

CULTURAL VILLAGE of EUROPE

Newsletter November 2008

What did they tell the Porrúans?

The view on the world from Porrúa

The mayor conference in Porrúa

May 2008

In 2008 Cultural Village of Europe is Porrúa. The Village wanted to organise the 'May conference' in another way as usual. Porrúa asked the guest-villages to tell about their villages to the Porrúan people. To do so in different workshops about those things that will be interesting for the community of Porrúa. About 20% of the Porrúans came to these workshops. Eye witnesses in Porrúa noted what they heard.

Rehabilitation of an old building as a social centre in Aldeburgh

by Silvia Sarrion

Aldeburgh's workshop about rehabilitation of an old building into a social centre took place in Porrúa Casino (which is also a social centre). There were three speakers and 14 participants.

They explained to us how an old electric centre was abandoned, and their village formed a committee to obtain the transfer of it to be able to do works in it and to transform it into a place to meet, a social centre.

Once they obtained the transfer, the most difficult task was to obtain financing to restore it. They found it with State lottery, private gifts and personal work of people that couldn't give money.

After many efforts, they could finish the works that had lasted three years. They have shown us pictures of the building before, during and after the works, and how it is now in full operation.

After their explanation, people of Porrúa asked some questions and exchanged opinions. Most of them were people from the social centre "Casino of Porrúa".

1. They asked about financing, they knew then that in United Kingdom you can take part of the national lottery benefits if you present a well founded project. In that case, as it wasn't enough they had to find complementary supports.
2. They asked details about the use of the building. They explained that in the first floor they have darts and billiards and it is used for particular festivals and celebrations. This room is rented and they use the money for the building maintenance.
3. They asked also if they had youth participation and the answer was that not specially.
4. People from Porrúa explained that in our village many public works had been done by emigrants, we call them Indianos. These are people that have made fortune in other countries and help their hometowns. We have many examples in Porrúa in the two last centuries.
5. Punctually, Porrúa people explained how with neighbours' economical inputs, we could restore the church and make the funeral home.

A taxi for one euro in Kreiz Breizh and a selling cooperative and ecological bakery in Mellionnec

By Mari Cris Fernandez

These two workshops took place in Porrúa council house, the meeting point of the popular assembly.

A territorial problem which needed to be solved: Kreiz Breizh territory is about 50 kms long in diagonal, with very remote villages and isolated houses. There is an important problem of transport for young people, unemployed people, old people and people with disabilities.

A solution: the TRAD system, started off by creating a centre to control the bookings and reservations and also by reaching an agreement with the local taxis. The user has to pay 1€uro for every journey and the community will pay the difference. The costs are covered by the transport taxes. It is run on a half time timetable, the times aren't fixed and the taxi can be shared with other users of the system..

The results: 700 people use this service every month, the distance travelled average is 11.000 km for this period. Half of the users are more than 60 years old, and 28% are young people. As the fraud is less than 20%, control is not profitable. All the villages use this service. The clients' destination is mostly Ros-trenen (the capital), and 25% is from one village to another (for reasons such as visiting families, practising hobbies...).

The cost for the community for this taxi service is € 76.300,-. Evaluation: it's important to make an information campaign to maintain the service. It's also important to work with the sector not only before starting the project, to avoid discrepancies or disagreements and to involve them continuously. It's necessary to adapt the service to the demand, so the demand has to be studied previously.

Ten years ago, there were four shops in Mellionnec. But they disappeared. Then, three individuals started to work with bio products. The baker thought his hop could sell the bio products of all of them. They organized to sell all their products together, taking turns to man the shop. They started with their own products but they enlarged the offer with products of other bio producers. The operating regime is a selling cooperative. Now, the previous shops are closed due to factors such as retirement and the cooperative continues to function with new plans like placing orders in advance. The idea was to make something new with a cooperative structure and they are now the only shop in the area but working successfully on a cooperative basis.

Rehabilitation of historical heritage in Kilingi Nomme

By Marta Elola

This workshop started at 9.45 in the morning, we were twelve people most of them in the trade of construction.

We could choose between two subjects, one was about rehabilitation of historical heritage and the other was a presentation of the village through old photos. We decided that we wanted to see both even if they had to be shorter.

We started then with the rehabilitation. It must be borne in mind that it's a village highly ravaged by conflicts. The loss of identity is a milestone in Kilingi Nomme history. In this case, they were trying to recover a monument to the Unknown Soldier that had been built after the German occupation and destroyed during the Russian occupation. They only had photos and a bronze sword. Two years ago they hired a sculptor. Following the guidelines of people who had seen the statue and helped by the photos, she made a replica of it with the real old sword.



They have been looking for financing to be able to put it in its place on an according pedestal. After many years, the statue is now back to the place it occupied, maintaining its meaning. It is not only as an historical memory but also the pride of people who have fight to recover symbols that had been stolen. The statue has been inaugurated on June the 24th 2008. After this, we have seen how the village changed in the last centuries. By viewing photos and listening to the speakers we tried to understand how the village had lost all its old buildings through warfare, natural disasters, and fires (they have mostly a wooden architecture). As a conclusion we can say that it has been a very participative workshop, thanks to the translator. People had many questions, most of all those who had already been in Kilingi Nomme and were interested in all the changes they saw.

Photo: Kärt

Chess workshop in the school

A successful experiment



In May the 10th, a meeting was held in Porrúa g between chess experts from Ströbeck and 17 children aged from six to twelve.

Previously, the children had had chess lessons with Miguel Angel Armas, a local chess teacher for two months in accordance to Llacin association project.

First of all, the German experts wanted to find out the level the children had, so they asked them to place the chess pieces on the chessboard and to start playing.

Then, they put an original magnetic chessboard on the blackboard and started a play explaining their moves.

Children listened, participated, and were very interested thanks to Gildo quick and effortless translations. At the end of the workshop everyone was treated to a selection of wonderful German sweets which further sweetened the chess experience! They also donated the magnetic chessboard to the local school.

In my opinion, the most important result of this workshop was not the success it had but that it helped to promote the chess hobby.

Youth and employment in Pergine Valdarno

By Julio Tamés

This workshop took place in the school, there were about twenty persons. The Pergine delegation talked about their work with young people. The delegations of Denmark, France, Czech Republic and Spain took part in the debate.

The actions of the municipality and the associations start by thinking that youth shouldn't leave their villages. They have a youth centre where young people meet and do their hobbies such as theatre, music, sport. Each village has a centre for these activities. Each autumn they meet with youth to organize entertainment activities from September to July. Furthermore, the municipality employs specially trained experts who are experienced in running activities for youth.

Two specific programmes are those of theatre and sport. The third program is titled "how to find a job in villages". Thirty young people are working on it; it's a research in the local area. They started explaining how to make an investigation. Youth prepare an interview for 15 people of the village about their future. Some of the typical questions are:

Do young people stay in the villages or do they leave? What do

you want to do in the future? Are you going to have success? In Pergine? In Italy? In Europe? What kind of business do you want to be involved in? Will you live with your family? Is it difficult to find a good job?

And regarding the employment situation for young people:

Where do they work? Some of them have a part time job in the service sector. They admire the older generation because they have developed rural tourism. There is employment crisis in factories and very few possibilities of working in the industrial sector. Villages can benefit from learning from one another and it's a good development way for the villages to meet with young people.

Debate and questions:

There have been several questions after the Italian explanation. *Did you have to pressure the young people to take part in the programmes?*

You have to force them a little, and then they start passing the message to others. It's important to adapt to youth interests and involve all the collectives.



The people from Pergine Valdarno explain the project with the youth.

Is there any vocational training or specialising?

There are professional courses with professional guidance.
There are also contacts between enterprises and schools.

And at the end participants made the following suggestions.

School failure and its monitoring (Tommerup),
The long time we take to see the importance in getting specialized in formation (Porrúa)
You have to study what you like not to force the decision (Mellionec),
The reason to live in a village can just be because you feel good in it (Porrúa),

There are not enough young people and jobs are not appetizing (Tommerup),
There are also transport problems, moving is not profitable (Bystré),
It's necessary to analyse children potential and skill in workshops with artists to help them with their career advice (Svojanov),
we need part time jobs to complete activity and we need also to develop agro tourism and cooperatives: young people who get associated to offer services (babysitting, extracurricular activities, special needs..) (Pergine)

Experiences with tourism Wijk aan Zee, Paxos and Palkonya

By Maria Jose Piñera

This workshop took place in the library of the new Llacín building. 4 speakers and 15 participants. It's interesting to point out that small local tourism businessmen have participated in this workshop (country houses, apartments and hotel owners)

Wijk aan Zee

Wijk aan Zee is located on the northern sea coast, in Beverwijk municipality and it has 2200 inhabitants. The village showed a presentation about entrepreneurship in the village. And that means mainly tourism. Tourism has been an economical resource for a long time. They have the largest beach of the Dutch coast (good for surfing and sailing). It is also surrounded by dunes and forests with cycling and walking routes forbidden for motor vehicles.

It's an ideal place for family tourism, people come looking for peace and tranquillity and contact with nature, but more and more you can see young people coming to practice sports or just to enjoy outdoor activities. In Wijk aan Zee you can find both: calm and animation, tourists have many leisure possibilities.

Even though this is reflected in the village economy (most of its business and infrastructures are adapted to the touristy sector), Wijk aan Zee still maintains its traditional lifestyle. You can see a sense of traditional community, manifested in the ability of people to join and organize several kinds of public and cultural events.

Paxos

Paxos is one of the smallest islands in the Ionic sea. Located on the West coast of Greece and has 2 300 inhabitants. There is no airport; it can only be reached by sea, using boats or the water plain. That's why it has been protected for touristy overcrowding. It's just overcrowded the peak summer months.

Tourism is now the main source of incomes for the island. Previously, the inhabitants used to work in agriculture (wine and oil), fishing, farming, but now they exclusively work for the tourist market. Most of them work during the summer and enjoy their calm island during the rest of the year.

The way of marketing the tourist product is different. Tour operators are the agents that sell the complete tourist package

holidays to the visitors. The access to the island may be a problem when the Tour operators claim all boat capacity. The tourist comes and settles in during the summer season but the contact with people is minimal and totally impersonal. They are greeted, put up in their accommodation but then nobody achieves to connect with them. The visitor becomes a typical "tourist" instead of the travelling guest he should be. Of course, it is not always like this but most of the villas owners see their customers the day they arrive and the day they leave, they don't exchange cultural and personal aspects. There should be a closer tourism, not so commercial. Visitors don't benefit from all the island has to offer. Paxos has a family tourism coming from Italy and United Kingdom principally, but now you can see more and more families coming from the Northern part of Europe. With Cultural Village of Europe in 2004, the islanders felt happy to host people in their houses, they enjoyed having guests again, people they could make contact with, people to feel close to, and not just tourists.

Palkonya

Palkonya (370 inhabitants) is situated in the Baranya region. This is considerably different to the other two villages. Its principal economic resources are farming and agriculture. Wine cultivation is the key resource for the families.

The cellars are the main tourist attraction. They are situated in 53 basements in a peculiar part of the village. There has started the wine route, where the visitors can taste and experience the extensive wine culture.

In Palkonya, they don't have accommodation for tourists yet, like in other villages where tourism is already consolidated. Tourism in the south of Hungary is new and it is starting with a rural tourism form. We call it agro tourism.

People from Palkonya are discovering that the world of wine offers more possibilities to visitors, so they open their houses to host them; they give them the possibility of sharing with them direct experiences about wine cultivation, elaboration process, and finally wine tasting.

Works and actions for village's development in Kirchheim

By German Romano

This workshop took place in the multipurpose room of the new Lacin building. There were two speakers and 23 participants.

Kirchheim is a village with 700 inhabitants and an important tradition of community life. They have many associations with many members and this community spirit passes from generation to generation. Meetings are frequent, for example evenings, to exchange ideas and to tie with extern moderators helping and encouraging.

The Church and government are actively involved with the children youth and women. The government has given an endowment to promote family work.

They participate in Cultural Village of Europe and say that it is one of their most important achievements. They also participate in the Local Agenda 21 programme.

They have a supermarket which is run by these associations and it is used as a meeting point for the neighbours. There is also the gas station, the lottery, the post office, which have been created thanks to the village work. Their latest project is to encourage people to ride bicycles in the village.

They are starting to focus their attention on natural products, because they have seen that there is an important demand for that kind of products, for example cheeses, pear beverages and other natural products of the area.

Debate, questions:

What does the government do to help families?

Family support, it's continually being debate amongst the politician over who will give more. They have doubts if women should stay at home or if a structure for babysitting should be created.

How important is agriculture and farming?

There are few small producers because at 15 minutes there are towns with big industries.

Is there any project to change the main road crossing the village?

No, but they have gardens and the church to be used as meeting points

Do they have problems of young people exodus? And what to they do to prevent it?

They try to foster a sense of stability in the village; that means that everyone is important, that's why associations are a strategy to achieve that goal. They also organise a festival for young people every year.

What projects do they have for 2010? Are they tired with so many projects?

In 2010 they will be the headquarters of Cultural Village of Europe.

They are just a little tired with so many projects.

What started before associations or association's necessity?

Associations are a tradition in the village.

What about the local Agenda 21 you talked before? What kind of subventions did you ask for?

It's a regional local agenda 21 and we didn't ask for any subvention, their support comes from projects.

COLOPHON

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