

EUROPEAN HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS PARTNER PROJECT: RURAL HERITAGE VALORIZATION - CREATIVE COMMUNITIES IN PODRAVINA



19-29 AUGUST 2020



FINAL REPORT



Organisers

Culture Hub Croatia (CHC) – Platform for Education, Creativity and Development through Culture, Split
Interpretation Center – Kuća Petra Preradovića, Grabrovnica
European Heritage Volunteers, Germany

Team

Project coordinator: Marina Batinić, CHC
Technical leaders: Danijela Rešetar, Interpretation Center Petar Preradović /
Helena Kušenić, City Museum of Koprivnica in collaboration with
Elizabeta Milanović Glavica, Tourist Board Central Podravina
Group coordination: Jasmina Šarić, CHC
Methodological support and monitoring: Bert Ludwig, EHV

Special thanks to

Općina Pitomača,
Knjižnica i čitaonica Pitomača,
Udruga žena Dinjevac,
Udruga žena Guščarice „Grabrovnica“,
Udruga Čuvarice kulturne baštine „Kladare“,
OPG Barčan
Turistička zajednica općine Pitomača,
Općina Podravske Sesvete,
HFD Sesvećice,
Sesvečka udruga mladih aktivista SUMA,
Športski konjički klub Podravske Sesvete
Turistička zajednica područja Dravski peski,
Muzej Grada Đurđevca,
Turistička zajednicom Grada Đurđevca,
Galerija naivne umjetnosti (ogranak Muzeja grada Koprivnice),
Galerija Josip Generalić u Hlebinama,
Turistička zajednica područja Središnja Podravina.

...and to our amazing volunteers

Lea Biličić, Croatia (Student of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology); Dora Hornik, Croatia (Student of Art History, Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology);
Maria Teresa Salazar Rivera, Mexico (Architect); Jennifer Wenzler, USA (Student of Cultural Heritage Protection and Management);
Gizem Demirkiran, Turkey (Student of Architecture).

Rural Heritage Valorization: Creative Communities in Podravina

Table of content

1. Introduction	_5
1.1. About the organizers	
1.2. Objectives of the workshop	
1.3. Methodology	
2. Field visits and storytelling	_10
2.1. The treasures of Podravina	
2.2. Stories	
2.2.1. Women Association - Dinjevac	
2.2.2. Keepers of Cultural Heritage – Kladare	
2.2.3. City Museum Đurđevac	
2.2.4. Naïve Art in Hlebine	
2.2.5. Croatian Folk Ensemble Sesvečice	
3. Proposals and strategies	_20
3.1. Learning from others – good practice examples	
3.2. Erasing the invisible boundaries	
3.2.1. Funds and collaborations	
3.2.2. Accommodation and transportation	
3.2.3. Attractions and activities	
3.2.4. Digital documentation, social media and promotion	
4. Final word	_28

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About the organizers

Culture Hub Croatia – Platform for Education, Creativity and Development through Culture is a non-profit organization founded in January 2017 in Split, with the aim to use education, culture and creativity for development of local Croatian communities through transmission of knowledge and European expertise and through promotion of art practices. Our main goals are to offer innovative educational opportunities to cultural professionals and creative individuals and through capacity building programs and partnerships use the transfer of knowledge as a powerful tool for social change.

Petar Preradović Interpretation Center is a museum at the birthplace house of Petar Preradović, where his life and works are presented to the public in an interactive modern exhibition. Petar Preradović was one of the most important Croatian poets of the 19th century Illyrian movement and the main representative of romanticism in Croatia. Preradović's house was built in 1775 and has been renovated several times by far. The last major renovation was in 1968 when the house became home to one of the first museums dedicated to a writer. Its aim is to promote and preserve not only the work of the poet but also the cultural heritage of the region in the broader sense and open the Center for new interdisciplinary initiatives.

European Heritage Volunteers has been active in heritage-related volunteering for more than twenty years. European Heritage Volunteers initiates, organises and supports various forms of voluntary engagement of the young generation – young professionals, students and other young adults – for the rescue, the preservation and the promotion of European cultural heritage. At the core of the programme lie practical, experience-oriented projects and educational activities all over Europe with a strong hands-on approach, instructing volunteers in conservation practices as well as in traditional handicrafts with the intent to actively contribute to the protection and preservation of particular heritage sites, and to raise awareness about the values, diversity and fragility of cultural heritage and the links between cultural heritage all over Europe.

1.2. Objectives of the Workshop

International cultural heritage partner project in 2020 took place in Podravina region in the Northern, rural part of Croatia, hosted by the local partner - Interpretation Center Petar Preradović. The selected participants were coming from Croatia, Mexico, Turkey and the US. The geographical area of Podravina is taken as the location of the workshop because it consists of **many small communities with rich tangible and intangible heritage that is still unexplored and not visible enough at the local and international levels**. The volunteers worked in Grabrovnica where the Interpretation Center is located, but the workshop also consisted of numerous field trips and study visits with the aim to discover and encounter as many of the relevant communities as possible.

Pitomača municipality is situated in the North-Western part of Virovitica-Podravina County, near the border with the Republic of Hungary. With its natural and cultural values, this municipality is of great importance for the County. It is most known for the birthplace of the famous Croatian poet Petar Preradović in Grabrovnica. His house was built in the 18th century in a unique style for this region and is of great historical and cultural value. Historically, the house served for military purposes and in the second half of the 19th century it was used as a warehouse by an agricultural cooperative. It was renovated in 1909 and in 1968 it became one of the first museums dedicated to the writer. In 2018 a more thorough renovation was made and the new contemporary cultural and tourist attraction inspired by the poet's life and work was created. Thanks to the European Union funds from the Interreg cross-border cooperation program between Hungary and Croatia, the Municipality of Pitomača officially opened the modern interpretation center in **June 2019** which is significant for the entire Podravina region.



This rural part of Croatia is still an **undiscovered area** in terms of tourism. Nevertheless, it is attracting an increasing number of visitors from Croatia and abroad, especially those seeking a preserved and clean landscape, and who want to learn about the cultural heritage and customs of this rural area. The interpretation center is dedicated to enriching the cultural offer of the area and its premises were used during the workshop as a working space for the volunteers.

Rural communities – villages located in Podravina are currently **disconnected** and there is a strong need to work collaboratively on bringing them together using culture and creativity as drivers for innovation. The idea of the international heritage workshop in Podravina was to **interpret and valorize** the rich rural cultural heritage and connect smaller creative communities and relevant local actors. This network would be based on their creative potential, traditions and value of the cultural heritage considered as a resource for fostering social, economic and cultural development. The focal point for this initiative is the Interpretation Center Petar Preradović.

1.3. Methodology

Creative Communities in Podravina



Coming from all over the world, the participants, young professionals specialized in cultural heritage management, art history, anthropology, ethnology and architecture, didn't have previous knowledge about the region and its rural communities. Therefore, the first days of the workshop were dedicated to **learning from the local experts** – about the history and the context of the region of Podravina, the existing cultural and touristic offer, traditions and customs of the local communities and the Interpretation Center itself. The participants also had the opportunity to meet the representatives of the local youth activists – Association SUMA and learn from their experiences about living in the region, the challenges they face and the projects they implement to address the needs of the younger generation.

The volunteers were officially welcomed at the Municipalities of Podravske Sesvete and Pitomača, where the representatives of local authorities discussed some of their ongoing projects, strategies and initiatives when it comes to heritage preservation.

The programme of the workshop consisted of a **series of field visits** to different communities that were selected on the basis of their importance and efforts to preserve and promote their heritage and traditions. These visits included discovering the villages but also meeting representatives and members of cultural institutions and organizations.

Prior to the visits, the volunteers were doing preparatory work which included getting the available information to understand what is actually already available to the public both online and offline. They also jointly prepared the possible questions for the interviews. During each visit, the volunteers were on a mission. Their assignments were to: interview the most engaged and knowledgeable members of that particular community; make a photographic documentation and a SWOT analysis (identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of the specific site / tradition. They visited seven sites in total (marked in bold on the map above). Other relevant sites that could be included in the network of rural communities were identified (as shown in the map above). The community from the whole region was very much engaged during the project which brought together numerous associations. Each of them prepared special demonstrations of their customs on the occasion of the visits, which often included delicious homemade traditional food, music and dance.

Podravske Sesvete
Pitomača
Dinjevac
Kladare
Đurđevac
Hlebine
Grabrovnica
Koprivnica
Legrad
Virje
Gora
Molve
Novigrad Podravski
Rasinja





Associations:

Women Association Dinjevac

The Keepers of the Cultural Heritage Kladare

The Croatian Folklore Ensemble Sesvečice

Women Association Guščarice Grabrovnica

The Association of Young Activists of Sesevete (SUMA)

2. FIELD VISITS AND STORYTELLING

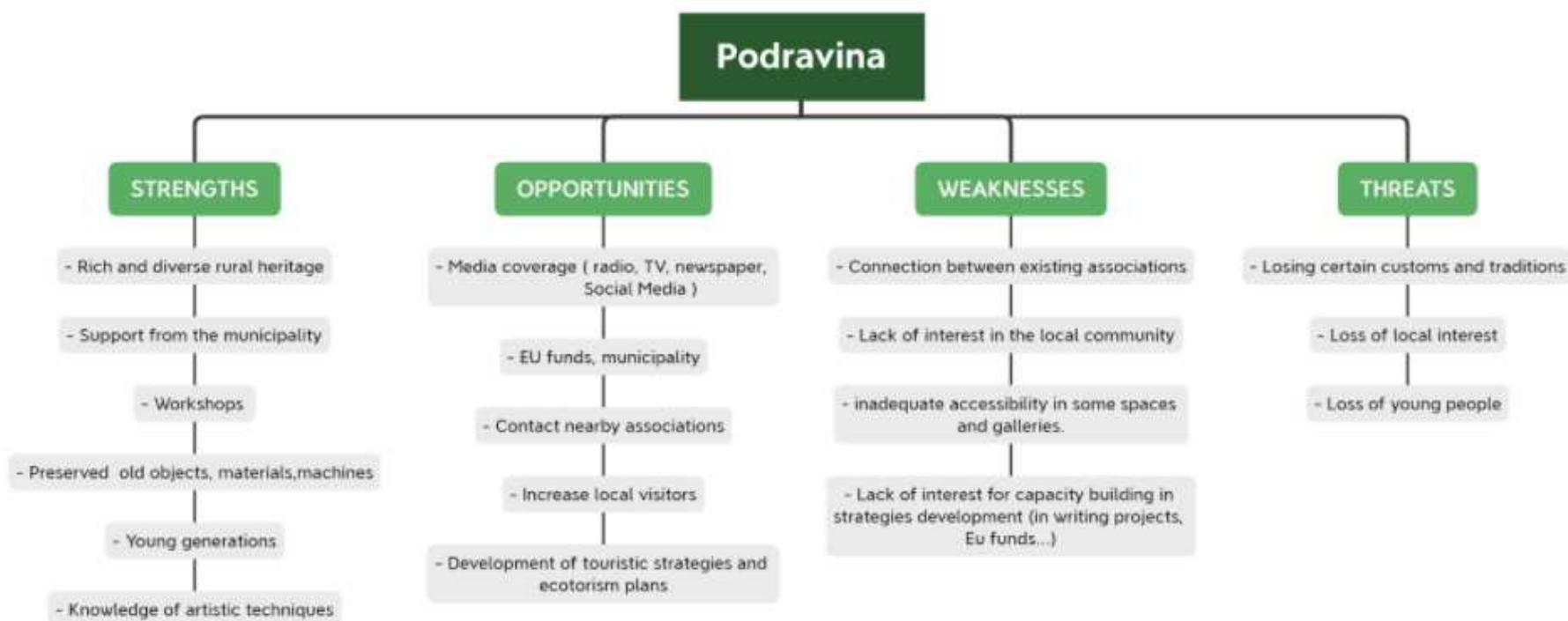
2.1. The Treasures of Podravina

The field visits included: **Women Association Dinjevac** – presenting their folklore traditions (dances, clothes, music and food); **Keepers of the Cultural Heritage Kladare** – presenting the ethnographic collection “Grandmother’s story” which consists of objects and stories of traditional way of living and working (linen weaving); **City Museum of Đurđevac** – presenting their permanent exhibition and the legend of “Picoki”; City Museum of Koprivnica – **Gallery of Naïve art in Hlebine** and the **Gallery of the painter Josip Generalić**, where the volunteers discovered the rich collections and the tradition of painting on glass that originated in this village; **Association Sesvečice** presented their folklore traditions (dances, music, food, work habits and horses, clothes and hairstyles). During each visit the volunteers were also able to engage in practical experiences: try out the painting on the glass, food making and weaving.



After each visit, the volunteers were working in groups at the Interpretation Center. Their task was to summarize and make sense of the acquired material and information: transcribe the interviews, select photographic material and jointly finalize the SWOT analysis. Many common points identified in the individual analysis were summarized in a unique SWOT covering Podravina region as a whole.

SWOT



2.2. Stories

2.2.1. Women Association Dinjevac

The little village of Dinjevac is located in the northwest of Croatia, with around 450 inhabitants. An important role for the development of the village has the Women Association, the non-profit organization founded in 1959. In the beginning, the Association had 20 members, while today there are around 40 active members of all generations – from the elderly ones born in the 1940s, to adults, young people and, most importantly, children, to whom the elderly are passing the knowledge of the cultural tangible and intangible heritage. The aim of this Association is to preserve the rich and diverse local cultural heritage which consists of traditional dances, songs, clothes, food, customs and objects that show the old way of living in the rural area of Podravina.

This little community of the Dinjevac is characterized by a huge motivation for passing their knowledge to younger generations. In their own words, they are proud of themselves for giving everything to their younger ones, for whom they are hoping to preserve the local traditions. They are very active in the community – they organize different workshops, fund-raising and manifestations that promote tradition, such as “That’s how our elderly did it” and “The most exemplary Croatian rural woman” events. They also participate at the international folklore festivals with support by the County of Pitomača.

Their activities are encouraged by the local people who are interested in promoting local cultural heritage. One of the next goals of the Association is to establish the local museum where the legacy of the ancestors would be collected, preserved and represented, so that the valuable cultural heritage of Dinjevac village and the Podravina region is still passed on to the next generations, kept alive and accessible.

“My motivation is love. I just love all of this. I love when I have the opportunity to represent my village and I love passing on this love to the young ones.” -Svetlana

“[Svetlana] encourages us to do what we love, to sing and to dance. We invest our time in making our village a better place.” -Ruža

“Today, our priority is to preserve the cultural heritage from oblivion...we need to protect it at all costs.”

“My mum and my grandma are teaching me how to do traditional crafts, such as sewing. I enjoy learning it.” -Lucija

“From the old days in Dinjevac until today, a woman holds the three corners of the house”.



2.2.2. Keepers of Cultural Heritage, Kladare

Keepers of Cultural Heritage is also an association of women that was established in the village of Kladare in the Pitomača county. The Association is preserving the rich ethnographic collection called the “Grandmother’s story”, which consists of authentic objects used in the everyday life of the first half of the 20th century. Today, many of the old customs and traditions are slowly but surely disappearing, because not many people seem to care to preserve them. Luckily, this association is persistent in doing the best they can to cherish and promote the rich cultural heritage from the Podravina area. This ethno collection represents the typical traditional house interior in the closest possible way – it consists of furniture that is over eighty years old, traditional textile clothes and tools, as well as handcrafts demonstrations, clothes washing, ironing and linen weaving traditions. The whole collection is characterized by authenticity and is in a very good condition.



Apart from preservation of the ethno-collection, the Keepers are being active in many charity manifestations, ecological initiatives and collaborations with kindergartens, schools, retirement groups and other women associations. In 2020, the association is leading a project entitled “Mladi Ruralci” (Rural Youth) with many workshops related to learning about old customs and handcrafts. The Association has been awarded for their endeavor by the County of Pitomača, which can be considered as another evidence of their value. They have also been active in promoting themselves on social networks, local news and television. In 2014, they filmed a series of documentaries about the traditional production of the linen canvas. Many visitors are interested to visit the ethno-collection, not only from the local area, but also from the other countries and continents. The Keepers of the cultural heritage are continuing to work hard on preserving the tradition of their ancestors, as well as on passing all the knowledge to the young generations and are very successful in doing it.

2.2.3. The City Museum of Đurđevac



The Đurđevac City Museum is an unavoidable place when in Podravina. It is located in the old medieval fortress, called the Old Town that was built in the 14th century, but extended in later centuries. The fort was very important in the 15th century when the Ottoman army arrived close to the Old Town wanting to conquer it. Luckily, due to the courage of an old woman this did not happen. A detailed story is presented in the museum together with the guided interpretation tour. Apart from the “Legend of the Picoks”, told in an interesting and interactive way, in the museum you can learn something about the history of the Old Town and its architecture, as well as about the rich ethnographic heritage of the Đurđevac area. The Museum also provides information about the Đurđevac “sands”, a rare natural geomorphologic phenomenon that is a protected

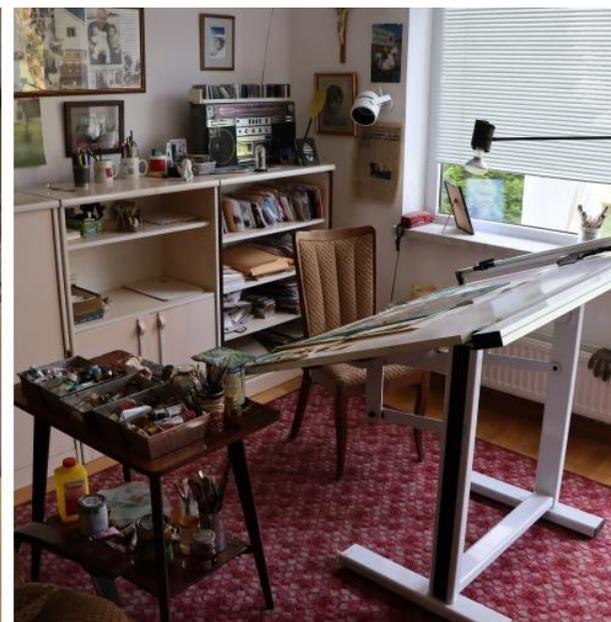
geographical and botanical reserve. It is also associated with the name “Croatian Sahara”, which includes a small zoo with different species of living animals, such as donkeys, goats and indigenous poultry, as well as especially interesting camels. In the attic of the Museum there is also a donation of paintings by Ivan Lacković Croata, a Croatian naïve painter, whose oeuvre harmoniously complements the knowledge of naïve painting of the Podravina region, that can be found in nearby Hlebine. The museum organizes various workshops, temporary exhibitions, lectures and concerts, and also sells various souvenirs made by the locals. A special attraction is the staging of the “Legend of the Picoks” performed by the Association of St. George in the form of a medieval festival, held every year in front of the Old Town in late June.

2.2.4. The Naïve Art in Hlebine

If you really want to understand the naïve art, you need to visit its birthplace and the dedicated **Gallery of naïve art**. The naïve painting originated from the fine arts in Hlebine in the 1930s by its main initiators, Krsto Hegedušić, Ivan Generalić and Franjo Mraz. What is specific to naïve painting is the unique technique of oil on glass, which until then, when naïve appeared in the 1930s, no one had practiced, although similar attempts to paint glass had been made earlier by Vasily Kandinsky and baroque painters of religious themes. It is also interesting that the naïve artists were self-taught, with no academic education, which was in line with their thought that art should be able to be practiced by everyone.



Vivid and shimmering colors have a special charm and appeal, and depictions of Podravina landscape and inhabitants give an insight into what it once looked like, but today is mainly lost. Over time, there were more and more supporters of the movement, so in addition to the first and second generation of naive artists, today there is a third, living generation of local painters also having their works in a permanent exhibition. They often organize temporary exhibitions as well. In addition to exhibiting large collection of three generations of naïve painters, the Gallery implements several projects and activities for a larger audience. Some of them are: ETNOFestival, KUL Hlebine and HIN - Innovation, Naive art, Tradition, and successfully collaborates with many other museum institutions, organizations and individuals. One such collaboration is with Josip Generalić Gallery which is located just a few minutes walk, where one can get a more complete impression of the lives and works of Ivan and Josip Generalić, painters of the first and second generation of naive artists (more information below). For the last two years, the project “Walk Through Hlebine” is organized in the village. It consists of a special route that leads visitors through all the important locations of naive art. The visitors can meet the local artists active today, as well as learn about the heritage of the area presented by the inhabitants themselves.



The Josip Generalić Gallery inherits the painting and ethnographic heritage of Josip Generalić, a second-generation painter from the Hlebine School of Naïve Art, as well as his father, Ivan Generalić, who is a member of the first generation of the same school and one of the founders of the movement. Along with the Gallery and Studio of Josip Generalić, on the same property there is the old memorial house of Ivan Generalić and the ethno house “Janičina hiža”. All the visitors of the Gallery have the opportunity to get detailed information about both painters, but also about the traditional ethnographic objects that were used in their time, as well as about the traditional house structure in which they lived. A particularly interesting part of the Gallery is Josip’s unfinished painting “White Frog”, which was left intact exactly as the painter left it before his death, which makes it feel as if the artist is still alive, but only briefly absent for the time being. A visit to the Gallery, in addition to guided tours, can also include schools in nature with some living naive artist, sports activities and lunch breaks. As a part of the offer, there is a rich selection of souvenirs in the form of monographs, posters, hand-painted magnets etc. that allows you to bring a nice memory of a gallery visit with you.

2.2.5. Croatian Folk Ensemble “Sesvečice”

“Sesvečice” Ensemble gathers local multigenerational enthusiasts who are trying to preserve their local cultural heritage and folklore – clothing, instruments, customs, stories, songs and dances. It was founded in Podravske Sesvete in 1992, although it has been operating informally since 1936. They practice traditional dances, sing old songs and demonstrate old Podravina customs, such as lighting bonfires, demonstrating old work customs or preparing the traditional breakfasts as they did for us. Also, they nurture the specific art of coloring Easter eggs, which is protected in Croatia as an intangible cultural heritage. It is important to point out that the society currently has more young members than the older ones, which is especially important at a time when young people are increasingly migrating from the countryside. It is also significant that their dances are not choreographed, which means that they do not rehearse the steps, but they improvise. The society has great public support and it is very present in the media. They had appearances in various places in Croatia, but also in many foreign countries, such as Greece, Montenegro, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.



“The main goal is to attract the younger generations, so we can pass our local traditions to them. There is interest among them, but we need to encourage them first. Once you join the Ensemble, it becomes a part of you and you cannot live without it. And when you get to know all those people, they become your friends, your family. As long as one is alive, one must create.”



3. PROPOSALS AND STRATEGIES

3.1. Learning from others – good practice examples



Valorizacija ruralne baštine
- primjeri dobre prakse

22.08. 18:00
Kuća Petra Preradovića
Grabrovnica



Lea Biličić (HR)
"Art in the Community: Redefining the Heritage of the Group Zemlja"

Maria Teresa Salazar Rivera (MEX)
"Rural community San Agustin Etla in the State of Oaxaca, Mexico and its Industrial Heritage"

Jennifer Wenzler (US)
"Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village: Valorizing Shaker Heritage"

Dora Hornik (HR)
"Suhozid - Dry Stone Walls"

Gizem Demirkiran (TUR)
"Tahtakuşlar Village Edremit"

Organizatori: European Heritage Volunteers | Culture Hub Croatia | Interpretacijski centar Kuća Petra Preradovića
Sudionici: Udruga žena Dinjevac | Udruga žena Gušćarice „Grabrovnica“ | Udruga Čuvarice kulturne baštine „Kladore“ | OPG Barčan | Turistička zajednica općine Pitomača | Turistička zajednica Virovitičko-podravске županije | Hrvatska folklorno društvo Sesvečice | Sesvečka udruga mladih aktivista | Športski konjički klub Podravske Sesvete | Turistička zajednica područja Dravski peski | Muzej Grada Đurđevca | Turistička zajednica grada Đurđevca | Galerija naivne umjetnosti (ogranak Muzeja grada Koprivnice) | Galerija Josip Generalić | Turistička zajednica područja Središnja Podravina
Pakrovitelji: Općina Pitomača | Centar za kulturu „Draga Britvić“ | Knjižnica i čitaonica Pitomača | Općina Podravske Sesvete | Dobrovoljno vatrogasno društvo Pitomača
Sponzori: KTC proizvodnja, trgovina, usluge i turistička agencija, d.d. | DERGEZ d.o.o. - Dergez Pekara i Trgovina | Kraš prehrambena industrija d.d.

The presence of international volunteers and the exchange of experiences are important to **raise awareness** of the potential that the rural heritage has. For this reason, a public event was organized during the workshop – “Open doors day and presentation of good practices of rural heritage valorization”, to allow local community to come and meet the volunteers and discover heritage from their countries of origin. On that occasion, the women association “Gušćarice” organized making of traditional bread and allowed our volunteers to try out their skills.





3.2. Erasing the invisible boundaries

Throughout the workshop, the biggest obstacles identified included the **complex divisions** in Podravina region – despite being a small territory, it is composed of different counties, municipalities and communes, which makes it divided in the administrative, geographical and social sense. When thinking about the possible proposals for connecting these communities, we took the approach based on cohesion and the exercise of erasing these invisible boundaries as the basis for improving future collaboration. Another common issue identified is of course of financial nature – there is very **little support** from the State for development of the region and although the local actors have ideas and motivation to implement innovative projects, often it is the lack of capacity and finances to actually make them happen. The individuals who engage are left on their own, often frustrated by small and slow progress of their huge efforts. The proposed strategies are taking this context in consideration and are divided in several fields, relatively simple to implement. This is further explained below.

STRATEGIES:

- **Funds and Collaborations**
/ financiranje i suradnje
- **Accommodation and Transportation**
/ smještaj i prometna povezanost
- **Attractions and Activities**
/ znamenitosti i aktivnosti
- **Digital documentation**
/ digitalna dokumentacija

3.2.1. Funds and Collaborations

The municipalities and counties in the region support the local associations and offer them spaces to use which is definitely an advantage. There are several successful projects at the local level although the efforts should also be invested in learning more and applying jointly to European funds and **participate in international projects.**

We identified several local very successful private companies in order to propose **collaboration between the industrial and cultural sectors.** Instead of fully relying on the

Funds and Collaborations

- EU Funds
- Local Companies
- Socially Responsible Business (e.g. KTC, Podravka, Spider)
- Interpretation Center as focal point
 - Collaborations between communities (e.g. Smart Villages EU Project)



funds at the local and national levels, we suggest that the SMEs apply the model of **socially responsible business** and invest back a part of their income towards non-profit organizations, especially the cultural ones. In this way, they would give back to their community and the local organizations would be able to have more funds to build their capacities, develop further and implement their activities. Some of these companies already support the environmental associations and contribute to the protection of nature, but more targeted support towards culture and heritage could be considered.

Another strategy for the development of this region is certainly a **better connection between villages, communities, associations and institutions**, ie better networking and greater cooperation, in two ways: the virtual cooperation (that we present further in this document), and the cooperation in a physical sense. As an example we can cite the European project Smart Villages - Smart rural communities. The concept of **smart villages** tries to bring together rural communities in a specific area and offer them innovative solutions for improvements in various domains based on local resources and needs. The focus is on collaboration and participatory approach in designing strategies and solutions for the development of economic and social conditions and digital technologies. This type of project allows participants to share knowledge with others and connect with villages from other European countries. It is therefore just one example of the European network that aims at creating better and innovative connections between rural communities.

The newly opened Interpretation Center can actually serve the purpose of the **connector and facilitator** of these collaborations by bringing all villages together regardless of the administrative boundaries, different counties and municipalities. The center has already, in a year of activity, served as a venue for many events and thus became a **focal cultural point**. This project has shown the possibility of bringing everyone together around a **shared purpose** and it could be used as a great basis to continue the cooperation. During our research, we have noticed that there are larger events such as traditional festivals that are similar in nature but organized in different communities. This makes them dispersed and not visible enough for those outside of that particular village. We propose making **unique joint festivals at the level of the region** (rather than a village). This would increase the importance of the festivals, allow better cohesion among the inhabitants and it would attract more visitors at the same time.

3.2.2. Accommodation and Transportation

One of the reasons the tourism is not yet well developed in this area is the lack of accommodation – currently there is a very limited number of beds and a very underdeveloped transportation, public or private, in the villages themselves but also among them. There are no options to explore the region if it's not with the car or by bike. Furthermore, only in bigger cities the visitors can actually rent cars or bikes – this is also something that could be improved because the area already has biking trails developed that are a part of the European routes. In order to increase the number of available accommodation and improve the transport consequently, the local inhabitants should **open up more** towards the tourists and not consider them as a threat. We noticed that this is often the case – the locals are hesitant to open their houses and rent a part of them through the well known platforms such as Airbnb or Booking because they are not used to having foreigners in the area. The tourist offices could be those who would provide **educational programs for the locals** to learn how to become hosts, share their heritage with others at the same time generate additional income for the families and for the region as a whole. If the tourists would have a place to stay for a longer period, the entire community would benefit from this economic activity.

This would consequently result in developing a larger offer of restaurants and other touristic facilities, focusing developing **good quality cultural and eco tourism**. From what we have discovered, currently only tour buses arrive to this region and stay very shortly, not spending on the local products and not getting to know the real treasures of the area. We have visited an exemplary rural accommodation and restaurant "Zlatni Klas Otrovanec" – offering delicious homemade food and unique accommodation in traditional wooden houses in the nature. We believe it is an example to follow, being aware that it takes a lot of effort and above all, knowledge, skills and support to develop such a good quality offer. However, even just by starting to open up more to the possibility of becoming hosts, local inhabitants could definitely make use of the potential of their surroundings, amazing nature and well preserved traditions. We have noticed that at the moment, the locals do not believe in this potential as they take what they have for

Accommodation and Transportation

- Improving the transport between villages
- Rural accommodation (local family or homestay, rural bed & breakfast or small hotel)



granted. But being witnesses of the growing need for more ecological tourism at the European level, it is precisely this potential that needs to be explored further and used for the benefit of these communities.

3.2.3. Attractions and Activities

During our field visits, we had the opportunity not only to discover all the attractions but also to **experience the traditions** from the first hand. We believe that this approach is very valuable when thinking about valorization. We suggest making a **customized itinerary** in collaboration with all the associations we encountered in the same way as it was done for us. A few days of visiting different communities, seeing them present their dances, music, culinary traditions and handicrafts...allowing everyone to not only visit but engage in creations with the local people. We propose one such itinerary on our prototype website (explained in the following section). In this way, a **sustainable touristic offer** would be developed based on good quality experiences including natural and cultural heritage. It could be organized by the tourist boards or the Interpretation Center itself. Partnering up with travel agencies would increase the visibility of such offers. The income generated from the visits would be distributed among all participating associations allowing them to further invest in their activities. This model would certainly result in locals opening their houses for accommodation and would consequently contribute to development of other tourism related services boosting the local economy.



Attractions and Activities

- Cultural, Gastronomic Attractions
 - Heritage Routes
 - Develop ecotourism plans
- Interpretation Center Petar Preradović



3.2.4. Digital Documentation, Social Media and Promotion

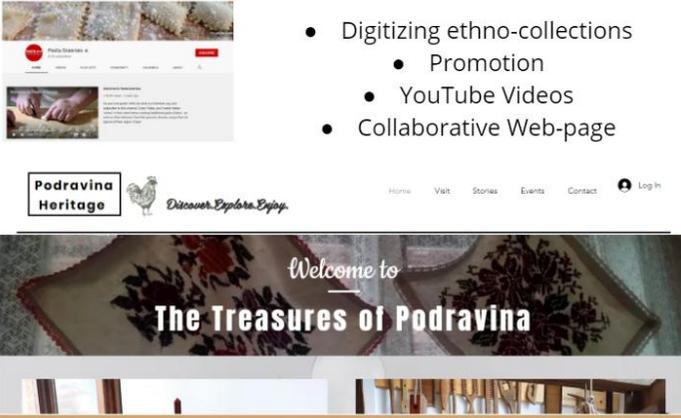
We propose to **digitize the existing ethnographic collections** as they are in risk of disappearing, but also to additionally list and document potential future collections. This could be done in collaboration with ethnologists, museologists, conservators and various museum institutions. A digitization can be carried out using available funds at the European level or the national level by the Ministry of Culture. The example of this is the Ericsson Nikola Tesla project.

In addition to this type of digitization, we also propose the idea of YouTube documentation in form of **short creative videos**. A series of videos would show the intangible cultural heritage, ie demonstrations of techniques and certain artisan practices, especially those in risk of disappearing.

The videos as kind of “tutorials” targeting the younger audience would be a way to **transmit the knowledge and document it**. This initiative could be implemented by the youth associations active in their communities, such as SUMA. The cooperation between younger and older members of the community is another added value of the proposal. The main purpose is valorization of cultural heritage, but it would certainly serve the purpose promotion to attract visitors, both foreign and domestic ones.

Finally, our main proposal is a **collaborative online platform** in form of a website. Every member of the community could easily upload their contents on their own. In the framework of the workshop, we prepared a **prototype website** that would bring together all interested associations and institutions in the Podravina area, and the key would be to run the site jointly - the site could be edited depending on the needs and ideas of the local associations and the inhabitants themselves. We imagine this platform focusing on the real life stories, digitized photographs from private family collections (crowdsourcing), interactive map, videos, itinerary suggestions... Thus, the rich local heritage could be shared with the public in a collaborative way making easier for the visitors to find their way in this area; and it would additionally better connect the local communities and strengthen their cooperation. Making an online platform would also make this heritage more **accessible and interesting** for the younger generations.

Digital Documentation / Social Media



- Digitizing ethno-collections
 - Promotion
 - YouTube Videos
- Collaborative Web-page



[Podravina Heritage webpage](#)

>>> <https://podravinaheritage.wixsite.com/podravinaheritage>



Our prototype that can be further developed and maintained after the workshop, consists of several sections:

- Local organizations
- Individual stories
- Events calendar
- Suggested itineraries
- Contact section

Due to the limited time of our workshop, many parts of the website are yet to be filled. We hope that this idea might be adopted by the local community and the Interpretation Center. The creation of such a platform can also be the initiative with which the local actors can jointly apply to the upcoming open calls at the national or European level. Another way of raising funds could be through organizing a crowdfunding campaign.

4. FINAL WORD

This report, collected documentation, material and the prototype website are the results of joint efforts of young professionals and the coordination team, achieved in the 10-day workshop (8 days of dedicated work including the field visits and many encounters). It is only the basis that can be used for future thinking of ways to connect these rural communities and continue the work initiated through this project. It is of great importance to identify a **strong community leader** – an organization that can keep the joint activities going and further foster engagement. The focal point in region, such as the Intepretation Centre Petar Preradović could take the lead in maintaining and building the community, generating ideas and turning them into actions. The cultural and natural potential of the region, the kindness and generosity of the locals could be one of the Europe's best kept secrets and a real asset to Croatian sustainable tourism yet to be discovered.

HVALA!!!



Lea Biličić - Gizem Demirkıran - Jennifer Wenzler - Dora Hornik - Maria Salazar