields of history, ethnography, anthropology, and would be engaged in the museum as someone responsible for the exhibits.

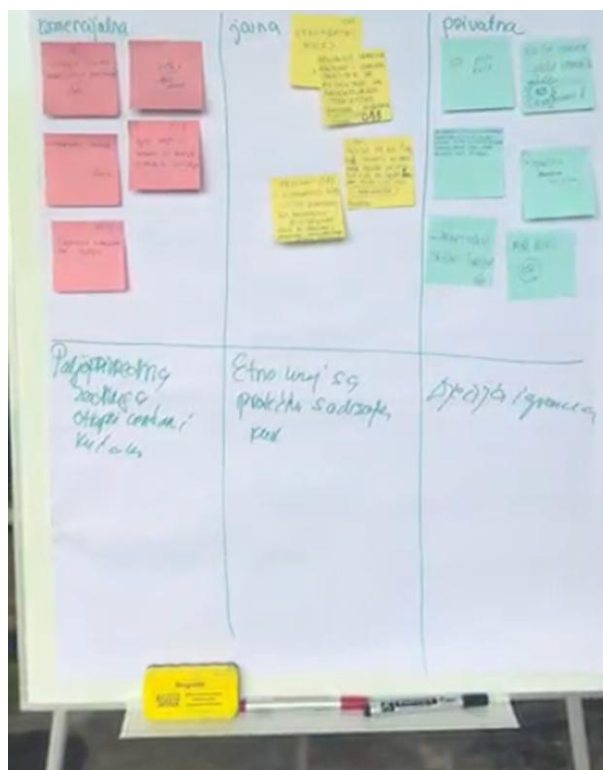
Problems & Obstacles to engage with community: Lack of understanding for the need to establish an ethnographic museum. It is necessary to collect items from the locals, where problems in communication could arise

Relation to engagement: The person would manage the facility and be responsible for its operation

Motives to engage in the community: Contribution to the community in preserving cultural identity and heritage



- Buildings that would serve for learning old crafts and mini workshops for a certain period.
- Adaptation of buildings for engaging in rural tourism.
- Buildings for fruit pressing.
- Buildings where the lyophilization process is performed.
- Buildings for organizing domestic handicrafts.
- Buildings where an IT community would be formed.
- Building that will satisfy multiple functions; it is better to choose a building that will serve multiple functions such as a resort.
- Sports accommodation.
- Hostel.
- Opening a restaurant.
- Building for wool processing.
- Purchase center (cold storage, scale, fruit processing and storage).
- Headquarters of an agricultural cooperative.
- Ethnographic museum.
- Preservation of culture, tradition, and local identity with an emphasis on enriching Mojkovac's tourist offer.
- Opening workshops for metal processing.
- Opening a tourist organization.
- Buildings for drying fruit.
- Buildings for storing forest fruits and certain types of teas.
- Honey house with a center for processing beekeeping products.
- Ethnographic museum with ethno apartments and a national restaurant where locals would sell their products.
- Building for a children's playroom.
- Building reconstructed into a mini hotel.
- Building – coworking space.
- Purchase center with product storage.
- Building that serves as an educational center.
- Building that serves as a youth camp.
- Building that serves as a mountaineering home.
- Building that serves as a picnic area.
- Reconstruction of a house for tourist purposes.
- Organizing cheese days.
- Buildings used for wood processing and wood products.
- Ethno house.
- Buildings for souvenir production.
- Buildings as a bicycle rental station.
- Buildings that will serve for camping.
- Building for young people involved in theater.
- Birthday party venue.
- Apartments for rural tourism.
- Buildings for holding ecological workshops.
- Organizing tourist trips.
- Store for agricultural products.
- Buildings as a center for foreign languages.



Since the participants listed a large number of ideas, those they could not decide on were narrowed down using an elimination system, and the ideas received their final version through a scoring system.

**Group 1:** Proposed solution by scoring system are:

1. Purchase center (storage and production)
2. Purchase center
3. Headquarters of the agricultural cooperative
4. Honey house and center for processing bee products

### **Final solution: Agricultural cooperative (purchase center) – Building 021**

**Group 2** :Proposed solutions by scoring system are:

- 1.Ethno house
- 2.Children's playroom
- 3.Sports accommodation
- 4.Mini hotel
- 5.Apartments and rural tourism

### **Final solution: Children's playroom — Building 023**

**Group 2** : Proposed solutions by scoring system are:

- 1.Ethnographic museum
- 2.Ethnographic museum with ethno apartments and a national restaurant where locals would sell their products
- 3.A building that will serve multiple functions; it is better to choose a building that can be used for various purposes such as a retreat
- 4.Preservation of culture, tradition, and local identity with an emphasis on enriching Mojkovac's tourist offer

### **Final solution: Ethnographic museum with accompanying facilities — Building 011**

## **Protoyping (step 5)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

Using the provided materials, as well as the foundational layouts of selected structures, participants began the model-making process through careful planning of the available space. Through the analysis of proportions, functional organization, and the essential needs the building must fulfill, participants approached modeling with a clearly defined intention to express architectural and programmatic requirements through physical form.

The first step in the model-making process was constructing structural walls out of cardboard, which allowed participants to define the basic volumetry of the building and the organization of its interior space. This process was not a mere replication of plans, but a creative act of interpreting functionality through material, where cardboard served as a simple yet highly flexible medium for expressing the structural elements of the building. Following the formation of the basic volume, participants continued shaping the structure by incorporating visual and natural elements. Using markers, twigs, leaves, and other natural materials, they conceptually presented key aspects of their ideas: **sustainability, connection with nature, business transparency, and functional clarity**. These elements added an additional layer of complexity to the models, giving them expressiveness and a distinct identity.

The content of the models reflected diverse approaches to architectural thinking and problem-solving: **from rational planning of functional units and the establishment of logical circulation and access, to the symbolic use of elements that point to themes of ecology, local economy, and sustainable production**. What is particularly important to highlight is that the entire process was the result of intense teamwork. Through collaborative work, **participants developed communication skills, learned how to integrate different ideas, and how to make collective decisions aimed at creating a unified, coherent concept**. Teamwork not only contributed to the quality of the final products the models but also provided participants with hands-on experience in collective spatial thinking, which is a key component of any architectural and urban planning process. Throughout this workshop, **participants demonstrated a high level of innovation, creativity, and engagement**. The outcomes were reflected in clearly defined, functional, and aesthetically compelling models that not only met the fundamental requirements but also demonstrated a deep understanding of context, purpose, and user needs. The process also served as an educational tool, as participants developed spatial perception, structural logic, team dynamics, and the ability to visually express architectural ideas through practical work.

Ultimately, the workshop resulted in a series of models that were not merely representations of buildings, but visions of space shaped through ideas of community, functionality, and local sustainability. Each team contributed to the overall narrative of the workshop in their own way, leaving a mark through their unique interpretation of the architectural mission and the social significance of the assigned project.



***Prototyping: Agricultural cooperative (purchase center)***



***Prototyping: Children's playroom***



*Prototyping: Ethnographic museum with accompanying facilities*

## Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

**Group 1 (Commercial)** presented a prototype of an Agricultural Cooperative (procurement center) for Facility 021 (a commercial building) located in the Mojkovac business zone, specifically at the Babića Polje site. The location has the necessary infrastructure for business development, including an access road, connection to the main traffic network, electrification, water supply, and close proximity to the city center.



The Agricultural Cooperative (Purchasing Center) is a single-story building with three separate entrances located on its lateral sides. The building has an average length of 20 meters and an average width of 9 meters. It includes a dedicated office space, its own parking lot, fencing, and an outdoor storage area surrounded by vegetation. Given that the building has three separate entrances, it is planned that production activities will take place within three distinct rooms. At the main entrance, there would be a professional scale for weighing loads over 100 kg.

One of the rooms is designated for fruit purchasing and juice processing. It would contain a mini juice processing line with a pasteurizer. The juices produced in this room would be distributed to the only hotel in Mojkovac, as well as to other tourist facilities in the area. The second room is intended for the purchasing and processing of honey. It would be equipped with an automated honey extractor, a device for wax processing and production of wax foundations, and also a dehydrator for drying fruit, which would be used to create various flavored honey

products (e.g., honey with strawberry powder, honey with blueberry powder). The third room is designated for freezing fruits and vegetables and would be converted into a cold storage chamber with the necessary refrigeration equipment. For the purchase and storage of potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, and beans, adjacent storage facilities near building 021 would be used. A separate room within the building is envisioned as an office, which would serve as the headquarters of the Agricultural Cooperative (Purchasing Center). This office would be responsible for business economic analysis, sales and purchase contracting, and collaboration with all tourist facilities in Mojkovac and its surroundings.

#### Model making proces Group 1.

During the model-making process, Group 1 focused on functional problem-solving and the clear integration of all previously planned zones of the building, aiming to ensure that the spatial organization aligns with the real needs of a modern and sustainable purchasing center. Particular emphasis was placed on the logic of movement, the separation of functional units, and the efficient organization of interior spaces to allow for the smooth flow of all planned activities—from procurement and processing to storage and distribution. The exterior of the model was conceived in a symbolic and conceptually strong manner. Represented through an archetypal house form, with a clearly defined roof and façade, the model alludes to the idea of unity, safety, and gathering—core values that underpin the concept of the cooperative. In this context, the "house" represents not only a physical structure but also a symbol of collective work, local cooperation, and social connectivity within the community. As a whole, the work of Group 1 is a successful combination of functional clarity and symbolic expression, where a simple model conveys a powerful message about the role and importance of an agricultural cooperative in the local context. By using basic materials and natural elements, the group managed to create a model that is not merely a representation of a structure, but a visual narrative of community, sustainability, and space in service of the collective. Group 1 also expressed concerns regarding financing. They pointed out that the proposed solution is complex and consists of multiple units, and that the procurement of equipment and materials is both expensive and challenging, potentially posing a limiting factor. They also raised a key question: whether the Purchasing Center should be established as a non-governmental organization (NGO) engaged in commercial activities or as a business entity (private company) with paying members.

#### Feedback and Discussion:

Group 1 received feedback from participants and the facilitator-expert team, which acknowledged the necessity of the proposed solution for the agricultural sector and its relevance for the local community. The feedback highlighted the complexity of the proposed structure. The repurposing of the building would require significant financial investment. It was suggested that the building should be directed toward a single, focused purpose—either storage or processing of agricultural products. Even in that case, the building must be adapted in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHP). The implementation of a HACCP system is essential in order to ensure traceability from farm to table.

If a single-purpose use is selected, necessary equipment could be procured through various Ministry of Agriculture programs and the IPARD program, particularly in collaboration with NGOs and the Food Safety Administration.

If the group is unable to decide on a production focus, it is advisable to start with a simpler solution that can be expanded later—either by upgrading the existing building or by carrying out different parts of the production process in separate facilities within the local business zone. An additional expert analysis by a civil engineer is needed to assess the type and quality of materials from which the current building is constructed, to determine its suitability for food production adaptation. As cold storage is a very expensive option—and considering that there are already three cold storage facilities in the Mojkovac area—it was suggested that the group should focus on solutions not currently available in their immediate surroundings. The concern regarding the organizational structure (NGO vs. business entity) is justified. The feedback from participants and the expert-facilitator team leaned toward forming a non-governmental association with a commercial orientation, as such a structure can apply for various funding opportunities with support from the Ministry of Agriculture. Further detailed feedback will be formulated after the simplification of the proposed prototype solution and a financial feasibility analysis provided by a business expert. Group 1 also received positive feedback on the architectural basis of their proposal, particularly regarding the spatial orientation and effective use of available space.

**Group 2** (Private) presented a prototype for a Children's Playroom, designated as Facility 023 (Teacher's Residence), located in the village of Podbišće, approximately 3.5 km from the city center. The site is situated in close proximity to the Elementary School in Podbišće and is surrounded by deciduous and coniferous forest, with a large meadow adjacent to it.



The facility consists of a waiting room that leads into the main room. The main room is the largest area and serves as a playroom, intended for children's play and entertainment, including birthday parties. On one side, the playroom connects to an outdoor playground, and on the other side, it is connected to a mini kitchen. The mini kitchen is a vital element in caring for and raising children, as it will serve locally produced food and homemade products. Next to the kitchen is a classroom, where teachers will work with children on school tasks and homework. Outside, there is an open-air playground equipped with a slide and other children's furniture (swings, a sandpit, carousels). The outdoor area also includes an amphitheater, intended for use in collaboration with the local community. Nearby, there will be sports fields for football, volleyball, and basketball. The building is designed to function during the day as a children's play and extended-stay center, where children will receive a warm meal made from local ingredients, have the opportunity to learn, practice lessons, and complete their homework. Three evenings per week, the facility will serve as a mini language school. This program is intended to be funded through membership fees paid by parents. For the remaining four days, the facility is planned to be used through a public-private local partnership as a youth corner, aiming to implement various youth-oriented activities such as workshops on diverse topics and to enrich the cultural life of the Mojkovac community. Activities would include theatrical performances, poetry readings, open-air cinema, and other cultural events, all free of charge for users.

#### Model-Making Process – Group 2

During the model-making process, Group 2 chose the concept of an open-floor plan, i.e., a construction without a roof, with the goal of clearly and directly presenting their spatial and functional concept, primarily focused on the needs of children who will use the facility – the playroom. This was not just a technical choice, but a conscious decision to ensure visual clarity of internal organization, emphasizing the user experience and pedagogical value of the space. The open plan allows for a better understanding of spatial dynamics – the layout and interconnectivity of zones dedicated to play, learning, rest, and interaction. The design focuses on creating an accessible, safe, and stimulating environment for children of different ages. The spaces are envisioned as flexible, capable of adapting throughout the day based on activities, which is clearly reflected in the physical presentation of the model. A special quality of the model lies in the fact that it functions not only as a physical structure, but also as a narrative tool – a “story in space.” The cardboard walls are inscribed with descriptions and key ideas, making the model an interactive medium that communicates the group's conceptual message to the observer. These textual elements help explain the function of each zone and enhance understanding of the spatial logic and purpose. The successful balance between functionality, openness, and narrative expression points to a thoughtful pedagogical approach, where space is not just a passive container, but an active participant in the child's development. Through the open design, the group symbolically emphasizes transparency, freedom of movement, and openness to the community—values essential in contemporary children's spaces. Through teamwork and active idea exchange, Group 2 developed a model that not only showcases an architectural vision of a playroom but also reflects a deep understanding of the needs of end-users—children, their habits, emotions, and learning through play. This approach demonstrates

the group's ability to design from the user's perspective, a key skill in creating socially responsive spaces.

### Challenges and Feedback

Group 2 identified a key challenge related to financing and the potential need to find a private entrepreneur to support the initiative through a public-private local collaboration. They received feedback from participants and the expert-facilitator team, who acknowledged the value of integrating a privately intended project into a local-public partnership, given the lack of content and events dedicated to children and youth in Mojkovac. Participants were encouraged not to be discouraged by the financial aspects at this early stage. This is only the first step, and further business analysis will follow. The method of presenting the concept through various channels was emphasized as an effective way to attract potential stakeholders. Feedback also suggested that the proposed solution be viewed as a project for a new build, rather than a renovation, as the existing materials do not meet the technical and technological standards. The model clearly shows that the concept is well-integrated into its surroundings, forming a cohesive and purposeful whole. The interior design needs to be adapted to children, using appropriate colors, decorations, and furniture.

**Group 3** (Public) presented a prototype solution for an Ethnographic Museum with accompanying facilities, designated for Facility 011 (a private house). The building is located in the village of Štitarica and represents a structure of traditional architecture, featuring a ground floor and an upper floor — a so-called “kula” (tower house), dating back to the late Ottoman period. The kula served as a multi-generational family residence and a defensive stronghold. In addition to standard door and window openings, it also features loopholes — small rifle windows that were used for defense against invaders during that historical period. It is situated in a natural setting of meadows and forests, in close proximity to the historic site — the medieval town and mine of Brskovo.



The building intended for the Ethnographic Museum with accompanying amenities consists of a main exhibition room on the first floor. This room contains glass display cases and shelves with ethnographic objects. The walls are painted white, and the ceiling is equipped with lighting that provides adequate illumination. Each object is accompanied by a small label displaying its name in the native language, English, French, and German. In addition, cream-colored posters are placed on the walls. At the center of each poster is a graphic representation of an ethnographic object, and below it is a QR code that allows access via mobile phone to a text describing how the object was used, available in the native language, English, French, and German. One section of this room is dedicated to traditional folk costumes, accompanied by explanatory posters with QR codes. Another room features a collection of coins and archaeological artifacts such as jewelry and pottery, all placed in glass-protected vitrines. Suitable lighting is installed on the ceilings. The walls are white on one side, while the opposite wall is covered with wallpaper featuring graphics that represent different historical periods, arranged in chronological order. Adjacent to this room is the office of the museum director. Another space is dedicated to old photographs of Mojkovac. In the center of the room, there are tables with glass covers displaying documents such as charters, contracts, and records from various historical periods. Next to these tables is a board with myths and legends about Mojkovac. The titles of the legends are written in the native language, English, French, and German, and each is accompanied by a QR code through which the text of the legend can be accessed in all four languages. Next to this room is a souvenir shop where visitors can buy souvenirs and handmade items such as the

national musical instrument gusle, traditional cooking and storage vessels, and products made of wool, thread, and textiles. The walls in this room are also white. The ground floor of the building includes a ticket office. Nearby, there is a library and a small restaurant with a café. The ground floor walls are white, with conifer trunks incorporated into the interior in a traditional style. The national restaurant will offer only Montenegrin national dishes and beverages, with ingredients sourced from local producers. The entire ground floor will serve as a space for holding traditional events and will be dedicated to preserving local culture and heritage. The museum staff will wear uniforms inspired by traditional Montenegrin folk costumes. In front of the building, there is a parking area and a path made of small decorative stones. A fountain and a horticultural garden with carefully selected flowers will also be located at the entrance.

Group 3 approached the model-making task in a creative and playful manner, placing the main focus on the design of the façade, roof, and access points to the building. Although special attention was given to the exterior design, the group did not overlook the function of the building itself, which resulted in a solution that is both aesthetically pleasing and practically conceived. The model clearly demonstrates how the group considered not only the external appearance of the building but also its interior use. The façades were designed to be interesting and distinctive, while the roof and entrances were carefully positioned to support the spatial concept. The access paths are logical, easily noticeable, and clearly lead to the various parts of the building. What particularly stands out is that the entire exterior of the model was created to reflect the group's final idea and vision — that the building should be modern, functional, and visually appealing. The model effectively illustrates the balance between good design and efficient organization in a simple way, without unnecessary complexity. In the end, the result of Group 3's work is a model that stands out visually while maintaining practicality and purpose, demonstrating strong team collaboration and the ability to blend creativity with the real needs of users.

Group 3 also expressed concerns regarding funding. The proposed concept is relatively costly, as it involves restoring the building in a traditional style, which significantly increases the overall cost of the restoration and renovation process. They are also concerned about collaboration with the local community. In addition to the items currently preserved in the archives of other institutions, some authentic ethnographic objects are privately owned by local residents. The group is particularly concerned about the willingness of individuals to accept the idea of lending privately owned items for the purposes of the Ethnographic Museum.

Feedback and discussion include the following:

Group 3 received feedback from participants and the facilitator-expert team, with strong encouragement for the core idea, the depth of understanding, and the thoroughly described concept. The group was encouraged to reconsider their proposed solution in a simpler form, as the level of investment envisioned would extend beyond the local scope. Since this project is aimed at empowering local communities, the proposed prototype exceeds those boundaries, and the concept should be adjusted to avoid administrative obstacles related to opening a formal museum, which could result in delays in implementing the RurAll project. The group was encouraged to approach the idea by utilizing artifacts already stored in institutional collections,

while the ethnographic exhibit could be supplemented with high-quality replicas of original objects. They were also encouraged to frame the project within the context of preserving culture, tradition, and intangible cultural heritage, suggesting that the national restaurant should be separated from the cultural component of the initiative. The choice of materials and the envisioned horticultural landscape were praised, as they fit perfectly into the existing microenvironment

### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

**Group 1 (commercial)** implemented the feedback and presented the revised solution in a way that positions the prototype as a hub for the purchase and sale of local agri-food products, with a particular focus on food items such as rakija, preserves, jams, and organic products. The group plans to acquire a fruit and vegetable drying device or a lyophilizer, which would contribute to the diversification of agricultural production. The management model is structured as a non-governmental organization with a permit to engage in commercial activity, based at the headquarters of the Farmers' Association. Through the RurAll project, the association will be encouraged to expand its commercial capacities in the future, including the establishment of small-scale production units. The group agrees that, in the upcoming period, efforts should be directed toward finalizing the solution, taking into account professional expertise and input from other members of the expert team, as well as conducting more in-depth research.



**Group 2** (private) implemented a solution through integrative feedback, such as the reconstruction of the facility. They also presented exterior design improvements (walls painted in different colors). The toys intended for children have passed certification. The tables and chairs are of appropriate size, and a communication strategy has been included with the aim of attracting investors.



**Group 3** (public) incorporated feedback from participants and the expert-facilitation team by simplifying only the ethnographic museum solution. To avoid administrative and technical issues, as well as the lengthy process associated with opening and categorizing a museum facility, they decided to transform the facility into an ethnological gallery. This gallery will feature the necessary content with exhibits, a gallery space, and an area dedicated to myths and legends. Conceptually, the space will be reduced by excluding a national restaurant and a bio-library. The space will be intended for promoting the culture and traditions of Mojkovac.



### **Testing the prototype (step 8)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

#### **Group 1 (commercial)**

An association of agricultural producers was established in the Babića Polje Business Zone, with an office space. Local farmers come to sell their products. The products are displayed in a designated area for the sale of agricultural and food items. The association negotiates the sale

of local products to hotels and other tourism-related facilities. Farmers are satisfied because they have resolved the issue of product placement and sales. The association also purchases surplus pome fruit and produces fruit chips (the association purchases a lyophilizer, dries the fruit, converts it into powder, and distributes it to honey producers, thereby diversifying production). Beekeepers are pleased because they now have a space to sell their honey within the premises.

### **Group 2 (private)**

A children's playroom was opened in Podbišće. The owner collaborates with the local government by allowing the space to be used in the evening hours by youth groups. Events and performances for children are organized in the amphitheater. Parents are satisfied because children have supervision, as well as a space for both learning and entertainment.

### **Group 3 (public use)**

An ethnographic gallery has been opened, displaying items, photographs, artifacts, and written records of myths and legends. The gallery includes a space for permanent exhibitions of artists from Mojkovac. Cultural events such as poetry nights, concerts, and activities aimed at preserving cultural heritage and intangible cultural assets are regularly organized.

All three groups agree that the concepts should be further developed in the next steps through multisectoral expertise.

After the conclusion of the activities, project manager Biljana Radović Fuštić thanked the participants and once again reminded them of the upcoming phases of the project that will be implemented in the near future.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of alternative Format**

## **Country report of Slovakia**

## **Documentation of the process (1-2 pages, depending on the format)**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Workshop took place 25.8.2025, in Jelšava, Coburgh manor

Number of participants: 29

Content:

Introductions - what have we done during the previous workshop

- Words of introduction - short summary of the project, goals, activities which are taking place currently in Jelšava, goals the project is trying to achieve, expectations and limitations of the project (we are currently not preparing renovations, but collecting ideas)
- Summary for the participants of the general discussion on missing functions on the current town squares (our piloting zone). Highlighting the functions that were missing in order to stimulate the thinking about changes

Introduction of workshop lead and the architect, who was participating in the discussion and was invited to listen to the ideas of the local citizens in order to prepare a design which is corresponding with the actual needs of people present.

Introduction of the program of the day, timeframe of the activities, expectations

Highlighting the importance of direct participation of the citizens, explanation why the citizens are crucial part of the changes which directly influence them

- Invitation to also bring ideas about public space in which deteriorating buildings are located

The discussion:

- Initial introduction of the basic design concepts and selected buildings

Each discussion round has the same structure starting from individual thinking about the functions and designs, continuing towards the small group discussions, after the ideas were collected and clustered continuation with the bigger group discussion followed by the presentation of representative of each group (if they wanted to) to present the ideas in the plenary discussion and followed by the suggestions, remarks, comments from the audience.

The architect was collecting the ideas and taking notes, without directly stepping into discussion, only in case of questions she stepped in with the explanation.

Round 1:

Individual thinking process - function 1 - community building

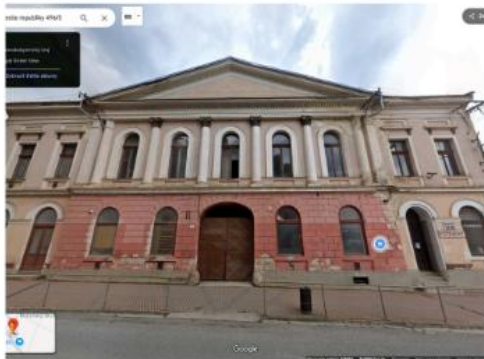
Discussion in a small groups max 5 people - comparison of ideas, missing functions, negatives and positives of the proposed ideas, summary of the ideas in the group - large group discussion - summary of the ideas and brainstorming - presentation of the ideas

Main outputs:

- The missing communal function - from the perspective of the citizens missing function is museum- Museum of crafts and history of the town in the burgher house, burgher traditions in the town
- (interactive elements) – burgher house
- Historical pharmacy
- Cinema
- Gallery with cafe
- Garden for relax in Reduta building (historical manor)

Suggested buildings for renovation and references:

Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Community center/local museum idea

Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Local parish office - local priest, showed the interest to renovate old parish building which could serve as a community and prayer center for catholic church and members of its community. Proposal

### Existing state of dwelling



Image 1: Photo of existing state of dwelling

### Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Image 3: Idea reference  
Source: Martin Neruda Architektura | Martin Neruda

Round 2:

Individual thinking process - function 1 - Commercial function

Discussion in a small groups max 5 people - comparison of ideas, missing functions, negatives and positives of the proposed ideas, summary of the ideas in the group - large group discussion - summary of the ideas and brainstorming - presentation of the ideas

Main outputs:

- Missing functions in the town:
- Restaurant
- Bike shop
- Ice cream/coffee shop
- Small vegetables shop/groceries/newstands

Suggested buildings for this function:

Existing state of dwelling



Image 1: Photo of existing state of dwelling

Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Image 1: Photo of existing state of dwelling

Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Round 2:

Individual thinking process - function 1 - Residential function

Discussion in a small groups max 5 people - comparison of ideas, missing functions, negatives and positives of the proposed ideas, summary of the ideas in the group - large group discussion - summary of the ideas and brainstorming - presentation of the ideas

Main outputs:

- The residential buildings located on the square are in private ownership
- The challenge is the deterioration and missing repairs of the buildings, which residents don't have sufficient financial resources to repair
- There is no significant housing shortage in the town, the problem is repairment of the buildings not their lack
- Its particularly difficult and challenging for the beautiful historical buildings - participants are not happy that they are not repaired, while being aware of the costs of repairment

Suggested buildings for this function:

Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



Existing state of dwelling



Dwelling proposal ideas, concepts, programs



*Collection of the ideas from the group work:*







The citizens together with the architect also collected ideas for the public spaces of the town square around the buildings selected for Jelšava. Discussing the lack of greenery, unsafe traffic solutions and lack of spaces for resting and family gatherings in the summer.

The architect presented her concept idea - cultural square where she was suggesting solutions for the parts of the square in order to improve its function. This part was added based on the initial discussion with the citizens and strong criticism towards public spaces which we have collected during the first workshop.

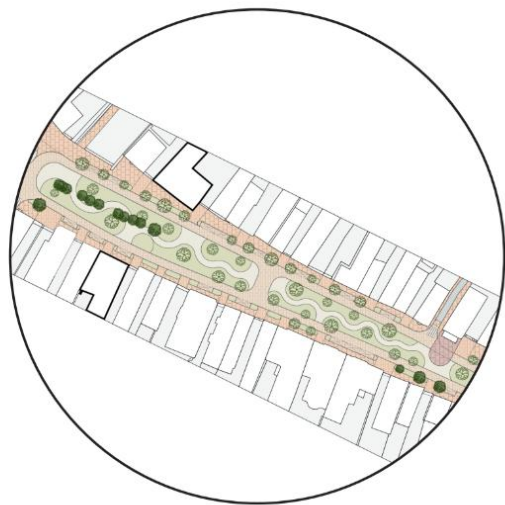
## "KULTÚRNE" NÁMESTIE

OVEROVACIA ŠTÚDIA NÁMESTIA V JELŠAVA



# LINEÁRNY PARK

OVEROVACIA ŠTÚDIA NÁMESTIA V JEĽŠAVA



## Background information (1-2 pages)

Why did we choose this method? (justification, if not RurALL project)

Method – What did we do?

Invitation in local press: [https://www.jelsava.sk/download\\_file\\_f.php?id=2278790](https://www.jelsava.sk/download_file_f.php?id=2278790)



Prezývka na Workshop v rámci projektu RurALL - Živé vidiecke komunity budúcnosti

Miesto konania: Konferenčná miestnosť v Katedre Kultúry a pamiatok v Jelšave  
Dátum a čas: 25.8.2025, 14:00  
Organizátor: Mesto Jelšava v spolupráci s ACEL Slovakia

Vážení obyvatelia, vážení obyvatelia mesta Jelšava,

vráťme Vám pozornosť na duhu nasledujúceho workshop v rámci európskeho projektu RurALL - Živé vidiecke komunity budúcnosti - Nový integrovaný model riešenia na riešenie vyľudňovania vidieckych oblastí. Tento projekt sa zameriava na problémy vyľudňovania vidieckych oblastí a napriek tomu, ktoré sú vzájomným problémom nielen na Slovensku, ale v celom podunajskom priestore.

Program workshopu:

- **Predstavenie projektu námestia** - Zoznámite sa s predbežným návrhom námestia, ktorý predstavuje aj architekta a celkom zjednotenú odpoveď na všetky otázky obyvateľov mesta
- **Diskusia o potrebách obyvateľov** - Práve sa o nej robí a odpoveď sa odhaľuje a má to veľké postavy a prínosy pre vytváranie lepšieho priestoru v meste.
- **Zbieranie spätnej väzby** - Predstavíme Vám aktivity, ktoré momentálne v projekte RurALL, s cieľom sa zamerať na spoločné Váše otázky, napríklad a prispieť k možným funkciám budov, ktoré sú vybrané v projekte.

Prečo práve? Váš hlas je pre nás obdĺžnik! Spoločne môžeme identifikovať potreby miestnej komunity a navrhovať riešenia, ktoré smerujú k zlepšeniu kvality života v Jelšave. Taktne je to prínosom dozvedieť sa viac o možnostiach spolupráce medzi obcami miestnej Európy a Balkánu.

Tešíme sa na Vašu účasť a spoločné hľadanie nových možností pre mesto Jelšava!

S úctou,  
Mesto Jelšava / ACEL Slovakia

The main task of the participants was to select from the pool of dwelling those for basic concepts creation and potentially those for detailed design ideas. The basic concepts were prepared by the architect, due to the nature of the collaboration in Jelšava, where the citizens are very hard

to engage and discussion over concepts which are not concrete and do not suggest initial ideas was not recommended to us by the municipality.

The approach we have chosen proved to be very functional, as the questionnaire also suggests, and the participation was very high - 29 people attended.

All the participants showed interest and care for their environment. The selected method - initial individual thinking - small group discussion- large group discussion and volunteer presentation also helped us to create an environment, where people who are not comfortable with public speaking can participate.

As the main bonus for this non-forceful and inclusive approach tailored for the specific needs of the community we consider that we again managed to attract local residents from the whole spectrum of social strata. From the mayor of the town and local representatives to the local workers, activists and regular residents.

The event was finalised with the informal discussion, when citizens with the coffee and cake could approach architect or project manager and continue discussion and questions in more informal setting.

We dedicated extra time to allow this interaction, in order to ensure, that all the voices are heard, atmosphere is friendly and we secure the interest and collaboration of the participants for the next workshop.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Serbia

# Reporting Workshop 2 “Prototyping solutions”

<b>Date:</b>	13.06.2025.
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Despotovac, Serbia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Marica Gajic <a href="mailto:marica.gajic@redasp.rs">marica.gajic@redasp.rs</a> Goran Miljkovic <a href="mailto:goran.miljkovic@redasp.rs">goran.miljkovic@redasp.rs</a>
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	20

## Overview of who is here – Warm up

*Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.*

In the introductory speech, the deputy mayor of Despotovac, Nemanja Radovanovic provided the main information about the project, the goal and the project partners, as well as the completed activities so far, and where this activity leads to. After him, the REDASP representative, Marica Gajic, as the project team member and the mediator of the workshop explained the goal of this workshop, i.e. the expected outputs and what impact the output and results should have on the future development of the project and on the local community.

She then explained the methodology of the workshop and that everyone should participate and would have the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas for solutions to the problems in the community.

The participants then introduced themselves, although the majority are the same groups that participated at the WS1. That was for the participants to make sure that they know each other and to form groups and for the mediator to have adequate approach and communication.

The participants represented their villages and groups, some of them represented the elementary school and the high technical school and their staff and pupils, social welfare center and their employees and beneficiaries, cultural center, association of agriculture producers,

women's association, museum of coalmining, a police officer, retired persons, unemployed person.

### **Understanding the problem (Step 1)**

*Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.*

The first group identified and discussed the problems of the vulnerable people in all the villages. Those are mostly the elderly who live alone and feel neglected and depressed. If they get ill, they become more vulnerable. Through discussion they identified other very vulnerable groups: young people after maturity who are out of the foster family. The service of foster families in Despotovac is rather frequent and the problem emerges when the beneficiaries become mature/ 18 years of age and cannot use this social service anymore. Surprisingly, some of the participants learned that on the territory of Despotovac municipality there are homeless people who occur occasionally, and the social welfare center has no capacities and resources to take care of the homeless. Questions occurred such as who these people are, how many they are per year, how they behave, what state of mind they are in, what are their needs and desires, where do they go afterwards... Some of the participants had experience with meeting these people and passed their impressions and opinions. The social welfare center explained their experience and expert knowledge about such problems of individuals and of the local communities. One of the basic needs is space and facilities to stay for several days (while some administrative procedures are completed, to define further steps) or to stay longer in the social or institutional housing. Other priority needs refer to health and hygiene, and then conditions and activities for entertainment, learning, communication, socializing etc.

The other group talked about the problem of migration due to unemployment and lack of job opportunities, for both young people and the vulnerable group of 50+, especially women. This problem is even more present in the areas of the municipality that traditionally have been industrial and mining districts of Senjski Rudnik and Ravna Reka. On the other hand, these communities have cultural heritage and objects that can be valued in the tourism sector and provide new job opportunities. The participants in the group exchanged experience, problems and their views of the job opportunities and quality of life in these areas of mining villages. The management of the Senjski Rudnik (Senje coal mine) Museum was in the group and they presented their ideas from a more professional point of view. The related problem is true for the whole community and that is the risk of losing the centuries old and built identity and culture of the multinational industrial community of miners and their families and the whole cultural / historical heritage of the area.

The third group also discussed the problem of unemployment and the lack of job opportunities, especially for the entrepreneurs and vulnerable groups of 50+ years of age. The group emphasized the unused potential of tourism sector, that is especially rich in the Resava cave, which is very popular and frequently visited throughout the year. The neighboring villages have the same problem of unemployment as other villages in Despotovac municipality. However, the potential for economic and tourism growth here is much better. There is an abandoned and nonfunctional building that used to be a famous and very frequently visited restaurant several decades ago. Revitalization of this restaurant and extending the purpose could provide not only job opportunities for the restaurant workers, but also providers and many support services for tourists and visitors. This

means startup businesses, old crafts, women associations, creative industries etc. There are creative women and other groups that produce valuable local products but can't place them on the market or have very limited one.

## Asking people (Step 2)

*Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.*

The questions asked:

- What are the main problems and needs of elderly people who live alone and feel neglected?
- What are potential solutions for the people who cannot afford housing?
- What are the key needs of young people who are out of foster families? Is it housing or job& economic independence, or studying?
- What do homeless people need most apart from housing?
- Could a shelter solve the problems of people in need of housing?
- Could shelter solve the problem of people who are old, feel neglected and depressed?
- Could shelter solve the problem of people who live alone and are ill?
- How big are the economic problems of the families?
- Is the economy/ job the key problem for the families in mining villages where this economic sector is slowly becoming extinctive?
- Do people want to preserve their cultural identity and sense of belonging to the community?
- How can preservation of cultural heritage provide job opportunities?
- Will young people decide to stay if tourism provided many job opportunities?
- Can preservation and valorization of cultural heritage enhance tourism growth?
- Will tourism provide market for the creative industries, old crafts and thus economic benefit for many creative women, youth and other people?
- Will the area become more attractive for foreign visitors and maybe digital nomads?
- That could make the area more attractive for our young people as well, not only for tourists and foreign digital nomads.
- Would such a trend enhance the return of people who work abroad, more children in schools, so that municipality investment in school buildings reconstruction be justified socially and economically?
- Would that enhance the staying of high school students in Despotovac secondary technical school and not leaving to bigger towns for high school education?

## Define common ground (step 3)

*Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

How could social housing services be developed in Despotovac, so to help the people in need and the local community?

The accommodation in a shelter or similar model of social housing could provide temporary housing solutions for vulnerable people. The facilities should also provide activities for socializing, communication, entertainment and learning for the people who use the facility. It would also support people who do not have the problem of space to live in, but are living alone and are old and ill, so they start to develop mental problems or insecurity. It could also provide shelter for some other kinds of vulnerable people, including homeless people from the area, other towns and foreigners, who are in most of the cases migrants, until the problem is institutionalized with permanent solution. At the same time, the local community would avoid the danger of developing a sense of insecurity. It has never happened, but if a solution is not found early it might aggravate.

What is the most effective solution for stopping the emigration of people from a town that has historical and cultural value?

Giving an economic purpose to an object of cultural, architectural and industrial heritage could provide job opportunities to people of Senjski Rudnik and neighboring villages. It should be a tourism-oriented economy with hostel accommodation, restaurants and coffee bars, space for children care, entertainment and relaxation.

Reconstruction of such an object could provide economic benefit for the local government and local community, as well as many job opportunities in tourism and support services (food producers, rent a car, rent a bike, souvenir shops, film industry, IT sector, marketing etc.)

What could stop high school students moving to other towns for high school, when they have a modern technical school and all the facilities needed in their own town?

If young people of 15 years of age found life in Despotovac more interesting and if their parents believed that the municipality is offering them good opportunities for quality education, less teenagers and their families would leave Despotovac. If tourism provided many job opportunities in tourism, hotel and restaurant industry, the municipality would start generating income and provide jobs for young people and entrepreneurs.

#### **Find ideas (step 4)**

*Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Ideas to solve the problem:

- Support young people who leave foster families to continue their education and/or get employed.
- Create programs for mental health, entertainment and socialization for the vulnerable elderly and homeless. Adapt and utilize space for their temporary housing and shelter.
- Consider specific requirements for space, rooms, colors, equipment...
- Educate the community about the problems of these vulnerable groups.
  
- Reconstruct buildings of cultural-historical heritage to preserve its historical value and to give it a purpose that the whole community would benefit from; to enhance the cultural and economic development.
- Create job opportunities for the miners' families and citizens of broader areas.
- Create cultural programs to keep the community together and provide opportunities for artists, creative people and similar activities.
- The buildings such as Sokolski dom had purpose of community gathering and social, cultural, sports activities, education as well. The purpose should be preserved and extended to contemporary needs of the community. Create space for cultural events and support the existing events in culture, art and education, provide galleries and creative workshops.
- Create space for hotel or hostel accommodation and programs. Create additional tourism service, restaurant, café and combine with the cultural programs purpose.
  
- Utilize the tourism potential that exists thanks to the natural and cultural heritage of Despotovac, Resavska cave, natural beauties, clean environments, forests...
- Utilize the existing building of a former restaurant near the Resave cave
- Develop tourism support services, restaurants...
- Develop infrastructure for activities in nature, cycling and hiking trails...and support services.
- Consider the needs of both local community and visitors/ tourists.

### **Prototyping (step 5)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

### **Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

The working groups did not work on drawings of designs but discussed and wrote down. Included were all functional, aesthetic, green and inclusion aspects of prototypes/ buildings with a specific purpose.

The first group considered the building in public ownership to provide temporary accommodation for the vulnerable groups, primarily the homeless in transit. The facility is

located near the hospital, Home for the elderly, Manasija Monastery, hotel. It is surrounded by a forest/ park. The building has ground floor and first floor. The space should be primarily dedicated to bedrooms, but provide other necessary facilities, kitchen, dining room, toilets. The colors of the walls, floors and furniture, i.e. the whole interior design should be carefully considered by specialists in effects of colors on people in stressful condition. It should also have a room for medical first aid and other special purposes as prescribed by regulations for shelters. The space should also have a room or facilities for social games, reading, and similar. The balcony should be adapted for socializing and similar events. The functionality of space is adapted for the purpose of temporary accommodation for specific groups of vulnerable people. The exterior of the building should melt with the environment of nature and greenery. The access road is rather good, but should be improved, as well as parking for specialized vehicles. The yard should be fenced from the building next to it. The other building is the dormitory for old people. It is a different social category, because these persons are not endangered, insecure or homeless. A part of the yard should be arranged to be a functional garden/ economy of the shelter.

The second group discussed the reconstruction of the Sokolski dom in Senjski Rudnik. The facility is in a hilly environment, surrounded by a forest, and near the coal mining museum Senjski Rudnik, as well as the village church. It has a historical architectural value.

Its purpose was community gathering, sports and entertainment. The prototype means reconstruction of the building to preserve its historical value, the original architecture, style and colors. It should also complement the natural environment. The building is in a hilly environment, surrounded by a forest, and near the coal mining museum Senjski Rudnik, as well as the village church. It has a basement, ground floor and first floor. The first floor has two large rooms. One of them should be multifunctional for cultural and similar events. The purpose of the building should be a hotel restaurant, with space for cultural. The whole space, not only the exterior, should preserve the original architecture and style. The project design should consider the historical background with the emphasis of 100-year long tradition of multiethnic structure of the community of miners and their families from many countries in Europe and the world. The attractions for the tourists should be based on industrial and mining heritage mixed with modern trends in architecture and industry. The primary purpose could be MICE tourism for congress meetings and that is why the large rooms should be designed as conference rooms. However, one room should be adaptable to multipurpose, i.e. with the stage and other technical equipment for art and culture events and exhibitions (gallery). The basement space should be a restaurant. That should especially keep the style of mining and industrial heritage. It would be a combined commercial and public purpose of the building.

The third group developed a prototype for the abandoned building of a former restaurant Toplica that was famous and well visited during the 70's of the XX century. The nature in this area is protected, and the building is abandoned for security reasons. It is a ground floor building but is spacious and it has a large balcony that was once proclaimed as the "balcony with the most beautiful view in the world". The building should be reconstructed and secured. The purpose should be kept, as a restaurant. However, it should have additional services/ purpose: a couple of rooms, a small visitors' center, gallery and playing room for children. It would be a commercial purpose. The aesthetic of the building should be complementary with nature but incorporate modern and attractive style, attractive for the tourists. Unlike the previous building

where traditional aesthetic would dominate, here the modern dominates. The balcony should return the epithet of the one with the most beautiful view in the world. That is why the project should also include landscaping for the environment as well.

### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

### **Testing the prototype (step 8)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

Since the discussion during the workshop in groups often included group exchange of opinion and ideas, there was not much left at the plenary part of the workshop to be discussed. Basically, the ideas for prototypes were all agreed and accepted by all participants. Some wanted to emphasize some points that had already been mentioned but not emphasized enough.

Such were:

- The shelter interior should emphasize the choice of colors of the rooms with special purposes to be complementary with specific moods and additional support that people in need should have.
- The plenary discussion identified one new point to the prototype / it should have special access for the people in wheelchairs (with disabilities).
- The plenary discussion of the Sokolski dom confirmed the prototype of the group. All agreed that the purpose should be a hostel and restaurant with a multipurpose room that can serve conferences as well as cultural events and art exhibitions.
- One participant added that the environment should support cycling trails, because the area is attractive for cyclists and is on the tourist tracks for athletes, especially from Italy and Great Britain.
- For Toplica restaurant, the ecological aspect must be in accordance with regulations for protected natural areas. It should be analyzed which renewable energy sources could be used and to what extent.

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



**RurALL**

# **Reporting of Workshop 2 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prijedor**

### **Development agency of the city of Prijedor “PREDA”**

**Location: Community building MZ Božići on June 3, 2025**

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants identified a range of promising opportunities for commercial revitalization. A notable proposal from the Kozara Radio Amateurs Association advocates for the creation of an education and training center for civil protection and rescue within the old school building in Božići. This innovative center would not only meet local and regional needs but also attract professional training programs, enhancing community safety and resilience.

Additionally, the Albatros Club shared an inspiring vision for a Visitor Center in Božići 2, aimed at promoting eco-tourism, mountain sports, and cycling routes on Kozara Mountain. This facility would include a multifunctional hall and accommodations, designed to appeal to adventure tourists and nature lovers alike, fostering economic growth and attracting visitors to the beautiful natural landscape.

## **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The discussions regarding residential use highlighted a strong desire for improved living conditions and greater community resilience. Participants identified that one of the buildings, which used to be a primary school, in Jelovac currently houses a socially vulnerable family, which is in need of significant repairs. To address this, the community proposed integrating housing solutions into ongoing revitalization efforts, focusing particularly on supporting families in need.

Moreover, there was a collective enthusiasm for creating mixed-use spaces that allow residential units to coexist with community functions, particularly in multi-room buildings. This approach could foster a sense of community and further enhance the neighborhood's vitality.

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

One of the important topics discussed was the need for more spaces dedicated to youth activities, social gatherings, and community education. Revitalizing public buildings presents a valuable opportunity to enhance community life. In Jelovac, the Patria Association has taken an inspiring step by constructing a 300 m<sup>2</sup> facility using private funds. They are now looking for support in project writing and fundraising to complete this vision. The aim is to transform these spaces into multifunctional centers that serve various groups and address local needs effectively, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Commercial revitalization presents a valuable opportunity to utilize abandoned public infrastructure to enhance tourism and support local businesses. The proposed Visitor Center in Božići 2 exemplifies how transforming an underused asset can create a dynamic revenue-generating hub. This initiative not only has the potential to provide local employment opportunities but also aims to invigorate the tourism-driven economy in the region. By focusing on creative redevelopment, we can pave the way for a thriving community that benefits both residents and visitors alike.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Unused spaces have the potential to become valuable housing options for marginalized groups, especially when basic infrastructure is rehabilitated. A prime example is the occupied but rundown building in Jelovac, which presents an opportunity for renovation. With support from social housing programs, this building could be transformed into dignified living units. By combining institutional assistance with the engagement of a motivated community, we can create functional and welcoming homes for those in need.

## **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants advocated for revitalization of underutilized public spaces into vibrant community hubs by renovating them for a variety of uses, including associations, educational programs, and youth centers. By focusing on public benefit and fostering community ownership, these initiatives can pave the way for sustainable success and active community involvement.

## **Final Discussion**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The workshop confirmed that rural communities in the Prijedor area, though facing visible infrastructural and administrative challenges, possess a high degree of motivation, local knowledge, and initiative. Participants consistently emphasized that the revitalization of public buildings is not only about restoring physical structures — it's about creating spaces that bring people together, preserve rural identity, and support future-oriented development.

Several participants noted that the existing ideas for reusing community buildings — whether as visitor centers, training facilities, or social hubs — are not only visionary, but also grounded in local resources, traditions, and networks. These ideas are ready to grow, but require targeted support in the form of project development, access to funding, and mentorship in implementation.

There was a strong sense of shared purpose and a willingness to collaborate across local associations, residents, and institutions. However, participants openly pointed out that administrative procedures and poor infrastructure remain serious obstacles to realizing their visions. Many agreed that while buildings are important, “people are the key” — and only through meaningful involvement of the community can lasting change be achieved.

The following steps have been announced: three buildings will be chosen for full conceptual design in collaboration with local architects. Additionally, twenty basic concepts will be developed for selected mapped dwellings. Business plans will be created to evaluate financial feasibility. The community will remain involved through follow-up meetings, culminating in a final conference that will be opportunity to bring together residents and potential investors.

The workshop closed with a clear message: rural revitalization must be a co-creative process, built from the ground up, with support from agencies like PREDA and the RurALL project providing tools and guidance, while local people provide the energy, ideas, and ownership.

*"Buildings are tools - the real key is people."*

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL

# **Reporting of Workshop 2 – Livable communities**

## **Country report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prijedor**

### **Development agency of the city of Prijedor “PREDA”**

**Location: Community building MZ Jelićka on June 5, 2025**

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Participants put forth the idea of developing small rural businesses that capitalize on the community's unique strengths. One constructive proposal involves connecting tourism with local products, such as the high-quality goat cheese from the Nana Kaas farm. Furthermore, encouraging digital entrepreneurship, particularly through the talents of young returnees like Milan, who have expertise in digital marketing, could drive innovation. To facilitate these efforts, the establishment of a co-working space within the community center, equipped with enhanced internet connectivity, is planned. This space would not only attract skilled professionals but also help retain local talent, fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

To foster greater youth retention and encourage their return to the village, it is essential to build strong local support systems. The active participation of family units and encouragement from successful community figures, like the Lemić family, can significantly enhance residential stability. Additionally, revitalizing the community center into an open-space concept could provide a vibrant and inviting environment for young people, allowing them to live, work, and socialize seamlessly in their community. This initiative could serve as a cornerstone for strengthening community bonds and promoting a thriving atmosphere for future generations.

### **How can my community remain liveable and worth living in? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The community center in Jelička has established itself as an essential venue for local gatherings and youth organization activities. To maximize its potential, there are plans to transform this space into a multifunctional community hub that will facilitate training programs, social events, and tourism-related initiatives while preserving local culture and traditions. By fostering active engagement from community members, particularly through the initiatives led by youth leader

Draško Đurić and his peers, we can ensure that this center continues to be a sustainable and valuable resource for everyone.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 1 – commercial use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Unused rural properties present a valuable opportunity for the development of small-scale tourism businesses, such as rural homestays, guided tours, and the processing of farm products. The advantageous proximity to Banja Luka and Prijedor further facilitates market access, making these ventures more viable. By leveraging natural assets and fostering entrepreneurial initiatives, communities can create a thriving tourism economy that unlocks commercial potential and contributes to local development.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 2 – residential use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

Transforming abandoned or underused homes into rental housing for returning youth and elderly residents can be a constructive strategy for community revitalization. By focusing on enhancing basic infrastructure, particularly internet access and public transportation, we can create a supportive environment for these residents. Furthermore, fostering a sense of local belonging and community support can significantly enhance the quality of life, proving to be more beneficial than merely relying on urban conveniences.

### **How can we use unused resources, in particular abandoned dwellings, to achieve this aim? Group 3 – community use**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The community center in Jelička is already partially in use, but there is significant potential for improvement through modernization and sustainable practices. By focusing on open-space renovations and incorporating a multifunctional design, we can create a more versatile environment that supports a range of activities. This transformation would allow for co-working

spaces, training programs, youth events, as well as health and social services, ultimately enhancing community engagement and service delivery.

## Final Discussion

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

The workshop in Jelička confirmed that rural communities are not only capable of identifying their own challenges — they are also full of creativity, practical knowledge, and a strong will to act. The discussions highlighted the powerful combination of youth energy, returnee experiences, and deeply rooted local values.

Participants emphasized that revitalization is not just about infrastructure, but about creating spaces that serve real people and evolving community needs. The concept of transforming existing buildings into multifunctional, open, and youth-oriented spaces — particularly for remote work and social entrepreneurship — resonated strongly with attendees.

What stood out in this workshop was the visible synergy between generations — experienced residents, active youth, and returnees from abroad all shared the same vision: to keep their communities alive, relevant, and connected to broader economic and social trends. However, they were also realistic: the lack of reliable internet, complex administrative procedures, and financial limitations were all recognized as significant obstacles.

Despite these challenges, the community expressed readiness to move forward — especially if accompanied by advisory and project support. As one participant put it: *"We've already built a lot with our own hands. What we need now is support to take the next step."*

The final message of the workshop was clear: rural development must build on local leadership and be supported by flexible, targeted tools that empower people to make their ideas happen — right where they are.

Participants recognized the need for continued collaboration with the Development agency PREDa, viewing it as essential for accessing expert guidance and co-financing. The community's enthusiasm and readiness are strong, with plans to develop three detailed project proposals alongside 20 simplified ones. This proactive approach, emphasized during the session, demonstrates a commitment to advancing these projects and fostering positive development in the area:

*"The buildings are tools, but people are the key — and here, the people are ready."*



# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Croatia PP7

<b>Date:</b>	29.07.2025.
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Municipality of Lokve, Croatia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Tajana Brajković, euprojekti@tajanabrajkovic.hr
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	14

# Reporting Workshop 2 “Prototyping solutions”

## Country report of Croatia

<b>Date:</b>	29.07.2025.
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Municipality of Fužine, Croatia
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Tajana Brajković, euprojekti@tajanabrajkovic.hr
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	14

### Overview of who is here – Warm up

*Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.*

After the introductory greeting, brief presentation of the project, workshop objectives and program, the introduction of stakeholders was conducted through short exercises, i.e., icebreakers. Before the game, participants were divided into three groups according to the project requirements, i.e., workshop requirements, into groups that will create ideas for commercial, residential and public use of mapped derelict buildings in the pilot area.

Then, through the first icebreaker "My first job," all participants introduced themselves. On post-it notes, following the workshop facilitator's instructions, they had to write their name and surname, their first job (from the earliest age) and share with the group what they learned from that job. This game made the group laugh and relaxed them for the further course of the workshop. During the game, we learned that representatives of local self-government units were present, i.e., mayors and a female mayor, four representatives from two development agencies, several employees from local self-government units such as department heads, lawyers and project managers, and three external evaluators of this project. Then they played another icebreaker game "One word" in which they had to write on a post-it note one word that,

in their opinion, describes the workshop in question. The written words were: "renovation," "opportunity," "shift," "need," "change," "funding sources," "network," "information," "radical measures," "new look."

Then the facilitator asked the question: "Who among you thinks they are creative, please raise your hand?" As expected, half of those present raised their hands. After that, the facilitator explained that this was expected and that according to one study, when adults are in a room and this question is asked, always half or less than half raise their hands. Such an attitude most often stems from limiting beliefs that we acquired during growing up through criticism about drawing, sense of art and similar, when we received comments like: "you don't know how to draw, you're not creative," etc., or we ourselves connected creativity with art, drawing, photography, etc. The goal of this question and clarification was to encourage everyone present to solve the problems we posed at the workshop regardless of artistic talents. That is, with the clarification that creativity is the ability to seek solutions regardless of conditions, a new environment in which we have not been before, finding solutions to a problem we have not encountered before, and accepting that perhaps the first solution will not be the right one.

Then another short exercise was conducted as a reminder that creativity is not drawing. That is, the task was given to draw a person next to or across from them. After this exercise, the facilitator reminded that everyone had just given an answer to the request to draw their neighbor next to or across from them, and not that they had to make an artistic portrait, and that they had successfully completed the task.

After the introductory part, introductions and short exercises, icebreakers, we proceeded to the second part of the workshop.

### **Understanding the problem (Step 1)**

*Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.*

Before continuing with defining and solving the problem, the facilitator explained what exactly the design thinking method is and how it is connected to the New Bauhaus initiative and why the previous short games were necessary. She reminded them of the mapped objects that were the subject of the first workshop, and as a reminder, posters were also displayed on the room's windows.

Step 1. Problem definition related to answering the questions: "How can my community remain livable, be worth living in," "What could be developed so that the community comes alive" and they were given the task to come up with questions they will ask others. Each participant wrote questions for themselves on their post-it notes according to the type of building use in the group they belong to.

## Asking people (Step 2)

*Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.*

After some time, participants mixed with each other and conducted interviews, according to the workshop facilitator's instructions. During the interviews, participants questioned each other in pairs of two people and asked questions they had previously devised.

### **The commercial group created the following questions:**

1. How to attract young people to start companies or how to encourage them to become self-employed? The interlocutor answered that LSGUs will enable education for companies, which will include moral and other support in business development.
2. How to develop a homogeneous society? How to attract young people to become active in social work and volunteering? How to encourage volunteering in regular actions? Interlocutor's answer: Appreciate people, motivate them to become active, everything depends on people who lead associations.
3. The question of cleaning the existing industrial environment that occupies a potential place for investment and starting new businesses. Who works, who doesn't, who shirks? Answer: Problems are found in logistics, internal customs, dispatch. It is necessary to better keep records of dispatch and monitor waste generation and management.
4. The question of service availability, personal income and infrastructure. Can they be improved and how? Interlocutor's answer: it can be done with joint work of LSGUs and those who need that infrastructure, but nobody approaches anyone, instead they publicly call out, and the response to joint problem-solving is nonexistent.

### **The residential use group created questions:**

1. How to promote quality of life in smaller places and spaces closer to nature? How to enable mobility with the aim of using rural new services? How to prepare people to take their existence into their own hands? Answer: If the city or municipality would arrange old unused houses and apply the state model of granting support for long-term rent with a purchase option, including consideration of all paid rents after 10 years of residence.
2. How to arrange the center of Lokve? Answer: With more content for young people, young families, achieve better connectivity through public transport.
3. Can civil society development influence the increase of individual interest, quality jobs and affect employment? Answer: It could with education, business and financial assistance to young people to start their own enterprises.

### **The public use group created questions:**

1. To what extent is the availability and quality of public facilities important for attracting young families to rural areas? Is well-organized public-utility and tourist infrastructure important to them?

Answer: the availability and acceptable price of kindergartens, schools, health centers, homes for the elderly is important to them.

2. Can facilities for young people be increased and which ones, so they would stay in rural areas? Answer: they can, primarily through employment and ensuring housing, and then also workshops and education through the Our Children society.

3. Who will decide on infrastructure use? What are the experiences of public-private partnership? To which activities should public infrastructure be adapted?

Answer: First of all, it would be necessary to examine the needs of end users for infrastructure use and take the direction of development of that environment. Will it go more towards tourism, business zones or family needs. Partnerships would be possible when the final need is defined.





### Define common ground (step 3)

*Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that ... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

Given that participants announced the impossibility of participating the entire day, i.e., full 8 hours when registering for the workshop, it was created and held in a way to find solutions in the shortest possible time so that as many stakeholders as possible would be present until the end of the workshop. The problem with all-day workshops was highlighted through discussion due to various business and private obligations. For example, representatives of local self-government units are not able to dedicate an entire day to the workshop, while most of those present emphasized the need to leave to pick up children from kindergarten or school after working hours, which is why participation until 5 PM is not possible, as official working hours are until 3 PM or 4 PM, after which they must go pick up children. Therefore, the workshop facilitator created a persona in advance and assigned his needs.

However, before solving our persona's needs, each group presented the results of interviews to the groups (interlocutor responses listed in the previous question of the report) and they grouped the answers on post-it notes in accordance with the defined problems from the previous step.

The created profile of a male person aged 26, named Matko, was presented by the workshop

facilitator to all present. She stated that Matko is a young entrepreneur who, in his free time, engages in gardening and reading.

For each group, she defined a different need. Thus, she presented to the commercial group his need for business idea development, to the residential group the need for accommodation for his newly established family, and to the public group, the need to care for his elderly mother.

The facilitator instructed those present to put themselves in his shoes, think like him and approach the tasks. The instructions were to focus on solving the problem listed in the center of the poster, to write their assumptions on post-it notes, stick them and comment within the team. The task was set so that through an emotion map they tried to be in the perspective of the created profile of Matko. Each group wrote what Matko says, thinks, does and feels regarding each problem listed in the center of the poster.

In the first three minutes they independently thought about Matko's need, and the next 7 minutes in groups.

RESULTS:

### **Group 1. Commercial use**

**SAYS:** I want to work in nature. I want to engage in growing healthy food. For me, this is an adrenaline challenge. I need business space to start a business. I would like to return to the village. Maybe I would also work in some company. What if there are no EU funds for developing my business, could I apply for HBOR funds for some credit? I'm fed up with this Rijeka, noise and crowds, never getting to work, parking is always a problem.

**THINKS:** What if my business in a small environment doesn't succeed? I want to escape from the city. Where can I find space for my private business?

**DOES:** Goes to the local self-government unit for information. Contacts the local self-government unit for help in finding business space. Researches support measures. Seeks funding sources. Goes to work dissatisfied every day, smiles at colleagues and boss but doesn't openly express dissatisfaction at work.

**FEELS:** Feels insecure until he finds business space. Feels fear of failure. Feels that there are opportunities in rural areas.



Image 1. Needs a place for business idea development

## Group 2. Residential use

**SAYS:** Along with quality housing, it's also important to me what kind of kindergarten and school my children attend. I'll buy an old house and renovate it, it needs to have a bigger yard.

**THINKS:** It's easy for them, their parents bought them an apartment. I hope my new home will be better connected to the city. It's better to raise children in nature and a close community where we feel safe and where we care for each other. The long-term apartment rental model suits me better than having to buy real estate, especially because the municipality helps me with the rent.

**DOES:** Tries to find a better job. Inquires about space and loans. Since his wife can't find an adequate job, he tries to include her in his business.

**FEELS:** Given the small number of people in Gorski kotar, he feels fear about the success of the business that will enable him to pay rent. He wants to stay there, but also enable a better life for his children. He wants to provide them with better conditions, i.e., kindergarten and various activities.





Image 3. There's no one to take care of his elderly mother

Before moving on to the next task, the facilitator encouraged participants to do a short Quick sketch time exercise in which they had to draw the following concepts in a short time: door, baby and house. This exercise aimed to clear their minds a bit and remind them that creativity is problem-solving.

### Find ideas (step 4)

Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

In this step, participants were invited to create questions that pose potential solutions based on previous assumptions. Each participant wrote down ideas on how the problem that will help Matko can be solved.

#### 1. Group - commercial use

Could the city or municipality arrange a co-working space that, in addition to adequate space, could also provide mentors for business idea development?

Maže: bi grad/polina unaviti  
co-velang prostor koj. in  
fotocenter, oom adrebratreg  
prostora mogao angueh  
mentare za rezervi pealaviti  
koga?

## 2. Group - residential use

Would it have an effect to promote Gorski kotar as a place of better living, i.e., life in nature with the possibility of growing one's own food, better safety for children, possibilities of online business in a no-stress area?

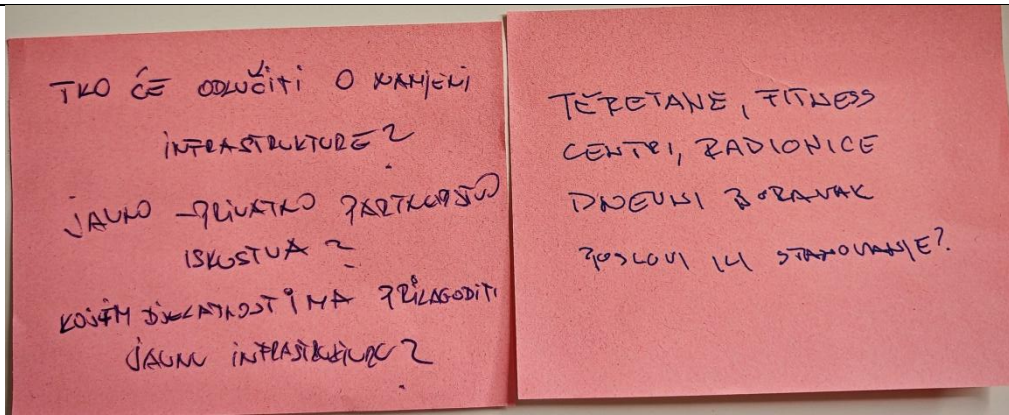
The question was prompted by the conclusion of the emotion map, i.e., can a quality long-term apartment rental model be enabled with municipal support?

Can quality micro-transport model be ensured for the observed profile of a young person for using public services? Can entrepreneurial needs be ensured and the municipality's interest to support its own young entrepreneurs?

1) ~~PROSTOR ZA STANJE U MIAJEM~~  
~~PROSTOR ZA STANJE~~  
\* MA KOJI NAJVIŠE PROMOVIRATI  
KVALITETA STANJE U MIAJEM  
\* PROMOVIRATI I PROMOVIRATI  
BUDUĆA PERIODI?  
\* KAKO OMOGUĆITI MOBILIZACIJU  
ZA ČIJU KVALITETA KVALITETA  
KVALITETA KVALITETA?  
\* KAKO PROMOVIRATI KVALITETA  
I KVALITETA PROMOVIRATI I KVALITETA

## 3. Group - public use

Who will decide on infrastructure use? To which activities should public infrastructure be adapted? Are facilities like gyms, fitness centers, educational workshops, help for parent care important to young people, or is their biggest concern ensuring housing and employment?



The results were presented within the group and grouped according to themes.

### Prototyping (step 5)

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

During the prototype development step, the facilitator asked questions: "If you could now renovate the buildings in question, cheaply and simply, what would they look like?"

It's not about how they will look in the end because this is a concept that we will refine. It can also be some kind of advertisement, not necessarily a renovated building, but something you could present to the public.

Group work lasted about 20 minutes after which each group presented their ideas in the next step.



## Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

After defining the prototype, each group presented their solution for the stated need of our profile Matko.

### 1. Group - commercial use\_Need: Needs a place for business idea development

Solution:

Arrange a space that will serve as an incubation center that will eventually become a co-working space due to the small number of entrepreneurs.

The city/municipality will provide support in the form of mentorship and other assistance in business management by having an employed person who will guide young entrepreneurs through the business process, advise them and help with promotion and sales. Additionally, it will encourage opening business ideas that will satisfy local needs, through co-financing equipment procurement, operations, marketing and similar. Feedback related to the possibility of local self-government unit support by providing a building for use, and the user will arrange it from their own or some other funds.

Identified flaw: financial sustainability of such space, who will bear maintenance costs, mentor costs.

### 2. Group - residential use\_Need: He needs accommodation for his newly established family

Solution:

Through the national housing policy plan, i.e., affordable housing, ensure a model of granting support for long-term rent with a purchase option including consideration of all paid rents after 10 years of residence or arrangement, construction and extension of existing buildings.

Comment from another group related to the issue of certain municipalities that are spatially limited, e.g., Lokve Municipality, and they don't have spatial capacity for expansion and new construction.

### 3. Group - public use\_Need: There's no one to take care of his elderly mother

Solution:

As a local self-government unit, provide a fund with incentives for buying or arranging old houses, encourage the arrangement of some building for day care for the elderly that would have a sports, creative space where courses and workshops would be held, provide one warm meal and medical and psychological help with daily monitoring and sugar measurement and blood pressure check.



A problem that can arise: insufficient medical and professional staff who could work.

### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

After the presented solutions, participants gave feedback to each group in the form of a certain obstacle that could arise, which each group then integrated into their proposed solution.

#### **1. Group - commercial use\_Need: Needs a place for business idea development**

Solution: Incubation center i.e., co-working space for starting business with mentoring support. The local self-government unit is open to providing a building free of charge for rent, for business development, with the condition of renovation by the user.

The identified flaw of financial sustainability of such space can be ensured through EU

funds via associations or entrepreneurial centers, donations from entrepreneurs and similar funding sources.

**2. Group - residential use\_Need: He needs accommodation for his newly established family**

Solution: Through the national housing policy plan, i.e., affordable housing, ensure a model of granting support for long-term rent with a purchase option including consideration of all paid rents after 10 years of residence.

For areas where construction is prohibited or there is spatial limitation for new construction, the proposal is to enable conversion of attics or extension i.e., raising a floor for the purpose of long-term rent.

**3. Group - public use\_Need: There's no one to take care for his elderly mother**

Solution: As a local self-government unit, provide a fund with incentives for buying or arranging old houses, encourage the arrangement of some building for day care for the elderly that would have a sports, creative space where courses and workshops would be held, provide one warm meal and medical and psychological help with daily monitoring and sugar measurement and blood pressure check.



The lack of medical staff could be additionally encouraged i.e., attracted through other benefits such as housing support, better working conditions such as salary, additional benefits such as various memberships for recreational activities and similar.

## Testing the prototype (step 8)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

For testing the idea, according to the workshop facilitator's instructions, a volunteer was sought within one group to play Matko. From the group that was solving the commercial use problem, a representative volunteered who presented their solutions for Matko's need for a place to develop a business idea, namely the need to start his business in their area. A person from the public use group voluntarily played our created Matko to whom the commercial group representative presented their solutions.

The testing was very interactive, and all workshop participants joined in during the interview. During the conversation there was laughter and various offers. The interview proceeded with the commercial group representative asking Matko questions about what she, as a city representative, could offer him and how to help him develop a business idea. Matko stated that he wasn't sure what exactly he would do in that area, what business idea would have chances for development. The representative responded that they have needs for funeral and chimney sweep services. That she could provide him with space, help with promotion and that business return is guaranteed for him, because in that area there is no business entity that provides those services. Matko further acted that this wasn't his choice of business, but that he could adapt if other conditions were made available to him.

This conversation lasted about 20 minutes, after which the group concluded that cities and municipalities should clearly communicate needs for certain jobs and to what extent they are prepared to help interested future entrepreneurs. Then they should reach those who are interested and encourage them to come and relocate, and then provide help in the first months of work through mentorship, connecting with people and customers, and promotion.

After completing the idea testing, the facilitator invited those interested to think about further steps after the workshop. Then all participants filled out surveys about the held workshop. Finally, the facilitator invited everyone to answer the question for themselves: "How much do I care about this topic and what can I undertake?".

After thanking them for their participation, all participants were invited to catering and further exchange of ideas and networking.





# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Bulgaria

<b>Date:</b>	29.07.2025 and 01.08.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Municipal Council Hall, Municipality of Sandanski, Bulgaria
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Plamen Todorov, <a href="mailto:office@bicc-sandanski.org">office@bicc-sandanski.org</a>
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	Workshop 1 (29.07): 24 participants / Workshop 2 (01.08): 12 participants - technical experts

# Reporting Workshop 2 “Prototyping solutions”

## Country report of Bulgaria

### **Documentation of the process (1-2 pages, depending on the format)**

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail & summarize at the end. Integrate pictures of post-its, whisper groups and in the plenary (clustering). Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

As part of the RurALL project's second phase of community engagement focused on "Brainstorming ideas, solutions and functionalities" BICC - Sandanski, in collaboration with the Municipality of Sandanski as an associated partner, organized a comprehensive workshop divided into two complementary parts which took place on July 29<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2025. This workshop built upon previous community engagement efforts that had identified 23 publicly owned or underused buildings with potential for transformation into active community assets.

#### **Part 1: Community representatives workshop (July 29, 2025)**

**Venue:** Municipal Council Hall, Municipality of Sandanski

**Participants:** 24 representatives including:

- Mayors from villages within the Municipality of Sandanski
- Active community members from areas where selected buildings are located
- Project team experts from BICC - Sandanski

**Summary of the event:** The first part of the workshop focused on gathering community perspectives and generating ideas for the functionality and use of the 23 pre-selected buildings.



Participants were divided into three smaller groups to facilitate focused discussions. Each group engaged in intensive brainstorming sessions about potential purposes and uses for the buildings in their areas. The project team experts from BICC provided essential information about each building's current state, structural characteristics, and technical possibilities, while local participants contributed ideas based on community needs and what would realistically work in their contexts.



The brainstorming sessions produced a rich variety of proposals for the 23 buildings:

- Community centers hosting multiple activities
- Youth hubs for education and recreation
- Cultural spaces for preserving local traditions
- Facilities for delivering social services
- Co-working spaces for local entrepreneurs
- Multi-generational activity centers

Each group presented their findings to the plenary, creating a comprehensive overview of possibilities for all 23 buildings.

## Part 2: Technical experts workshop (August 1, 2025)

**Venue:** Municipal Council Hall, Municipality of Sandanski

**Participants:** 12 technical experts including:

- Representatives from the Construction and Technical Department of the Municipality
- Municipal architects
- External experts contracted for detailed renovation projects
- Representatives from local NGOs

**Summary of the event:** The second part concentrated exclusively on the three buildings selected for detailed design development within the RurALL project framework. This session translated community aspirations from the first workshop into technically viable solutions.

The technical experts used detailed worksheets for each of the three buildings, guiding discussions through four key areas:

1. **Purpose and function of the building**
  - Primary and secondary uses based on community input
  - Alignment with identified local needs
2. **Key characteristics and features**
  - Architectural elements and spatial configuration
  - Renovation potential and constraints
3. **Management, ownership and funding**
  - Viable operational models
  - Potential funding sources and sustainability
4. **New European Bauhaus (NEB) features**
  - Integration of sustainability principles
  - Aesthetic considerations
  - Inclusion and accessibility requirements

Building upon the community ideas, the technical team refined the options for each building. Their analysis considered technical feasibility, regulatory compliance, cost implications, and alignment with RurALL project objectives. Through this process, they finalized the designation of the three priority buildings:

- One building for **residential use** (addressing housing needs of single-family owners)
- One building for **commercial purposes** (stimulating local economy)
- One building for **public use** (serving broader community functions)

The discussions addressed specific implementation challenges including structural assessments, energy efficiency improvements, accessibility requirements, infrastructure integration, legal considerations, ownership transfers, and zoning regulations.

## **Background information (1-2 pages)**

*Why did we choose this method? (justification, if not RurALL project)*

*Method – What did we do?*

The decision to organize the workshop in two distinct parts emerged from lessons learned during the initial phase of the RurALL project and the specific context of the Municipality of Sandanski. This approach also addressed practical considerations. The large number of participants (36 in total) would have made meaningful dialogue difficult in a single session. The spacing between the two parts (July 29 and August 1) allowed the project team to process and synthesize community input before the technical workshop, ensuring that expert discussions were informed by actual community needs rather than assumptions. Additionally, the focus on different scales - 23 buildings in the first part versus 3 priority buildings in the second - enabled appropriate depth of discussion for each phase of the planning process.

### **Part 1: Community brainstorming (July 29, 2025)**

We employed a facilitated brainstorming methodology that balanced structure with creative freedom. After initial introductions in plenary, participants were divided into three working groups of approximately 8 people each. Groups were mixed to include mayors from different villages, encouraging cross-pollination of ideas and preventing isolated thinking.

Each group received basic information sheets about the buildings in their discussion set, including location, size, current condition, and any notable features. However, we deliberately avoided overwhelming participants with technical details that might constrain their creative thinking. Participants wrote ideas on post-it notes for easy clustering and rearrangement. Groups then presented their ideas to the plenary, allowing for cross-group learning and validation of common themes.

### **Part 2: Technical workshop (August 1, 2025)**

The technical workshop employed a more structured analytical framework, using detailed worksheets developed specifically for the RurALL project. These worksheets guided systematic evaluation across four dimensions: purpose and function (translating community ideas into specific programmatic requirements), key characteristics and features (assessing architectural and structural elements), management and funding (developing sustainable operational models), and New European Bauhaus principles (ensuring quality, sustainability, and inclusion). Working as a single group facilitated immediate technical dialogue and consensus-building among experts who would need to collaborate during implementation. The workshop began with a presentation of synthesized community input from Part 1, ensuring technical discussions remained grounded in community needs. Experts then worked through each of the three priority buildings systematically, with sub-groups forming organically around specific technical challenges (structural, regulatory, financial) before reconvening to integrate findings.

At the end, we can conclude that this two-part methodology worked well for the specifics of the local community and created a good framework for the next project phases by establishing clear community vision and buy-in for all 23 buildings, developing technically sound and

realistic plans for 3 priority buildings and building relationships between community stakeholders and technical experts that will facilitate smooth implementation. This further proved the understanding that we have established during the project that effective and efficient rural development requires both bottom-up community input and top-down technical expertise, integrated through carefully designed participatory processes.



# Reporting Design Thinking Sprint

## Country report of Hungary

<b>Date:</b>	05.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Sárvár, Hungary
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Ms. Renáta Csabai – renata.csabai@pbn.hu
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	16

## Country report of Hungary

<b>Date:</b>	05.06.2025
<b>Place, Country:</b>	Sárvár, Hungary
<b>Notetaker name and e-mail address:</b>	Ms. Renáta Csabai – renata.csabai@pbn.hu
<b>No of participants/stakeholder group:</b>	16

### Overview of who is here – Warm up

*Take minutes of the introduction of territorial partner: Name - Organization - one keyword on the project - why am I here? If questions arise, note them too.*

*The workshop was opened by **Dr. Tivadar Máhr**, Vice-Mayor of Sárvár, and **Ms. Renáta Csabai**, Project Coordinator at Pannon Business Network (PBN). They welcomed participants and briefly introduced the aim of the RurALL project and the specific focus of the workshop: exploring innovative and community-driven ideas for repurposing the rear part of the Nádasdy Castle and further buildings, in line with the project's overall goal of counteracting depopulation and supporting youth retention in the region.*

*Following the introduction, each participant briefly introduced themselves by stating their name, organization (if applicable), a keyword they associate with the project, and their reason for participating. The group consisted of 16 stakeholders from different sectors, including education, youth work, tourism, cultural heritage, local governance, and civil society.*

*No major questions were raised during this opening round, but there was strong interest in ensuring that the ideas developed align with the long-term vision of Sárvár and the needs of local youth.*

## Understanding the problem (Step 1)

Please make sure to document per group. Group defines issue at stake and defines relevant questions for the issue at stake to ask others in step 2. Please make sure to take notes of the discussion and to document the final set of questions.

Participants were divided into three thematic groups to define the core challenges and formulate key guiding questions for the next co-creation step. Each group focused on one potential use type for the rear part of the Nádasdy Castle buildings: **commercial**, **residential**, and **community** use.

### Group 1 – Commercial Use

#### **Main Issue:**

The rear buildings of the Nádasdy Castle have potential to host small businesses, start-ups, and training-related economic activities (e.g. hostel management, craft production, or co-working), but there is a lack of operational framework, coordination, and responsible management. Uncertainty around ownership, building status, and seasonal demand further complicate potential commercial functions.

#### **Framing Question:**

What entrepreneurial and training-based models can be implemented in the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings to support youth-led businesses and generate sustainable, year-round economic activity?

### Group 2 – Residential Use

#### **Main Issue:**

Although permanent residential conversion of the building is unlikely due to functional constraints, the idea of **temporary, short-term accommodation** (e.g. youth hostel, student lodging, intergenerational tourism) is relevant. The key challenge lies in ensuring this use is integrated with educational and community goals and remains viable outside the peak season.

#### **Framing Question:**

How can the space be used to provide flexible, seasonal accommodation options that also serve as practical learning environments for students and young adults?

### Group 3 – Community Use

#### **Main Issue:**

Sárvár lacks a dedicated, youth-friendly community space for informal learning, networking, creativity, and leisure. The castle's rear buildings offer a symbolic and physical opportunity for this,

but sustainable operation, year-round relevance, and intergenerational inclusion remain open challenges.

**Framing Question:**

*What kind of multifunctional community activities can be developed in the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings to attract and retain young people while also serving broader social needs?*

**Asking people (Step 2)**

*Every participant takes notes individually and will present results in the next step.*

*After defining the core issues and questions in Step 1, each participant was asked to reflect individually and gather input—either based on their own experience, expertise, or informal discussions with others—regarding the framing question of the group they were part of.*

*Participants took individual notes on **ideas, observations, and challenges**, which they later shared during the next group session (Step 3). Below is a synthesis of the types of insights collected per group during this phase:*

**Group 1 – Commercial Use**

**Framing Question:** *What entrepreneurial and training-based models can be implemented in the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings to support youth-led businesses and generate sustainable, year-round economic activity?*

**Individual insights included:**

- *Importance of combining commercial use with educational functions (e.g. student-managed hostel or café).*
- *Strong interest in youth-run ventures (e.g. local product shop, social media/influencer business).*
- *Need for external mentoring and support (e.g. Chamber of Commerce involvement).*
- *Suggestions for pop-up businesses in the summer season with low initial investment needs.*
- *Emphasis on digital infrastructure and visibility (e.g. online platforms, branding like “Nádasdy Kert”).*

**Group 2 – Residential Use**

**Framing Question:** *How can the space be used to provide flexible, seasonal accommodation options that also serve as practical learning environments for students and young adults?*

**Individual insights included:**

- *Hostel could operate in cooperation with the local tourism school, providing real-life training opportunities.*
- *Accommodation should target low-budget visitors (hikers, youth groups, etc.).*
- *Idea of modular, easily adjustable furnishing to accommodate different user groups.*
- *Interest in cross-generational visitors (e.g. senior groups off-season).*
- *Concerns over who would manage bookings, cleaning, maintenance, etc.*

**Group 3 – Community Use**

**Framing Question:** *What kind of multifunctional community activities can be developed in the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings to attract and retain young people while also serving broader social needs?*

**Individual insights included:**

- *Demand for spaces suitable for informal gatherings (e.g. birthday parties, e-sport tournaments, creative clubs).*
- *Multifunctionality is key: one room could serve as a co-working space during the day and an event space in the evening.*
- *Idea to connect with local artists and craftspeople to offer workshops (e.g. weaving, pottery).*
- *Emphasis on a community-run model to foster ownership and reduce operational costs.*
- *Some participants expressed concern about long-term commitment and capacity to manage programming.*

**Define common ground (step 3)**

*Participants present results of interviews to the group and cluster them (post-its). Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate picture of post-its. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.*

*Group creates persona. The needs-oriented statement is important because it becomes the POINT OF VIEW: "How could ... be developed/changed for ... so that .... is influenced/changed?"  
Collect posters afterwards.*

Following the individual reflections, participants shared their insights and observations in a joint plenary session. Their contributions were clustered on post-its around recurring themes such as **youth engagement, seasonality, entrepreneurship, education, and community life**. The group worked together to identify overlapping ideas and establish a shared understanding of priorities and opportunities.

A set of common needs and guiding principles emerged from the discussion:

- **Multifunctionality is essential:** The space should flexibly serve various purposes—education, leisure, entrepreneurship, accommodation—depending on the season and community needs.
- **Youth as active users and operators:** The vision focuses on young people not only as beneficiaries, but also as initiators and managers of activities (e.g. running a hostel or co-working space).
- **Seasonal rhythm must be embraced:** High activity is expected in spring and summer (e.g. festivals, pop-ups, tourist accommodation), while off-season use should rely more on community, education, and training programs.
- **Need for a central coordination model:** Concerns were raised regarding long-term maintenance, responsibility, and management structure—suggestions included a student cooperative or a hybrid community-business model.
- **Importance of visibility and identity:** A strong brand (e.g. "Nádasdy Kert") and presence on social media platforms could help attract both users and collaborators.
- **Inclusivity and intergenerational access:** Although youth retention is the main goal, several ideas proposed community-wide access, especially for seniors and families in off-peak times.

The group then worked together to formulate a **needs-based POINT OF VIEW statement**:

**"How could the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings be transformed into a flexible, youth-driven multifunctional space so that young people can find purpose, community, and opportunities in Sárvár year-round?"**

#### Find ideas (step 4)

Every participant writes down IDEAS to solve the problem on post-its. Participants present their ideas to the group and cluster them (post-its).

Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of post-its and ranking of ideas. Translate to English afterwards and take notes during the presentations.

**In this phase, participants individually wrote down concrete ideas on post-its to respond to the central point of view question:**

**“How could the Nádasdy Castle rear buildings be transformed into a flexible, youth-driven multifunctional space so that young people can find purpose, community, and opportunities in Sárvár year-round?”**

**After the individual idea generation, all participants presented their post-its to the group. The facilitator supported the clustering of ideas into thematic groups, followed by open discussion and prioritization.**

#### **Key Idea Clusters and Highlights:**

##### **● Youth Hostel & Learning Space**

- **Student-run hostel as part of tourism training programs.**
- **Dual-purpose accommodation: summer tourism and school-year training/elderly groups.**
- **Test-bed for youth entrepreneurship, involving budgeting, maintenance, and marketing tasks.**

##### **● Entrepreneurship & Innovation**

- **Info Hub / Co-working space with shared offices for young professionals.**
- **Incubator for student-led businesses (e.g. social media services, crafts, influencer marketing).**
- **Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce to provide mentoring and seed support.**

##### **● Community & Event Space**

- **Rentable rooms for birthday parties, community workshops, and informal gatherings.**
- **Outdoor event courtyard for seasonal activities (open-air cinema, markets, live music).**
- **Cultural venue (e.g. concerts, exhibitions, local art shows).**

##### **● Crafts & Local Identity**

- **Space for handicraft workshops (e.g. weaving, pottery, basketry).**
- **Creation of a Nádasdy Kert brand including a demonstration garden, spice/herb shop, and local product showroom.**

- **Blue trail hiking stamp station to attract eco-tourists.**

### ● **Intergenerational Use & Inclusion**

- **Programming for seniors in off-season (e.g. quiet retreats, wellness weekends).**
- **Shared use spaces to encourage interaction between youth and older generations.**

### **Discussion Highlights:**

- **Broad agreement that multifunctionality should be reflected both in space design and management.**
- **The concept of a student cooperative emerged as a promising governance model.**
- **Some concern was expressed about building limitations (e.g. insulation, accessibility).**
- **Participants emphasized that small wins and quick activation (e.g. temporary events) would help maintain momentum.**

### **Prioritization:**

**Although no formal voting was conducted, ideas that gained the strongest group support included:**

- **The student-run hostel + co-working + event space model.**
- **Development of the Nádasdy Kert brand.**
- **Launching a summer entrepreneurship pilot with student involvement.**

### **Prototyping (step 5)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

Based on the prioritized ideas, participants collaborated on sketching a **conceptual prototype** of the multifunctional youth-focused space at the Nádasdy Castle's rear buildings. The prototyping process involved small working groups focused on different aspects (space use, branding, operations, user groups), which were later integrated into a shared concept.

Participants created visual drafts and basic floor plan sketches, identifying functional zones (hostel rooms, community room, event courtyard, co-working area, gallery/workshop). The **Nádasdy Kert** name was used as a unifying brand for the space and activities.

The design process emphasized **flexibility, youth ownership, and seasonal adaptability**.

### **Pitching ideas, presentation and feedback (step 6)**

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail as well as objections. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

*At the end of the prototyping session, the integrated concept was pitched to the plenary. Key elements of the proposal included:*

- **Student-managed summer hostel**, doubling as practice site for the tourism school.
- A **co-working space** and **Info Hub** for young entrepreneurs and remote workers.
- An **event courtyard** and a **rentable community room** for workshops, birthday parties, and cultural programs.
- **Craft workshop space** and a **small gallery** to host exhibitions and artisan activities.
- The branding of all activities under the **"Nádasdy Kert"** umbrella, including local products and a demonstration herb garden.

#### **Feedback and discussion included:**

- *Enthusiasm for the combination of education, business, and leisure in a heritage setting.*
- *Positive reactions to the idea of using the space as a **real-life learning environment**.*
- *Questions about the **building's current technical condition** and regulatory limitations.*
- *Suggestions to **involve the local tourism office** and **civil society organizations** in the follow-up phase.*

### **Integrating feedback (step 7)**

*Take pictures during the work process if participants agree.*

After the plenary feedback session, participants regrouped to refine their prototype by addressing the most critical concerns:

- Clarified the **seasonal operation plan**: youth-led intensive use in summer, community-led events in off-season.

- Agreed that the **governance model** needs to be flexible – combining educational institutions, city support, and community actors.
- Added details to the **financial sustainability aspect**, including suggestions like event rental income, local partnerships, and EU project opportunities.

Updates were made to the concept visuals, and key refinements were added to the summary poster.

### Testing the prototype (step 8)

*Every group presents their prototype to the plenary.*

*Please make sure to document the discussions in detail. Integrate pictures of the prototype.*

*In a final round, the refined prototype was presented again to all participants. They were invited to reflect on how the concept responds to the original challenge and vision.*

*The group confirmed that the prototype:*

- *Reflects the needs and interests of local youth.*
- *Has strong potential for **community impact** and **economic viability**.*
- *Could be developed in **phases**, starting with temporary use and gradually scaling up.*

**Next steps** proposed included:

- *Mapping out stakeholders for a pilot program.*
- *Initiating talks with the tourism school and city for management roles.*
- *Exploring funding and support schemes for a test season in 2026.*

**Interreg  
Danube Region**



Co-funded by  
the European Union



RurALL

# Participatory design

MOBA HOUSING SCE

**"In reality, architecture has become too important to be left to architects. Therefore all barriers between builders and users must be abolished, so that building and using become two different parts of the same planning process."**

**- Giancarlo De Carlo, Architecture and Participation**

# Participatory design - Shareholders

Engaging all the project shareholders:

- Owner of the building
- Future users of the building
- Local government
- Local community and immediate neighborhood
- Experts



# Participatory design phases

1. Questionnaire and discussion about what the renovation of the building could bring to the community - defining the vision, needs of the community and future users
2. Defining the project (building) programme and content
3. Defining the functional scheme of the building - relationship between different space zones
4. Matching the functional scheme with the actual space of the existing building
5. Finalization of Concept design

# Baupiloten method

Participatory design approach developed by *Baupiloten*, a Berlin-based architectural group affiliated with the Technical University of Berlin.

Method sets out to learn what kind of vision users have for the new building or renovation.

The process engages users in multiple stages to ensure the final design truly reflects their needs and aspirations.

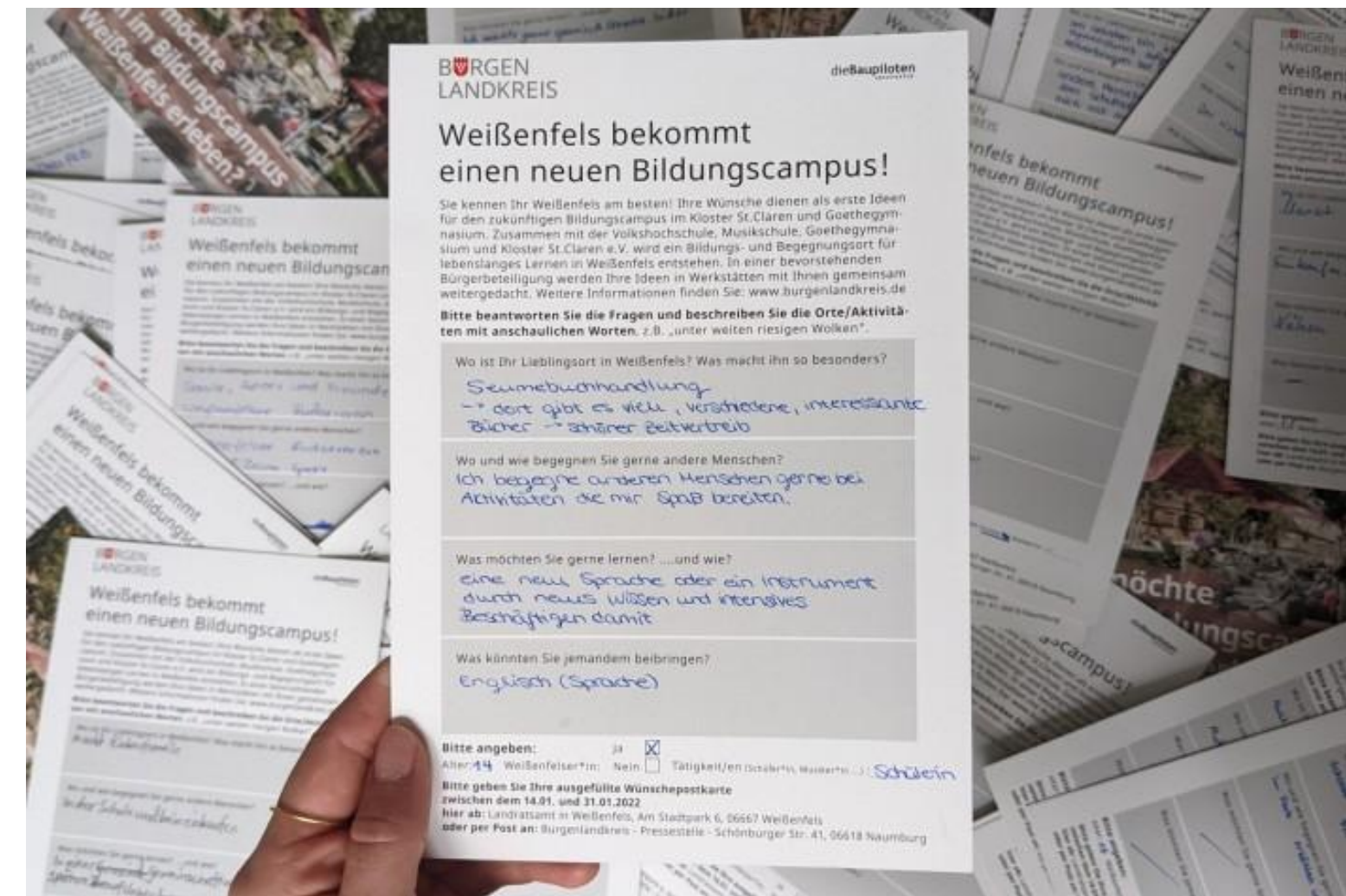


# 1st Stage "Dreaming"

By emphasizing personal experiences and emotions, this stage ensures that the final design resonates with users on a deeper level.

To start the process, simple methods can be used:

- Survey, to gauge impressions and wishes
- Addressing people in situ spontaneously, to write their ideas and suggestions on "wish postcards"
- They are also invited to participate in further workshops and other activities.



- With smaller number of participants, they can also translate these emotions and visions into drawings or stories. They can also create collages, share photos or even act out scenarios in role-playing activities.

### **Examples of questions:**

"Can you recall a space where you felt safe and happy? What did it look, sound, or feel like?"

"Tell us about a time you felt inspired in a room or building. What made it special?"

"Imagine you are entering a space designed for relaxation. What do you do first?"

# 2nd Stage "Imagining"

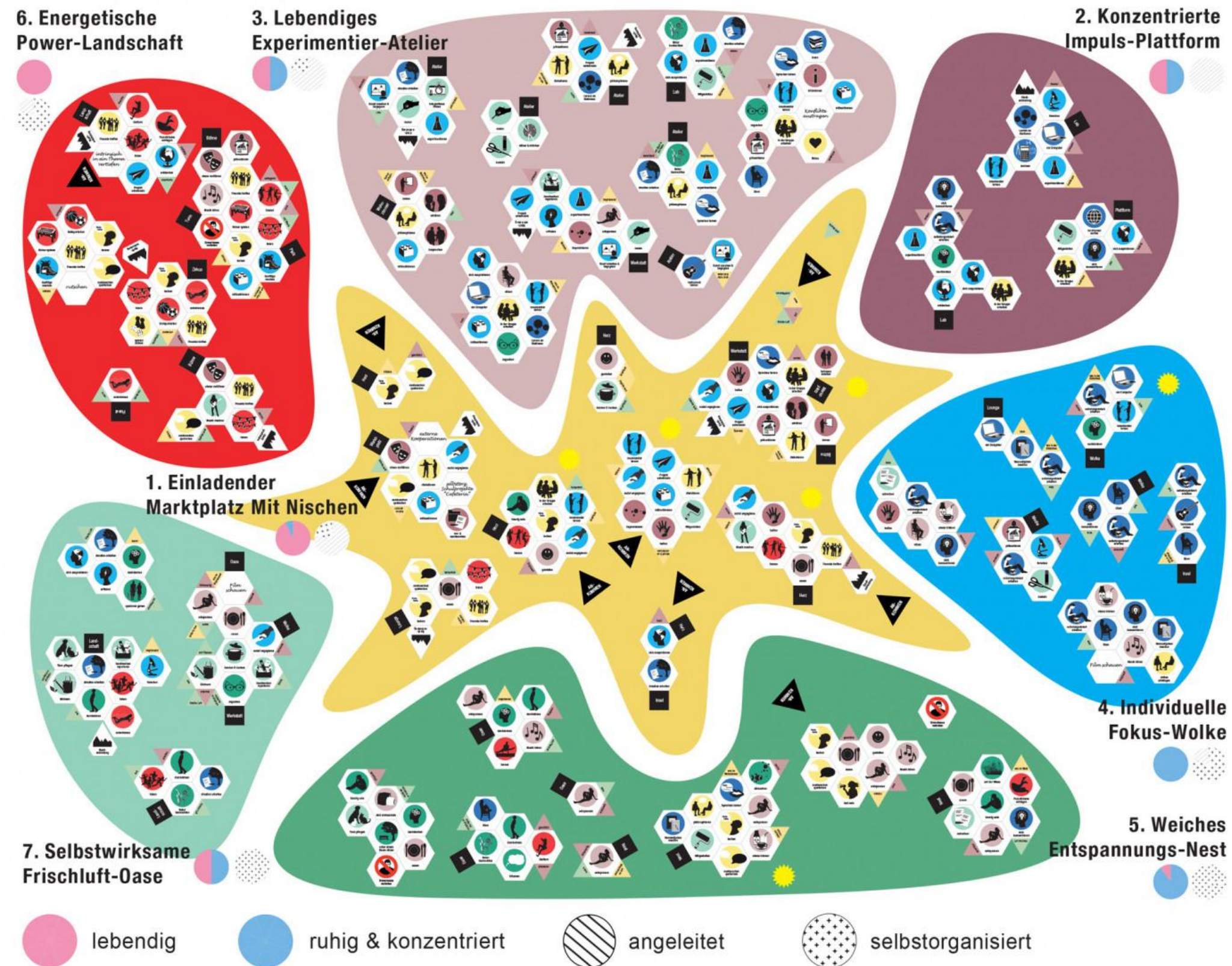
Second stage focuses on translating users dreams into design concepts. This phase is about generating ideas, experimenting with spatial possibilities, and starting to shape a vision for the final space.

Methods:

- **Future Scenarios** - Participants imagine a day in the life of someone using the space
- **Sketching & Spatial Diagrams** - Participants create quick hand-drawn sketches of what their ideal space might look like. These can include bubble diagrams (to define space relationships) or loose floor plans



- **Physical Model Making** - Users build miniature versions of their ideal spaces using simple materials.
- **Material & Atmosphere Exploration** - Users experiment with different materials (wood, concrete, fabric, glass) to understand their sensory impact.



# 3rd Stage "Experimenting"

This phase ensures that the design is functional, comfortable, and aligned with users' needs before finalizing architectural plans.

Methods:

- **Building models** in small and full scale - Participants can experience the space to assess proportions, accessibility, and usability
- **Walkthroughs & Virtual Reality Simulations** - Users explore 3d digital models, They can also use VR headsets. Adjustments are made based on user feedback.



- **Feedback Loops** - The design is continuously improved through multiple rounds of testing and feedback from the participants

- **Material Testing** - Users test different materials, soundscapes, and lighting conditions to ensure the space is comfortable and engaging.



# 4th Stage "Building & Experiencing"

In this stage space is physically constructed and then evaluated in real-world use.

Methods:

- **Participatory Construction & Finishing Touches** - Users contribute to painting walls, assembling furniture, or installing decorative elements that personalize the space.
- **Real-World Testing & Post-Occupancy Evaluation** - Creating Surveys & Interviews and comparing Expected vs. Actual Use
- **Adaptation & Fine-Tuning** - Based on post-occupancy feedback, small adjustments can be made to optimize the space.
- **Knowledge Sharing**



## Community Engagement Evaluation Sheet for Participants

Dear participant of the workshop(s), please take a moment to complete this short questionnaire to help us evaluate and improve our work. Your responses are completely anonymous. For each question, please select the one answer that best applies. Thank you for your time and contribution!

**Activity Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_

### How did you learn about this workshop?

- Social media  Personal invitation  Email/newsletter  Community organization  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### How well were the project's and workshop's goals explained to you?

- Not at all clear  Slightly clear  Somewhat clear  Clear  Very clear

### Did you have the opportunity to share your ideas and participate in brainstorming?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

### Did you feel encouraged to give feedback on the ideas being tested?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

### Did you feel your feedback was heard and acted upon?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

### Did you feel your needs were considered in the workshop?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

### Did you feel included and represented in the workshop?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

### To what extent did you feel your contributions influenced the outcomes?

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

**To what extent do you think the dimensions of sustainability, beauty, and inclusivity were considered in the workshop?**

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

**Were you inspired by the ideas and solutions generated during the workshop?**

- Not at all  A little  Somewhat  Quite a bit  Very much

**In your view, has this project the potential for a positive impact in the community?**

- None  Minor  Some  Significant  Transformative

**What is your age group?**

- under 18 years old  
 18-24 years old  
 25-34 years old  
 35-44 years old  
 45-54 years old  
 55-64 years old  
 65 or older

**Which gender do you identify with?**

- Female  Male  Other

**How did you participate in the workshop?**

- As a local resident  As a representative of an organization  As a representative of a business  As a representative of a public institution  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please share any thoughts on what you enjoyed or what could be improved.**

---

---

---

---

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

---

---

---

---