Project details (Poland)
"BOJARY – COMMUNITY CENTER"

The context and the problems

The Bojary neighborhood in Bialystok, Poland, observes a striking lack of integration of the local community.

The shortage of public spaces dedicated to the residents results in visible alienation of particular groups, and contributes to the social exclusion. The particularly vulnerable group are elderly people, who are rarely recipients of social activities, programmes and support.

Target Area & Beneficiaries

The target area is the Bojary district in Bialystok (Eastern Poland). Recently the city has been a place of a number of hate crimes (against the LGBTQ+ community and ethnic minorities), which creates an atmosphere of hostility and intolerance.

Goals

The project's objective is to build relationships between generations, to boost local integration process and create a safe space for the residents to meet and share their common interests and thus to prevent/limit the process of exclusion caused by the ever present technology.

Description of the activities (what, how, where, when)

WHAT:

The aim of the project is to facilitate various kinds of event which purpose would be to connect the different generations of the residents of the Bojary neighborhood.

The main goal is to form bonds between members of the various generations, to integrate the elderly with the youngest members of the community and to integrate the members of the ethnic and national

minorities, which are present in the neighborhood (Roma, Ukrainians, Chechenia) with the Polish residents.

One of the main activities would be to organize cyclical events, workshops, thematic evenings, casual meetings etc.

Examples of workshops:

- New technology course for seniors,
- Language courses for every age group,
- Various kinds of handicraft (embroidery, cooking classes etc),
- Physical activities (yoga, nordic walking, gymnastics) for every age group,
- Ecological workshops (zero waste, handmade natural cosmetics, recycling and reusing things),
- Social workshops (good neighborhood attitude, how to support people in need in the neighborhood, communications skills and other soft skills),
- Promotion of pro-social attitude in local community.

Examples of Themed Evenings:

- Cultural meetings with foreigners living in Bojary neighborhood,
- Language meetings with conversations,
- Movies meetings + discussions,
- Travels presentations.

Examples of regular events:

- Clothes and toys exchanges,
- Yard sales,
- Storytelling,
- Cooking events,
- Cleaning common areas both inside and outside the apartment buildings,
- Promoting neighborhood cooperation - for example taking care of neighbor's dog or child, taking care of the flat during trips, spending time with older people during family absence, community garden.

HOW:

Project team management - 7 concerned and involved neighbors, who through this project want to change the image of the Bojary neighborhood.

The activities will be organized by the project team and volunteers from the local community; each of them would facilitate workshops in areas in which they are most knowledgeable.

Marketing strategy - posters, leaflets on stairways, in churches, locals shops, at schools, in governmental buildings, social media.

WHERE:

- **Place:** uninhabited, empty building in the older part of Bojary neighborhood, given by city Bialystok as a lease for 1 year
- **Address:** Koszykowa 7, Bialystok
- **Building:** contains 4 rooms, bathroom, kitchen, utility room/maintenance room
- **Adjusted for disabled people**
- **Includes garden**, which could also be utilized as an activity area (community garden, outside exercises)

WHEN:

The opening of the community center is planned for the 15 September 2020; however, since it would be necessary to renovate the rooms and set the schedule for the first few months, the project team management would start working on the 1st of July 2020.

Impact and results

SHORT-TERM RESULTS:

The expected impact of the project is to focus community attention on the problem of the lack of social communication or a proper place to do it.

The goal of the project is to create such a space and then provide a range of activities that would boost the communication between residents.

MEDIUM-TERM RESULTS:

The community center exists and is slowly beginning to become recognizable.

The target group is starting to identify themselves with the community center and its values.

The neighborhood community have a space, which provokes diverse and interesting activities

LONG-TERM RESULTS:

The community center is present in the daily lives of the neighborhood residents.

It functions as an integral part of the Bojary community and is widely considered as a place to host a wide range of social gatherings. The residents see the community center as an answer to their social needs, of which they haven't been aware before.

The community center becomes the social, cultural and educational heart of the Bojary neighborhood.

TANGIBLE RESULTS:

- An interactive calendar filled with scheduled activities, which can be updated by any resident willing to either organize or take part in a workshop.
- Photographic documentation of the activities and progress made by the residents.
- Monthly or quarterly brochure documenting the actions of the community Centre and informing on its upcoming events.
- Exhibition of the items created during workshops.
- Publishing resident's stories of their feelings and experiences gained during the activities.

INTANGIBLE RESULTS:

- Fully realized bonds between residents.
- Development of soft (cooperation, positive competition) and hard competences (new real skills).
- Improvement of physical condition (thanks to the outdoor activities).
- Improvement of the wellbeing and social life of he elderly members of the community, reducing their feelings of loneliness and uselessness.
- Building a fully functioning civil society.
- Increasing public awareness of various social aspects.

Partners

- Cooperation with organizations dealing with formal and non-formal education (for example Logos which organize for example escape room events),
- Local charity store,
- NGOs that have something to offer e.g. workshops, courses, lectures,
- A community that has skills such as cooking, sewing, informatic, travel experience.

Duration

Start: 01.07.2020
Finish: at least 15.09.2021; the plan is to continue the project as long as possible.

Team

- 1. Administrative director
- 2. Deputy director/ right hand
- 3. Accountant
- 4&5. Marketing specialist
- 6. Concept director / main animator
- 7. Technical support

Management team will come from local community of Bojary, who would volunteer to take care of the project and possibly manage it in the future in case of it being successful and continuing after the set deadline.

Budget

The housing community management, government (electricity and maintenance), donations from local entrepreneurs (pharmacy, print point, cosmetic salon).

Some of the workshops will require entry fee to cover the materials, EU projects funding for development of the countryside, 1% tax program

Fees covered monthly by local government:

- Rent and additional costs 2000 zl ~ 500 euro

Marketing monthly

- 500 zl ~ 125 euro for marketing campaign (covered by local entrepreneurs in exchange of putting their logo on brochures)

Equipment for beginning of running the place (one time, in the beginning)

3000 zl ~ 750 euro:

- Printer/copy machine,
- Kattle,
- Dishes,
- Laptop x3,
- Projector.

Materials for monthly using

500 zl ~ 125 euro

- Materials for arts and craft workshops,
- Cleaning and hygienic goods (to clean place and to equipment toilet and social place),
- Basic food like sugar, tea, coffee.

Strategy of sustainability

Volunteers and management will not receive any payment for their work. In case of some activities requiring payment for educators, it would be covered by an entry fee from participants of those classes.

We will try to make place as sustainable as possible. We would not buy anything what we could get for free from local government and from local people.

The goal is to involve citizens of Bojary as active members. We believe there are many of them who have talents and skills which could be shared with others. They will use their time to make the community center grow and help to run it daily.

One of our main principles would be to implement zero or at least less waste ideology into people's lives. Next one would be to introduce the 4R practices (reuse, reduce, repair, recycle).

We would like to use ecological, sustainable materials, which would be environmentally friendly.

Strategy of communication

- Through hanging posters prepared during the workshops and distributing leaflets around the neighborhood.
- Spreading the news about the project directly among the residents of the neighborhood.
- Word of mouth marketing.
- Social media (fb, twitter, instagram, WhatsApp group).
- Organizing exhibitions of items created during workshops.
- Spreading the news of the community center through the local radio station/tv channel/newspapers/local news websites in order to reach a wider audience.