



THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society



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THETRIS PROJECT

COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES



WP 3.3.2

PP9: Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, Raziskovalna postaja v Novi Gorici – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Research Station Nova Gorica

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To reach the objectives of the project *THETRIS – Thematic Transnational church Route development with the Involvement of local Society* (Programme Central Europe; 2012-2014) the following collactions of good practice focused on the Goriška statistical region has been developed in accordance with the *Joint methodology of regional and transnational analysis* (LAMORO Local Development Agency (PP6)) by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts - Research Station Nova Gorica (Znanstveno-raziskovalna postaja Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti – Raziskovalna postaja v Novi Gorici).



GRID FOR OUTPUT 3.3.2 - GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION

Title of the Good Practice: **THE PILGRIMAGE AND SPIRITUAL CENTRE OF SVETA GORA – THE HOLLY MOUNTAIN – PILLAR ‘ACCESSIBILITY’**

Area Identification Information: Goriška region (Slovenia)

Area: 2,325 km²

Population: 119,236 inhabitants (2012)

Number of churches: 1

Detailed description of the Good Practice (please provide details also on: stakeholders involved, target groups, main and specific goals of the Good Practice, elements of sustainability)

Nowadays on the ridge of the mountain Sveta Gora (The Holly Mountain), where the Vipava and Soča Valleys meet and where the Goriška Plain joins the Friuli Plain, an extended pilgrimage, spiritual and tourist centre is situated. With an altitude of 682 m a. s. l., it offers also a magnificent view of the Julian Alps, the Trnovo Forest, the Karst and the countryside leading to the sea.

In this peaceful and quiet place, there are a magnificent pilgrimage basilica, a monastery of Franciscan friars, a convent of Sisters of Charity of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Marian Museum, the Museum of the First World War, but also a pilgrimage home (at the moment it is being renovated) and a spiritual and educational centre Tau. There is also a tourist offer: a restaurant and a souvenir shop.

The main and the specific goals of the Good practice: The main goal of the good practice is to provide not only a religious but also a spiritual and educational support to various kinds of individuals, faithful or not. Besides, Sveta Gora is also a well-known tourist destination of the Goriška region.

The stakeholders involved are Franciscan friars, Sisters of Charity of Saint Francis of Assisi, the regional museum Goriški muzej, pilgrimages, tourists, etc.

The target groups are religious communities, individuals needing spiritual and psychological support, tourists, pilgrims, etc.

Elements of sustainability: The pilgrimage, spiritual and tourist centre of Sveta Gora with its various offers helps to preserve a very rich and ancient sacral cultural heritage.



Actions implemented

On Sveta Gora the pilgrimage centre has been supplemented with a special spiritual and educational centre providing psychotherapy for couples and families and also special programs for kids and young people, and is led by Sisters of Charity of Saint Francis of Assisi. There anyone can find support in difficult moments of one's life, yet Sveta Gora is also a place where kids and young people can play, amuse, keep company with peers, etc.

Moreover, Sveta Gora is also a tourist destination where one can visit the Marian Museum, the Museum of the First World War, a souvenir shop, a restaurant, etc. In the Marian Museum a visitor can see ex-votos, remains of the basilica destroyed during the First World War, devotional pictures, photographs, documents, old souvenirs etc. In the museum there is also a special commemorative room dedicated to a seer Uršula Ferligoj. There is also a Museum of the First World War, because the mountain of Sveta Gora, as a strategic place, had been hardly involved in the fighting during the above-mentioned war. There are also cultural events such as concerts, etc.

Achieved results

The Tau centre, which is named after the cross of Saint Francis of Assisi, a sign of protection and appurtenance, offers psychotherapy performed by Sisters of Charity. The spiritual assistance and support is given to families, couples and individuals, either faithful or not. Moreover, the centre offers special programs for kids and young people. In the centre a visitor can find a relaxing place, but also a place full of kids' joy and laugh.

Furthermore, Sveta Gora is also a pilgrimage and tourist centre visited every year by people from various parts of the world, but mainly by religious communities and tourist groups from nearby countries.

Timing

The pilgrimage centre of Sveta Gora is very ancient and dates back to the 16th century. It is believed that in 1539 the Virgin Mary appeared to a poor girl Urška Ferligoj from Grgar, a small village situated close upon the mountain.

In the last decades and especially in the recent years, the pilgrimage centre has been enriched with spiritual and tourist contents. In 1996, there was founded the museum. In 2002, the Tau centre was established as a spiritual and educational centre. At the moment, the friars of Sveta Gora are striving for renovation of the ancient pilgrimage house that is actually in a very bad condition.



Added value at a local level

On the ridge of the mountain Sveta Gora, there is situated a well-known and ancient pilgrimage centre of the Goriška region, i.e. a large area in general. There is also an important educational and spiritual centre of the region. The visitors of the Tau centre come mainly from Slovenia and Italy.

The basilica of Sveta Gora and the caves from the First World War are also very important tourist destinations because of the historical value of the mountain attracting more and more tourists from the Central European area. There is an ancient pilgrimage tradition, however, the mountain also played an important role in the fighting during the First World War.

Are there elements of transferability at a transnational level?

Sveta Gora offers a good practice of how a pilgrimage centre can be not only a religious but also an important spiritual and tourist centre of a large territory. All the activities and offers (Tau centre, museums, the monastery and the convent, tourist offers such as a souvenir shop and a restaurant, etc.) mentioned above provide for preservation of the rich and ancient cultural heritage of Sveta Gora.

Contact details (please provide contact details of a reference person for the Good Practice)

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GRID FOR OUTPUT 3.3.2 - GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION

Title of the Good Practice: RENOVATION OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH COMPLEX OF SAINT VALENTINE ON THE MOUNTAIN SABOTIN – PILLAR 'CHURCHES AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES'

Area Identification Information: Goriška region (Slovenia)

Area: 2,325 km²

Population: 119,236 inhabitants (2012)

Number of churches: 1

Detailed description of the Good Practice (please provide details also on: stakeholders involved, target groups, main and specific goals of the Good Practice, elements of sustainability)

To the southeast of the Sabotin Mountain's ridge, there is a 535m high peak called Saint Valentine, where the reconstructed remains of a church complex can be seen. On the picturesque ridge of the mountain Sabotin (660 m a.s.l), where the boundary line between Slovenia and Italy lies, the basis and some walls of the medieval church of Saint Valentine were excavated. The church with a monastery was in use until the end of the 18 century, when it was abandoned. The ruins were totally destroyed during the First World War battles. Near the church, caverns and shelters were built. In 1999, Slovenian and Italian archaeologists started to excavate and research the ruins of the church and the monastery of Saint Valentine as well as the caverns and trenches lying on the boundary line between Slovenia and Italy. In the years 1999 and 2000, the ruins of the church were consolidated and the church was also partly restored. Additionally, there an open-air museum and the Sabotin Peace Park (development of joint tourist products on the mountain) were set up.

The main and the specific goals of the Good practice: The main goal of the good practice was to excavate, research and preserve an important sacral complex of the Goriška region, which was almost totally destroyed. However, the church was partly rebuilt and consecrated again.

The stakeholders involved were Italian and Slovenian archaeologists, historians of art and other experts of the following institutions: Centro di ricerche archeologiche e storiche del Goriziano (Gorizia, Italy), regional museum Goriški muzej (Nova Gorica, Slovenia) and the Institute for the protection of the cultural heritage of Slovenia - Nova Gorica Regional office.

The target groups are visitors and excursionists from both sides of the boundary line.

Elements of sustainability: The ruins of the church were not only excavated and researched but also rebuilt and consecrated again, which means that the sacral building regained its important



Actions implemented

In 1999, Slovenian and Italian archaeologists of the research centre Centro di ricerche archeologiche e storiche del Goriziano, the regional museum Goriški muzej and the Institute for the protection of the cultural heritage of Slovenia - Nova Gorica Regional office started with the archaeological excavation of the ruins lying on the Italian and Slovenian territory, thanks to the financial support of the programme PHARE CBC Slovenia-Italy 1994-1999 (project *Gorica in Goriška – stičišče narodov in kultur*). Some excavations had been done previously by the Centro di ricerche archeologiche e storiche del Goriziano. The archaeologists discovered ground plan of the original church. In 1999 and 2000, the same of the church's walls were restored and the consolidation works of the ruins were performed. This resulted in a presentation of the ground plan of the original church, of fortified walls of the church and of the bell tower as well as in reconstruction of the platform in front of the church. In addition, there the altar and the portal of the sacristy were also rebuilt.

Furthermore, archaeologists also excavated the ruins of the caverns and trenches from the First World War lying in the immediate vicinity of the sacral buildings.

Achieved results

Thanks to the above-mentioned institutions, the history and the architectural development of the sacral complex of Saint Valentine were researched and discovered. The new findings were presented to the public on an exhibition, dedicated to the historical development of the sacral buildings, and set up on the balcony of the cathedral of Gorizia in April 1996.

Moreover, the church of Saint Valentine was partly rebuilt and, with the rests from the First World War, it represents an open-air museum, always accessible to visitors and excursionists of the mountain Sabotin. Throughout the entire hill there are several caverns through which a visitor can walk today from one side of the mountain to the other. There are also celebrated masses on some special occasions.

Timing

The extensive research work performed on the ruins of the church of Saint Valentine was started in 1999 and the renovation and presentation of the ruins finished in 2000. Some excavations had been done previously. The project Sabotino - The Peace Park Cross-border tourism within reach starts in the 2005 and finished in the 2007 (programme Interreg III A Slovenia-Italy 2000-2006).

Added value at a local level

On the mountain Sabotin, the Sabotin Peace Park was set-up thanks to the cross-border collaboration (programme Interreg IIIA Slovenia-Italia 2000-2006). There are footpaths and



cycle routes leading to the top of the mountain as well as the above-mentioned open-air museum. Today the mountain Sabotin, commonly known for the battles during the First World War, with its Peace Park, tries to remind visitors about the absurdity of wars and to foster the coexistence of nations. Beside a marvellous view, visitors are offered an insight into the remnants of the past, going back to hermits from the Middle Ages, the church of Saint Valentine and remains of the First World War. Owing to its historical and natural sights, the mountain Sabotin is an important trip destination of the Goriška region.

Are there elements of transferability at a transnational level?

The good practice represents an example of a very successful renovation of some ruins of a medieval sacral complex, comprising excavations, research work, a partial reconstruction of the church, the inclusion of the sacral building into the open-air museum and its promotion as a part of the Sabotin Peace Park.

The good practice also shows how necessary is a cross-border collaboration for the realization of this project. In fact, the sacral buildings lie on a territory that once was a strategic place of the border line between Slovenia and Italy.

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GRID FOR OUTPUT 3.3.2 - GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION

Title of the Good Practice - POVEZOVALNA POT TREH SVETIŠČ – THE LINKING ROAD OF THE THREE SANCTUARIES – PILLAR 'COMPETITIVENESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP'

Area Identification Information: Goriška region (Slovenia)

Area: 2,325 km²

Population: 119,236 inhabitants (2012)

Number of churches: 3

Detailed description of the Good Practice (please provide details also on: stakeholders involved, target groups, main and specific goals of the Good Practice, elements of sustainability)

Mt. Sveta Gora, in the edge of the Banjšice Plateau, Marijino Celje, on the mountain ridge of Kanalski Kolovrat, and the sanctuary of Castelmonte/Stara Gora near Cividale del Friuli/Čedad, three well-known and much frequented sanctuaries, have been linked up by the Linking road of the three sanctuaries forming thus a unique triangle of three churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

The main and the specific goals of the Good practice: The main goals were the connection of the sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin Mary and a uniform and integral presentation of the historical thematic road with appropriate information about the historical and cultural tradition, people, values and the tourist offers of the area. Furthermore, the other goals were as follows: historical research about the three sanctuaries, connections between them and the interesting monuments along the linking road and the realization of the linking road, arrangement of works on the linking road, such as cleaning and graveling, drawing-up of a tourist map and direction signs, info signs and boards, arrangement of benches on resting places, reinforcement of the sociability among members of the three communities involved and, last but not least, promotion of the connections.

The stakeholders involved were the Municipality of Nova Gorica (Slovenia), the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči (Slovenia), The Municipality of Prepotto/Prapotno (Italy), priests of the sanctuaries, the local and religious communities, private enterprises and tourists.

The target groups were: local communities, especially the inhabitants of the demographically threatened area of the Idrija Valley, religious communities, private enterprises and tourists.

Elements of sustainability: The project has increased religious tourism (first of all, promoting a pilgrimage which is advisable to take part on foot), which helps to preserve the sacral cultural heritage of the area near the border. Moreover, the municipalities involved in the project have maintained the connections and some tradesmen and innkeepers were invited to sign the letter of intent for maintenance of the connections. The project has got a lot of private support. The partners of the project have been pleasantly upheld with willingness of local inhabitants, their kindness and creativeness and by the support given to the project, all these contributing to the sustainability of the linking road.



Actions implemented

The project partners have arranged the works on the road of the three sanctuaries (cleaning and graveling of paths, setting up the direction and info signs and boards, historical research of the cultural heritage of the sanctuaries, final elaboration of the road plan and valorization of the area). The partners have also promoted the linking road at fairs in Italy (Padua) and Slovenia (Celje) and produced the promotion material (web page, brochures, tourist maps).

Achieved results

The project The linking road of the three sanctuaries (programme PHARE cross-border cooperation Slovenia-Italy 1994-2003) emphasizes the role of the road that links together the above-mentioned sanctuaries (the road, the footpath, the cycle track). Moreover, in the project the history of the sanctuaries was explored and a special excursion map for visitors and travellers was elaborated. The road was marked with special signs directing travellers while travelling, with boards describing remarkable nesses placed along the way and with resting places for trippers. During the project, some presentations of the project and meetings with the inhabitants of the area were organized. The project has also increased the cross-border collaboration between municipalities and other institutions as well as their inhabitants.

Timing The project The linking road of the three sanctuaries started in October 2001 and finished in October 2002. During this period all the mentioned activities were realized.

Added value at a local level

The project has stimulated and accelerated an active and cross-border collaboration of some Slovenian and Italian municipalities and other institutions, being quite an innovative approach in the beginning of the third millennium. The project has made possible more intense relations between the inhabitants of the Slovenian and Italian villages and has increased the number of visitors, tourists, etc. on the border area, stimulating new tourist offers and other actions in the area.

The main factors contributing to the success of the project were the successful cooperation of partners - municipalities' structures, readiness of local inhabitants to take part in actions, tourist arrangements, well-chosen experts, etc.

Are there elements of transferability at a transnational level?

The project has successfully linked some sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin Mary that are placed on the border area between Slovenia and Italy, which in the past was a uniform historical region with a common cultural and historical heritage as well as with a common sense of belonging. The project has contributed to overcoming this division that has strongly marked the life of the people living on the border area in the second half of the century. Last but not least, the project contributes to the promotion of collaboration between the municipalities of Slovenia and Italy.

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