

Leader+

Q U A R T E R L Y

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Dear Readers,

In the 5th edition of the Leader+ Quarterly we are pleased to welcome representatives of Local Action Groups from Podlasie – LAG “Puszcza Białowieska”, from the Western Beskida Mountains – LAG “Podbabiogórze” and from Hrubieszów area – Hrubieszowskie-Mireckie Association “Lepsze Jutro”.

As always, groups’ inspiration is rich culture, nature and history. LAG “Puszcza Białowieska” cannot complain about the lack of development possibilities in its region with abundant nature resources as well as tradition and spiritual culture of its inhabitants. The Hrubieszowskie-Mireckie Association and Podbabiogórze showed their ingenuity, worth following.

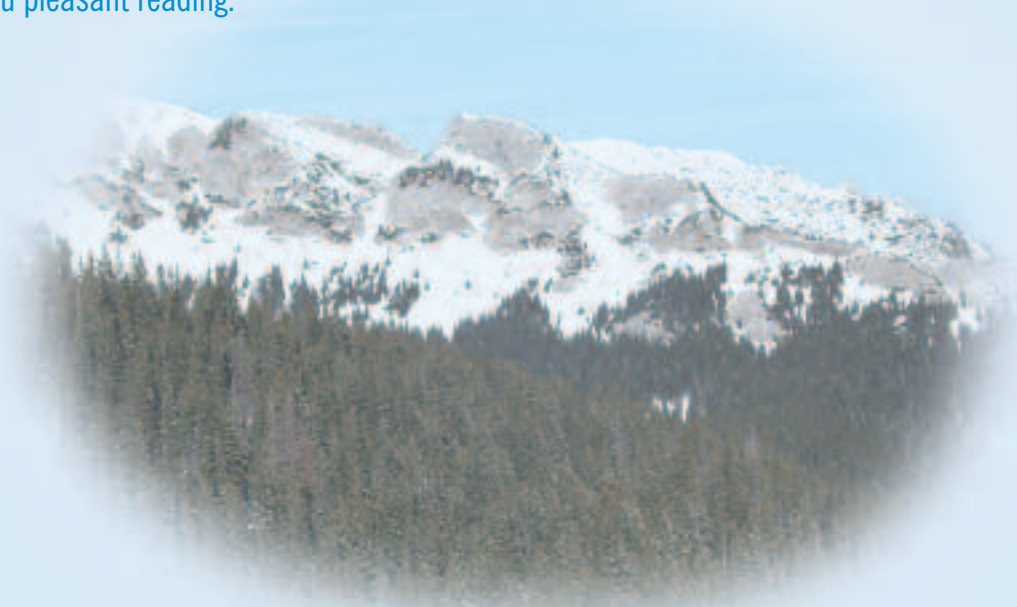
The regions where LAGs “Puszcza Białowieska” and Association “Lepsze Jutro” were set up are characterised by numerous significant historical and archaeological discoveries. They do not only date back to the Middle Ages, e.g. the ruins of the castle in Zbucz, but also to earlier times, i.e. 2-4th centuries AC when a Germanic tribe of Goths migrated through the Hrubieszów area. Thanks to a local initiative, after 18th centuries Goths returned to the area. Owing to archaeological workshops, creation of thematic routes and promotion initiatives, undertaken by LAGs, the knowledge of the regions’ historical heritage is transferred to younger generations and becomes the basis for the local tourist brand.

At the south end of Poland the LAG “Podbabiogórze” is also successful at creating and promoting its brand. It brings together all the characteristics of this part of the Beskida Mountains, in particular folklore, traditional cuisine of the Babia Góra region and a picturesque mountainous landscape. It is beyond any doubt that the use of new technologies to promote the tourist product, the creation of the website “Podbabiogórze”, has indeed turned out to be a great success.

In addition to familiarising yourselves with the LAGs’ presentations, we encourage you to read an article on trust in the Leader Programme and the function of the social potential in rural development by Mr Wojciech Goszczyński from the Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń.

We wish you pleasant reading.

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Publikacja przygotowana w ramach zadania pt. „Kontynuacja Krajowej Sieci Leader+“

Designed by:

Agencja Reklamowa „Po Godzinach“
ul. Friedleina 6, 30-009 Kraków
tel. 012 623 77 74
www.pogodzinach.com.pl

Printed by:

Drukarnia Nowator Sp. z o.o.
ul. Warszawska 1, 08-110 Siedlce
tel. 025 632 40 94
www.nowator.com

Leader in the Bison Land

The central part of the Bison Land is located in the area of two poviats (counties) of the podlaskie voivodship: hajnowski powiat (rural communes: Białowieża, Czeremcha, Czyże, Dubicze Cerkiewne, Hajnówka, Narew, Narewka and an urban-rural commune Kleszczele) and bielski powiat (rural communes: Bielsk Podlaski and Orla)¹. Most valuable nature resources of the area include the natural forest of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, in particular best preserved fragments thereof located in the Strictly Protected Area of the Białowieża National Park (4 747.17 ha). In 1979 the area was entered in the World Heritage List as a site valuable to the whole humanity. Due to the European dimension of natural resources of the Białowieża Primeval Forest and the Upper Narew Valley (northern part of the region), the areas were included into the protected area system "Natura 2000". Moreover, the region is characterised by exceptional ethnic diversity (Byelorussians, Poles, Ukrainians) and different religious denominations (orthodox Christians and Catholics) as well as historical and administrative cohesion.

Resulting from the implementation of Scheme I, Pilot Programme Leader+, the Local Action Group "Puszcza Białowieska" (Białowieża Primeval Forest) was set up. At the same time, on the initiative of local communities the analysis of development opportunities in the rural areas in the Central part of the Bison Land was carried out. Thanks to it, it was possible to devise the Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS) of the Białowieża Primeval Forest area. The IRDS priority theme: "Use of natural and cultural resources, including the potential of the area included in the Natura 2000 network" was selected with the view to unique natural resources to be found in the LAG area, most of which was included into the Natura 2000 network, as well as extremely rich local material and spiritual culture. One of the most rational methods of using natural and cultural resources to the benefit of the local community is the development of the region's tourist functions. However, to preserve sustainability and balance of such development, it is necessary to take care of its basis, i.e. to effectively protect the existing environmental resources. Therefore, the following was selected the first objective of IRDS: "Maintenance of high quality natural and cultural resources". It was assumed that the

resources would be exploited primarily in two sectors: tourism and farming activities, traditional for rural areas, targeted mainly at providing environmental services. Hence, the other two objectives were identified: "Development of rural tourism" and "Development of agriculture friendly to the environment". Given the Leader-type approach, it was considered as indispensable to create in the LAG "Puszcza Białowieska" area an adequate human potential and therefore the forth objective was set: "Creation of social capital". All the four objectives laid down in the IRDS of the Białowieża Primeval Forest make up a set of coherent measures targeted at exploiting the region's natural and cultural resources to improve the welfare of the local community. They have been successfully implemented since March 2007 under Scheme II of the Pilot Programme Leader+.

Thanks to support by Leader+ funds, LAG "Puszcza Białowieska", in collaboration with local government institutions and non-governmental organisations, delivered several interesting training projects. Certainly of great value was the cycle of archaeological workshops for the youth "Let's discover our past". The project was divided into two stages. The first took place in June 2007. Through talks, lectures and demonstrations the trainees familiarised themselves with archaeology and its investigation methods as well as archaeological sites in the area of LAG communes, including an early medieval castle ruins in the village of Zbucz. At the second stage, at the end of August and beginning of September 2007, archaeological excavations were organised in the site of Zbucz ruins by the specialists from the Association Podlasie Heritage and employees from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology at the Polish Academy of Sciences. The youth from the LAG "Puszcza Białowieska" area



took an active part in the activities. The workshop ended in granting the Young Archaeologist Certificate to most active participants.

¹ The above mentioned communes belong to LAG Puszcza Białowieska (Białowieska Primeval Forest)



Another interesting project was a cycle of handicraft workshops “To get to the bottom of handicraft or something about folk art” whose objective was to train trainers who will give educational classes to the youth and tourists, etc. The project implementing authorities were surprised at a great interest in training. From October to January 2007 the workshop participants got acquainted with practical aspects of weaving, making objects of crêpe paper, plaiting artistic objects of hay, birch twigs and baking traditional bread. In November, in the framework of the workshop the on-the-spot classes were held “Following the path



of folk handicrafts”, which enabled the trainees to familiarise themselves with the places where the skills of handicraft are cultivated. The cycle of workshops held permitted the participants to get and feel respect for their ancestors’ culture and tradition.



The area where the LAG “Puszcza Białowieska” operates is very attractive for tourists. Here there are more than 100 agri-tourism lodgings and other facilities providing diverse tourist services. Service providers sell their offers via the Internet and various catalogues and publications. Tourist information laid down in adverts is very often incomplete, wrongly classified, incoherent and not uniform. The best solution to the problem would be to introduce the system of agri-tourism facilities’ categorisation, based on the unique system of evaluation and classification.

The categorisation system developed by the Polish Federation of Rural Tourism is applicable, however, it is not accessible to local services providers due to the fact that it is not in line with the specific character of the Białowieża Primeval Forest and due to its high price. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and introduce an internal system of categorisation of agri-lodgings and other tourist facilities, account being taken of the region’s material and cultural resources. Recently the cycle of training sessions has been completed. Its aim was to familiarise the agri-tourism lodging owners concerned with the system and methods of facilities’ categorisation, to jointly develop categorisation methods and tools (evaluation and correction). The concept of the whole system operation is still under development. The facilities complying with key and complementary requirements laid down in the categorisation questionnaires will be marked in a special way. In addition, promotion materials on the system and lodgings subject to classification will be published.



A considerable challenge for the region inhabitants that provide tourist services is a constant search for new ideas to attract and keep tourists. Thus, some of the projects implemented by the LAG "Puszcza Białowieska" are closely connected with the development of a new tourist project. Out of numerous measures, the project "Orchards on the route" should be mentioned. The idea of the project is to offer guests the possibility of tasting traditional fruit varieties and preserves thereof during their stay at agri-tourism farms. Therefore, a cycle of training sessions was provided. Its major objective was to make people aware of the necessity of protecting and renewing old farm orchards. In addition, the trainees took part in a study



tour to Chrystków, where the Society of the Lower Vistula Friends have been successfully implementing the programme of old fruit tree restoration and promoting new local foodstuffs for over a dozen years or so.

In 2007 the LAG "Puszcza Białowieska" organised or co-organised several interesting events aimed at the region's promotion.

Certainly it is worthwhile to mention an open-air event "On Ivan's name day, let's go to Kupała" held on the Bachmaty bay in Dubicze Cerkiewne. According to the tradition, during the night of the summer solstice the young used to get together, singing and dancing, to worship a pagan god Kupała. This Slavonic ritual performed since the pagan times probably disappeared in mid-19th century. At present, organised in Dubicze Cerkiewne commune, jointly with the Union of Podlasie Ukrainians, the event took the form of folk festivities during which songs from the pagan times were sung and the pagan ritual of throwing flower garlands was performed. In 2007 the weather on the bay in Dubicze Cerkiewne was excellent and the performances of many fantastic folk bands from Podlasie: „Ranok“, „Rodyna“, „Skazka“, „Kuranty“ and „Strumok“ and from Ukraine: „Rodonowi dzereła“, „Rankowa Rosa“, „Żywycia“, „Weseła Słoboda“ were admired by a large audience. Around 21.00 hrs a traditional Kupała ritual was performed: maidens throwing flower garlands into the water and young men bravely catching them. The festivities in Dubicze Cerkiewne ended with the folk festivities and the performance of the Ukrainian bands: "Tycha dumka", "Krajany and "Flyzza".



Equally interesting was an event, regularly held in the summer in the Białowieża Primeval Forest region, the Archaeological Festival in the archaeological site of the early medieval ruins in the village of Zbucz in September 2007. First, the ceremony marking the end of the 2nd cycle of archaeological workshops "Let's discover our past" took place. It was possible to visit the excavation site and learn more about its discoveries. Fights of warriors and archers generated a great interest among the vast audience. In addition, the horse team was presented and a slave was fair held with the public participating. Numerous contests for the public were held, e.g. Open Horse Collar Throw Competition. Many people volunteered to take part in it. Local music and dance bands staged their performances, among them: Zbuczanki, Czyżowianie, Kuranty. Furthermore, a demonstration of medieval crafts was given. Through lectures and practice guests could familiarise themselves with the work of a smith, potter, herbalist, sculptor, embroiderer. Old, perhaps a little bit forgotten occupations, were presented: leather-working, shoe making, dyeing, weaving. Demonstrations were accompanied by tasting of old foodstuffs and medieval rituals and fortune telling.



In addition, in 2007 the LAG "Puszcza Białowieska" co-organised several interesting open air cultural events such as the fair "The Happy Land" on the lake Siemianówka (June 2007) and the Festival of Belorussian Culture in Orla (September 2007).



An interesting promotion event was the bicycle raid organised in October 2007 “Primeval Forest for Bicycles” to popularise bicycle trails of historical, natural and religious interest in our communes. Despite unfavourable weather, cool and rainy, approximately 50 people from the area of 10 LAG communes took part in the raid. To learn more about natural and cultural resources of the region, canoeing on the Narewka river was organised in August 2007. The event participants got acquainted with the Leader+ programme and partnership’s activities.



In September 2007 members and employees of the LAG “Puszcza Białowieska” took part in the study and training tour to the LAG “Fundacja Bieszczadzka”. The key objective of the tour was to primarily have a look at the activities of another local group, to exchange experience with regard to strategy implementation and to establish cooperation on a constant basis. The destination was selected deliberately. The partner

LAGs face similar problems: situated at the state border, the other region is multi-cultural with numerous ethnic and religious minorities, and it also pursues the policy of sustainable use of natural resources in the area covered by the IRDS. The exchange of experiences inspired and generated new interesting ideas that will lead to specific actions. The programme of the study tour was extensive. Above all, the study tour participants familiarised themselves with the activities of the LAG “Fundacja Bieszczadzka” and the Carpathian Centre of Active Tourism “Green Bicycle”, a social enterprise. In the village of Lutowska a meeting was held in Eco-museum “Three Cultures” and the Centre of Local Product Promotion and Certification “Made in Bieszczady”. During the meeting it was demonstrated how the local community can be involved in the actions aimed at increasing tourism attractiveness of their area – based on the Eco-museum activity. Furthermore, the implementation of the project “Local Bieszczady Product” promoting local artists, producers and handicraftsmen was shown. A major item of the agenda were meetings with local activists and leaders, including the representatives of the Rus minority. Certainly all the study tour participants returned with new experience and ideas that they will try to push forward in their area.

Many tasks that we took upon ourselves in IRDS were successfully implemented. We face great plans and more challenges. Given our mission, i.e. accelerating socio-economic development of rural areas covered by LAG “Puszcza Białowieska” activity and preserving at the same time rich environmental resources, we realise that a great deal is to be done. It is important that the LAG “Puszcza Białowieska” is a local partnership initiative taken by representatives of the public and private sectors and NGOs. These people come from various communities, however, one thing unites them – care for the future of our region.

For more information see: www.lgd-puszcza-bialowieska.pl

Ewa Michalczuk, Mirosław Stepaniuk
Local Action Group “Puszcza Białowieska”

We from the Land of Goths — We have been Successful

After thirty years of archaeological studies into the phenomenon of Goths' civilization, their life was reconstructed where they used to live, i.e. in Masłomęcz — the Goths's Route and Hut in the framework of the project: "Following Goths' trails — a prehistory of the Hrubieszów area, an element of the European Cultural Heritage", carried out by the LAG (Local Action Group), Hrubieszowsko-Mireckie Association "Lepsze Jutro" ("Tomorrow will be a Better Day").



Masłomęcz is a legendary place, renown all over the world. It was here where over half a century ago the Goths' cemetery and settlement dating back to the 2nd-4th centuries A.C. were uncovered. Goths arrived in the Hrubieszów Valley approximately 180 years after Christ. They created a powerful civilisation, one of the greatest in Europe, on the Huczwa and Bug rivers. Around 375 A.C., harassed by raids of warlike tribes, among others Huns, they left the Hrubieszów area. We owe the return of Goths to Masłomęcz to Mr Jan Motodecki, administrator of the Hrubieszów commune, and Professor Andrzej Kokowski, head of the Archaeology Department, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, who resurrected the Goths' souls in the hearts and minds of the Hrubieszów area residents. Until recently Goths were regarded erroneously as primitive peoples. The archaeological investigations carried out for more than 25 years led to the discovery of sensational facts about the life of this tribe. The proof of their advanced civilisation on the Huczwa and Bug rivers are the remains of one-floor houses with the sewerage system as well as their knowledge of silk and techniques of coating any metal with another one: silver, gold and zinc plating of objects. Another example of a highly developed culture is the translation of the Bible into the Gothic language. One of their greatest secrets is a strange burial rite. They buried incomplete corpses of the dead. A decisive majority of the buried corpses are the remnants of women and children. So where did the male part of the population disappear? It is still a great secret.



The major objectives of the project implemented under Scheme II PPL+ was the promotion of the cultural heritage and enhancement of tourist attractiveness of Hrubieszów and Mircze communes. Under the project a museum exhibit, the Goths' Hut in Masłomęcz, and the tourist trail, "Goths' Route", were created. The Route connects Masłomęcz and Krytów and refers to historical migrations of Goths, showing at the same time interesting natural and historical sights of the area covered by the Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS). Professor A. Kokowski assumed the honorary patronage of the project. The inhabitants of the Hrubieszów and Mircze communes created a new legend promoting the Goths' Route, where in addition to admiring tourist attractions you can "mount" the wolf at the St. Nicolas Shrine in Kol. Krytów, follow the Goths' Route and "complete the task of" your tour in the Goths' Hut, which guarantees luck and a happy marriage for a long period of time. Moreover, under the project support was provided to set up and run agri-tourism farms through advice and training aimed at





improving the skills of people rendering services to tourists and a professional guide was trained.

On 11 August 2007 the Archaeological Feast was organised in Masłomęcz at which old gothic crafts and activities carried out by the Goths were presented. The gothic group gave a spectacle of former rituals and customs.

Information on the project “Following Goths’ trails – a prehistory of the Hrubieszów area, an element of the European Cultural Heritage” and on Goths’ civilisation can be found in the bulletin summing up the implementation of the project “Thirty reasons to be proud to live in the Land of Goths”, which is a colourful scientific “story” about the excavations, Goths in the world, Laur Masłomęcki, Moroczyn, Ślipcz, Czerniczyn, Metelin and his powerful ruler, Kosmów tempting with secrecy, women without heads, a handsome warrior from Masłomęcz, beautiful Sarmatian women and their perfume with unparalleled scent, big huts in Masłomęcz, gothic jewellers and craftsmen, a large shopping centre of the barbarian world, the rule of the money and irresistible power of amulets, and which ends with a phrase “all roads lead to Masłomęcz ...” For the residents of our communes the publication is a source of knowledge of the cultural heritage of their towns and villages and is a basis for building thematic villages as an agri-tourism product under RDP (Rural Development Programme) for 2007-2013. The inhabitants of the area covered by IRDS plan to create the village of Goths and to develop and launch the product “A day of life in the Land of Goths” under which it will be possible to follow the Goths’ Route from Kryłów to the Goths’ village in Masłomęcz, to practise old crafts, to cultivate small fields and after a hard day’s work and maybe fights for beautiful Sarmatian women to gorge oneself on delicious food at the picturesque sunset in Masłomęcz while listening to night stories from former times told by our great contemporary Berig sitting on the threshold of the Goths’ Hut ...

In addition, the LAG, Hrubieszowsko-Mireckie Association “Lepsze Jutro”, takes other initiatives. In partnership with the Commune Office in Hrubieszów we developed a project “Leaders, line up at the start” under Measure 9.5 “Grass-root level educational initiatives in rural areas” of the Operational Programme “Human Capital”. We plan to train 20 local leaders engaged earlier in implementing projects under two PPL+ Schemes whose task will be to come up with new rural development ideas for their local communities.

The implementation of the project “Following Goths’ trails – a prehistory of the Hrubieszów area, an element of the European Cultural Heritage” coincided with the debate in the media among the authorities, scientific and education communities, whose outcome was the ranking of historical events in the Lublin region with which we should get acquainted and which should be a typical mark of the Lublin region in the world. Moreover, the intention of the debate was to teach history of a “small fatherland” to a young generation by introducing such subject into school curricula. It turned out that event number one for the people taking part in the discussion was Goths’ arrival in the Hrubieszów Valley, in the Masłomęcz vicinity, in the 2nd century A.C. At present organised groups and individual tourists from neighbouring communes go on a sightseeing tour of the Goths’ Route and Hut during which they can familiarise themselves with live archaeology and go back to ancient times for a little while. While making a visit to Masłomęcz, students have an opportunity of getting acquainted with the history of their small fatherland.

The effects of the projects implemented under two schemes of the Pilot Programme Leader+ begin to significantly impact the awareness and attitudes of the inhabitants of the commune and even the whole powiat (county). Scientists, archaeologists and historians confirm that this is one of the few ideas of active historical education in our region.

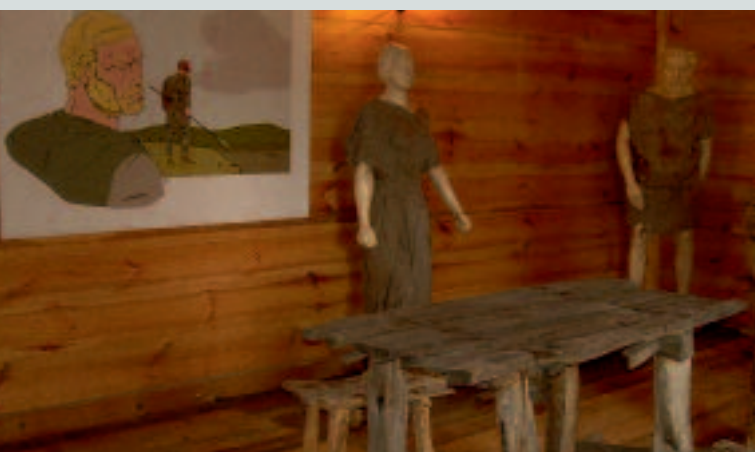
Tomasz Zając

Local Action Group,
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Goths' Hut in Masłomęcz

The hut was reconstructed based on the large Goths' house discovered in Hrubieszów Podgórze; the projection size has a scale of 1 to 2 and the hut dimension is 10 m x 5 m. Built of logs, with the thatched roof, the hut is divided into two parts. The first is a livestock part with a mud floor containing a pen for animals constructed of wooden beams. Above it there is an "attic", where for instance hay for animals used to be stored and which could have been used as a place to sleep. The second part is a dwelling room containing a reconstructed dome-like stove providing heating to the whole chamber.

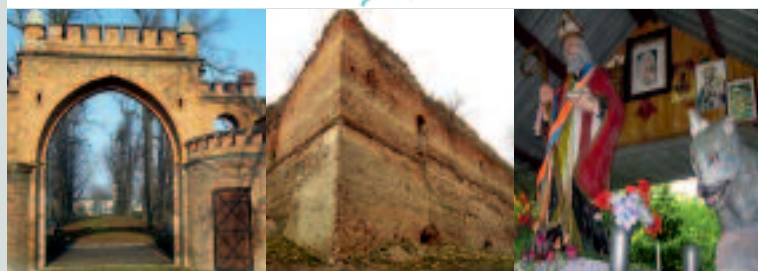


Goths' Route

Signs: blue, length: 23.2 km
(passes through the area of Hrubieszów and Mircze communes)
Masłomęcz – Mieniary – Cichobórz – Kosmów – Cichobórz – Kol. Kryłów – Kryłów

On the Goths' Route one can:

- visit the reconstructed Goths' Hut from the 4th century A.C. in Masłomęcz;
- go through the territory of the former Goths' settlement in Masłomęcz, pass by their ancient cemeteries where blood-urdling burial rites used to be performed;
- see the remains of the manor house and park complex located on the Bukowa river in Kosmowo;
- observe grey herons in Cichobórz, the biggest colony of these birds in the Zamość area;



- check whether the stone wolf at the St. Nicolas monument in Kol. Kryłów really helps women with fertility problems;
- walk in the chestnut tree alley in the former palace complex in Kryłów to the neo-gothic gate and a porter's small house;
- see the 18th century painting showing Saint Mary of Loretto in the Kryłów church, famous for its miracles in the past;
- go sightseeing the ruins of the Kryłów Castle where in 1687 Michał Radziejowski, the then primate of Poland and owner of the Kryłów manor, was granted a cardinal's hat;
- stay at Kosmów or Kryłów on the Bug, one of the few larger European rivers with an unregulated channel.

The Bug river, which forms there the border between Poland and Ukraine, is also an eastern border of the Protected Landscape of the Bug Area. The river is characterised by an abundance of fish species. Beavers live in its waters. The edge of the valley is a feeding ground for numerous storks and grey herons. Nearly 200 bird species can be found in the Bug river valley. During autumn and spring walking tours you may spot, among others, swans and cranes. Many rare insect species, including beautiful day butterflies, were discovered in the valley. Thanks to all that, the Bug river valley is so picturesque.

Map compiled by **Jacek Fuchs**
Photographs by **Jacek Fuchs**

Local Action Group, Association "Podbabiogórze" Melodies saved from being forgotten

Local Action Group, Association "Podbabiogórze" targets its activities at the area of 7 communes in the suski powiat (county) situated at the foot of the Mount Babia Góra: Budzów, Bystra – Sidzina, Jordanów, Maków Podhalański, Stryszawa, Zawoja, Zembrzyce. Run under Scheme II of the Pilot Programme Leader+, the project "Tourism, culture and local product – the greatest value of the Podbabiogórze area" contributes to the preservation of the cultural heritage in rural areas by enabling implementation of complex tasks including, in particular, tourism development, protection and promotion of the environment and landscape as well as utilisation of historical and cultural resources.

As for training provided under the project, we focus on the popularisation of regional music. Since August 2007 we have been organising for the youth workshops on violin playing, including the elements of the local folklore, free of charge. The workshops will be held until the end of February 2008. The trainer is Mr Marcin Pokusa, an artist, a musician, a folklore lover, who speaks about his work in the following way: "I am trying to cultivate the culture and traditions of the area I live in, which is closest to my heart. I am trying to teach the music of the Carpathian Mountains. Within 6 months you can teach young people as many as 30 melodies, however what we care about is quality. We'd rather choose 20 melodies, but played precisely, as folk music is not mediocre music. It has a different character and vivacity than classical music. In classical music the hand must be set very precisely, whereas here, if the sounds are played in tune, you can allow yourself more freedom". During



the lessons the youth get acquainted with the arcana of violin playing as well as folklore that has always accompanied the rural population in Podbabiogórze. The repertoire taught during the course includes the melodies from our region, especially the area around the Babia Góra, melodies from Orawa region, Podhale and Slovakia. The culmination of the workshops will be the formation of the regional folk youth band to which the LAG will provide folk instruments. These activities are aimed at preserving and promoting Podbabiogórze folklore. They are also targeted at activating the youth, at arousing their interest in the rich cultural heritage of their small fatherland. We do believe that the workshop participants will become members of the existing regional folk bands or those to be formed.

Promotion of the local brand "Podbabiogórze"

An important task that we took upon ourselves in the project under implementation is to create and promote the local brand "Podbabiogórze" associated with the area covered by the IRDS (Integrated Rural Development Strategy). Such approach enables better identification of the area we operate in. We do our best so that our brand can become equally well-known and popular as that of for example "Podhale".

To this end we introduced certification of local products from Podbabiogórze in three categories: artistic-handicraft product, services and foodstuffs. In total, the LAG granted 50 promotion logos "Łączy nas Babia Góra" (Babia Góra Unites us). An important initiative was the establishment of a virtual Babiogórze shop as a promotion and distribution network which, beside an obvious increase in the local product value, will contribute to improving the quality of life by enabling the inhabitants to apply



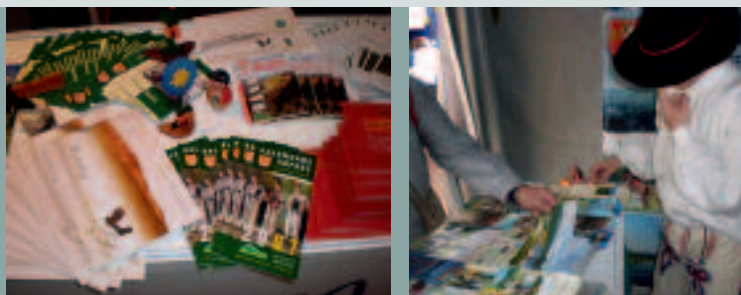
IT solutions. Products with the "Łączy nas Babia Góra" logo are promoted in the shop, including baskets from Łuba (wooden articles), products from Apiary in Zagroda Dolna (multi-flower honey and honeydew), smoked cheese with herbs, rennet cheese, cheese noodles, embroidery with lace (handicraft), Carmelite balm in honey. Thanks to common actions, the portal was created with the aim of enabling small manufactures access to markets. Local products from Podbabiogórze are invaluable to us and their considerable potential may contribute to the development of local entrepreneurship, the local heritage being preserved.

Another element of the brand promotion was the LAG's Association "Podbabiogórze" participation in tourist fairs. We attended the 9th Małopolska Agri-tourism Exchange, 15th Tourist Fair "TT Warsaw" and 16th Tourist Fair "Market Tour" held during the Picnic on the Oder River in Szczecin. The fairs were an excellent opportunity for presenting the tourist and agri-tourist offer as well as local products from the "Podbabiogórze" area. The fact that our stand at the "TT Warsaw Fair" was so frequently visited proves that our decision

to promote the area around Babia Góra as Podbabiogórze was right.

The Picnic on the Oder River comprises numerous festivities:

- 16th Tourist Fair “Market Tour”
- Euro-regional Tourist Presentations POMERANIA TOUR
- Festival of Regional Cuisines
- 2nd Book Festival



Everything took a form of family festivities and outdoor games. Thanks to such form, the event was attended by many people. At our stand we displayed a tourist offer from Podbabiogórze and our typical local products and well as leaflets and catalogues published by the LAG Podbabiogórze. The Catalogue of Podbabiogórze Local Products generated a particularly great interest. The Fair was attended by 40 000 people, many of whom visited our Podbabiogórze stand. They were not ordinary “leaflet collectors”, but expressed great interest in specific Podbabiogórze offers: trips, tourist routes, agri-tourism, accommodation, cycling trails and local products. We answered numerous detailed questions posed by inquisitive persons. Our organisation was the only one from southern Poland at the fair.

of Podbabiogórze”, one of the leading themes was the application of new know-how and new technologies whose goal was to increase competitiveness of the tourist sector services. During the project delivery the LAG, Association “Podbabiogórze”, organised numerous training sessions in management and application of new technologies in the tourist sector. The most important element of the action was the launch of the website devoted to Tourist Information Desks in Podbabiogórze. The Internet portal ensures easily accessible information on tourist attractions as well as services and events in our region. It will be constantly updated and will play a role of a newspaper with interesting news, announcements and telephone directory. Those concerned will be able to learn where to buy small souvenirs from Podbabiogórze, where to spend a social evening with friends or where to find accommodation. This is the way of exchanging information between the Internet users living in the suski powiat and people interested in the region. Each of the users may post and update information on the portal which immediately becomes available to those interested.

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Another method of our region’s consistent promotion is our website. In the framework of the project implemented “Tourism, Culture and Local Product – the most Precious Value



Information on implementation of Measure 2.7

Pilot Programme Leader + Scheme II

Implementation of projects under Scheme II of the Pilot Programme Leader+ is coming to an end. By 31 January 2008, five final payment claims were submitted by Local Action | Groups (LAG) to the Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture FAPA. Most of the projects shall be completed in March and April 2008. To smoothly finalise PPL+, FAPA sent to all beneficiaries a letter informing them about the mode of work and requirements for closing the Programme and posted the relevant implementation documentation on website: www.fapa.org.pl. It is of crucial importance that projects be completed on time and final payment claims lodged by the dates set out in the agreement. The process of payment claim verification and project closure is likely to be smooth as annexes to the agreements should not be signed or the deadlines for payment claim submission extended any more (which was the case in previous periods). However, account ought to be taken of the fact that at the present stage the process is more labour consuming for both LAGs and FAPA as it is necessary to settle the whole project, including the first payment and to possibly make corrections or to reimburse funds as well as to draw up and verify final reports.

By January 2008, 317 payment claims totalling PLN 37 million were lodged. Resulting from the positive verification of claims, 161 payment orders for PLN 17 million were issued. Compared to the previous period, projects were implemented more rapidly, however, relative to the value of all agreements signed (PLN 98.5 million) as little as 40% of the tasks were carried out (based on the payment claims lodged). Since Measure 2.7, Pilot Programme Leader+ under the Sectoral Operational Programme "Restructuring and Modernisation of the Food Sector and Rural Development" has to be completed and closed in 2008, the projects must be implemented by the dates provided for in the agreements as otherwise there might be problems about making payments.

Krzysztof Janiak

FAPA, Rural Development Unit



Rural Development Programmes for 2007-2013 in Selected European Union Member States

Following positive verification of the Polish Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013, accepted relatively early, i.e. in July 2007, over a dozen or so programmes of other member states were approved by the European Union authorities. Within the next few months rural development programmes from the remaining EU member states and regions should be accepted. The programme drawn up by Romania as well as several regional schemes are waiting for acceptance. Overall, in 2007-2013 around 94 different programmes will be implemented in EU rural areas to support broadly understood rural development.

According to the review of the documents approved, the programmes vary depending on the selected tasks and priorities of the rural policy pursued in 2007-2013, which is reflected in the share of particular measure axes in the total programme budget. This is a consequence of the general assumption that the states draw up and accept their own programmes which must comply with the general framework set at the EU level. The basis for them are, inter alia, Council Regulation No 1698/05 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and strategic EU guidelines for rural development. The EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel, emphasised many times that there does not exist a unique solution suitable for all rural areas of the EU. The programmes are part of the strategy for the coming years. In addition, expected changes in agricultural policy resulting from the review under the Health Check should be taken into account. They are very likely to be aimed at increasing funds allocated for rural development in the Community. According to the European Commission, of increasing importance is the economic development in rural areas in the off-farming sector. Under axis 3 this type of measures and diversification into non-agricultural activities are envisaged and funds for such objectives are earmarked. However, based on the allocation of funds for rural development in EU member states, it can be concluded that most of them take a negative approach to investment in an off-farming sector as they consider it to be the mainstream activity under Axis 1 or Axis 2 measures.

Below you will find the arrangements adopted for 2007-2013 in the national programmes of two member states: Austria and Portugal. The former state gives priority to Axis 2 (Improving the environment and rural areas), whereas the latter puts special emphasis on Axis 1 (Improving competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sectors). In both countries a relatively small amount of financial resources, which is also true of the majority of other Community states and regions, was allocated to Axis 3 (quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy).

Austria

A characteristic feature of Austria is a substantial share of mountainous areas (over 60% of the territory). Furthermore, nearly 80% of the territory is classified as less favoured areas (LFA). 78% of the Austrian population (8 million) live in areas that have a rural character. Most of them is characterised by valuable nature resources, clean natural environment and rich cultural heritage.

In reaction to a specific situation, i.e. the geographical location (an Alp country) and special needs of the people living in such areas, great importance is attached to the environmental protection and landscape maintenance. Under the rural development programme for 2007-2013, out of the total budget of EUR 7.82 billion, a decisive part was allocated to Axis 2 measures (more than EUR 5.66 billion, of which 50% are EU funds). The Axis budget will include agri-environmental measures, which are the top priority, with a broad range of tasks in this field. Agri-environmental measures, together with LFA payments will make up 90% of the funds allocated to Axis 2. All the payments made for this group of measures will contribute to the protection of sensitive eco-systems in rural areas and will be used to remunerate farmers who will decide to improve environmental protection. Under Axis 1 (more than EUR 540 million from the EAFRD, in total EUR 1.07 billion) the most important will be the following: modernisation of agricultural holdings, support for establishment of young farmers, aid for investment in agricultural and forestry infrastructure as well as agricultural product value added in the form of processing and sales aids. The smallest amount of funds will be allocated to Axis 3 as almost 2/3 of its budget (EUR 506 million, including EUR 254 million from the new EU fund) will be channelled to the two mainstream measures: basic services for the economy and rural population and nature protection in rural areas. As for Axis 4, including implementation of Leader-type measures, EUR 423 million will be allocated (EUR 213 million from the EU budget).

Portugal

Rural areas account for 85% of the state territory and are sparsely populated. Out of the total area, 81% is classified as LFA and 21% belongs to the Natura 2000 network. In the current programming period Portugal's objective will be to improve the competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sectors as well as to support landscape and nature conservation and economic and social renewal of rural areas. Great emphasis was placed on competitiveness – it is the top priority of rural development programmes, while improving competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector is the main pillar on which rural development strategy was based. Therefore, Axis 1 is also the most important one as regards the financial criterion (almost 50% of the total programme budget amounting to EUR 4.44 billion). Other objectives laid down in the national programme include: sustainable landscape management and

more dynamic economy in rural areas. In the framework of Axis 1 measures (EUR 2.08 billion of public financial resources, including EUR 1.56 from the EU Fund), in addition to general support of competitiveness, other issues were taken into account, i.e. strategic sectors were given favourable treatment (fruit and vegetables, flowers, olive oil, wine, high quality products) and improvement of irrigation systems as well as promotion of know-how and human capital development were included.

Axis 2 (EUR 1.77 billion in total, of which EUR 1.44 billion EU contribution) includes the following priorities:

- support to maintain economic activity in LFAs and mountainous areas,
- organic and integrated farming,
- agri-environmental measures.

As regards Axis 3, measures to be implemented following a Leader-type approach, more than EUR 6.68 million was allocated (EUR 5.06 million from the EU budget). The top priority of Axis 3 will be the protection of natural and cultural heritage in rural areas. EUR 452.9 million (EUR 360.6 million from EU) was assigned to support the selected integrated strategies that are in line with the Leader principles.

Compiled by

Marta Leoniak

based on source materials from the European Commission



Trust in the LEADER Programme

— on social factors of rural development

Introduction:

Trust is a frequently ignored factor that affects the quality of life and a possibility of cooperation in rural areas. However, ranging from ordinary situations, such as neighbour's help to actions taken by all communities, it is trust in our close family, inhabitants, members of the community, authorities, non-governmental organisations' activists, which seems to be an element determining a success or failure of a given undertaking. Furthermore, examples of countries with strongly consolidated local communities, such as Ireland, Spain, Scandinavian states illustrate that the willingness and ability to cooperate and to create jointly a vision and to take concrete actions may to a large extent compensate for the lack of financial resources, an unfavourable financial or demographic situation. In the period of change, activities in rural areas must rely on the skill of cooperation, trust and mutual assistance. In this context the situation in Polish rural areas is specific. One of major problems the inhabitants of Polish villages face is a relatively small capacity to cooperate and take common action. Leaving aside complex causes of that situation, frequently connected with the historical heritage, at the outset it should be noted that this phenomenon has impact on numerous aspects of rural life, manifesting itself in a low level of citizen activity in the whole country as well. In this context particular emphasis should be put on programmes and mechanisms conducive to building up trust which, by strengthening the communities' capability to take action, have a significant impact on the potential and future opportunities of Polish rural areas. One of the most important and certainly most powerful tools for setting up the network of trust is at present the LEADER+ programme. In this article I will try to examine, on the one hand, how this mechanism may develop trust in the areas covered by the programme. On the other, I will endeavour to at least give a partial answer to the question to what extent the capacity to cooperate and to take common action is an indispensable condition for the proper functioning of partnerships and on which elements should LAG (Local Action Group) members focus to build the trust-based foundation for further rural development.

Trust levels in Polish rural areas

To become aware of the social background of the partnerships' activity in Poland and to realise how much is to be done in Poland to increase the capacity to cooperate, account should be taken of key data describing the trust level, the willingness and ability to cooperate or to take joint actions in rural areas.

Data showing the trust level in Polish villages are presented in cyclical reports of the Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture. Of crucial importance are two tables presenting specific social characteristics of rural areas.

Table 1. *The level of generalised trust in rural areas. Data expressed in %.* (FDPA 2006: 102)

	Generally, you can trust most people	You should be cautious in relations with other people	It is difficult to say
Poland	19	79	2
Villages	15	82	3
Farmers	5	94	1

Table 2. *The level of trust in neighbours and local authorities. Data expressed in %.* (FDPA 2006: 102)

	Trust in neighbours	Trust in commune authorities
Poland	75	56
Villages	81	61
Farmers	87	66

The above data show an interesting feature of rural communities. They trust people with whom they have direct contact. According to the data, the trust level is decreasing in the case of people and institutions an interviewee is not in direct contact with. Therefore, in order to effectively increase activity of the rural population, it is necessary to introduce measures at a local level and to get straight to the communities by establishing direct contact.

While attempting to sum up the outcome of the survey, it should be emphasised that a specific atmosphere of distrust prevails in rural areas. It is easy to predict that a low trust level affects negatively the ability to cooperate, to collaborate and to take joint actions by rural inhabitants. The research conducted by Professor Andrzej Kaleta in one of the communes in northern Poland indicates that over 65% of its inhabitants were not involved and did not intend to be involved in the development of the local community and their nearest area. Most respondents shift the burden of taking actions on public institutions as they are obliged by law to act.

Here, once again two questions of utmost importance in this study can be asked: (1) what is the impact of such a low level of trust, capacity or willingness to act together on the establishment and operation of Local Action Groups and (2) is LEADER capable of strengthening or exerting a positive influence on the trust level?

Do Polish villages need trust?

Before we discuss the part directly related to the LEADER programme, we should consider why, in fact, trust is such a crucial factor that can determine the situation and prospects of rural communities. It is obvious that collective actions, participation in NGOs, the ability to cooperate, to carry out joint activities in order to achieve a common, not an individual, objective, bring about better effects. However, it must be admitted that the importance of trust goes far beyond accelerating the community animation. It is the trust level which to a large extent determines the development prospects of individuals and whole groups. If we trust institutions, organisations, people from other communities, we open ourselves to new knowledge, experience and patterns. This has impact on lowering costs of pro-development measures and on improving the information flow. It also facilitates the introduction of innovation, increases the capacity to take risk and to build up trust in public institutions. As a result, all these elements facilitate economic development¹. While playing an active part in the community life, we cooperate with individuals and institutions which frequently have greater knowledge, experience or power. In this case, proper action requires delegation of powers or trust in the partner and transfer of some responsibilities to him/her. Distortion of the process may lead to irregularities such as laying too much responsibility on certain individuals or institutions or may disrupt the functioning of the whole partnership. Examples of micro-loans and such initiatives as Grameen Bank or Rotating Savings and Credit Associations show that by relying on trust spectacular effects can be obtained, e.g. eliminating poverty even among the most deprived communities in the world. Furthermore, in the case of the aforementioned programmes, economic development was the outcome of building the solid foundation resting on the growing capacity of particular individuals, organisations and institutions to cooperate.

The last element of trust, the most difficult to capture, though equally important, is life comfort. This is a category frequently mentioned by sociologists and political scientists studying the level of trust and its impact on the functioning of local communities². Generally, they claim that the community built on mutual trust of inhabitants, authorities at various levels and associations offers greater possibilities of stable collective and individual development.

LEADER Programme as a mechanism for developing trust in rural areas

Certainly, due to the lack of evaluation studies on a greater scale, it is difficult to assess the real effectiveness of the

¹ (Aldridge, Halpern, Fitzpatrick, 2002)

² (Putnam 1995)

programme. At this stage all the data come from small projects implemented by particular partnerships and the results thereof should be treated as an indication, an attempt at initial identification of the problem, not as final. To get to the core of the issue, some time ago self-development capacity of rural communities became an important theme in social sciences. Two extreme views dominated in the discussion: the first assumed the natural capacity of rural communities for self-organisation, the second – complicated cultural heritage and non-adaptation of rural inhabitants to a democratic reality. When examining the capacity for cooperation and trust in rural areas, it can be concluded that by definition the LEADER mechanisms, such as establishment of tri-sectoral partnerships, networks at local and regional levels, involvement of communities into the formulation of development strategies, seem to draw on social energy of region's inhabitants, thereby organising them into a modern institutional structure and breaking a bi-polar vision of rural development. Moreover, as has been pointed out by researchers into rural issues, the most effective way to increase the community's capacity for cooperation is to exploit its potential while transferring know-how and moderating external processes³. In its practice, LEADER seems to depart from the division into bottom-up development and expert-led development by combining major elements of the two approaches.

However, when analysing the results of the studies on the LEADER programme, certain discrepancy between the objectives set and the practice must be emphasised. First of all, to be able to treat the LEADER initiative as an important tool for building trust and capacity for cooperation in rural areas, its activities should take roots in local communities. However, the practice of the programme implementation shows that LAGs (Local Action Groups) operate in a much larger area. Thus, the real partnerships' impact on whole communities might be problematic. At this stage of implementation LEADER seems to focus on particular points, building up trust within particular networks (e.g. public institutions, NGOs integrated into LAGs). Without underestimating the significance of such activities, which create a good climate for cooperation between units that have not collaborated with each other before, it is worthwhile to think if there is a chance of fuller animation of all communities. The answer to the question thus posed would be to encourage LAGs to perform the function of an "umbrella". It would involve, for instance, support for the system of small grants as well as initiatives and ideas put forward directly by the local community. In addition, assistance may take a form of a transfer of know-how and skills, thereby transforming the LAG into a specific incubator of civic activities in a given area. This would enable LAGs to have an indirect, however, real impact on social development of all regions, without limiting themselves to key, but "point-related" initiatives. Furthermore, partnerships could thus become a kind of platform for reaching agreement, a place

where visions and initiatives of both inhabitants and institutions are presented.

Another element worth strengthening is partnership. If it is true that a certain atmosphere of distrust in individuals and institutions not connected directly with the place the community lives in prevails in rural areas, the LAG may become, through incubation of local initiatives and combination of various sectors' activities, the first organisation that will create among rural inhabitants a positive image of the public or non-governmental sectors. Aiming at strengthening the social potential of their regions, LAGs should get to the ideas and initiatives conceived within particular communities.

Obviously, the problem has been outlined here only. However, it is crucial that the opportunities offered by LEADER should be not wasted. To this end it is indispensable to go beyond ideology, the general motto of the programme. Partnerships set up for the purposes of the LEADER Programme cover vast areas in geographical and social terms. The population density in rural areas is on average in Poland 50 people per square km (FDPA, 2006) and one Local Action Group operating in rural communities up to 100 000 inhabitants has relatively small possibilities of making impact on the whole area. It is for this reason that such great emphasis is put in this article on creating networks through support for smaller initiatives. It is crucial that LAGs operating in this manner have a possibility of "imposing the definition of the situation", i.e. by supporting the local potential and activity the partnership may shape it in an appropriate way (e.g. by imposing high organisational standards, requiring transparency and devolving responsibility for smaller measures downwards to the community). This would permit to fill the social vacuum, thereby increasing gradually the level of trust in neighbours, public institutions, local government authorities, NGOs operating at various levels.

Trust in of Local Action Groups' practice

The last element that should be dealt with, while discussing the issue of trust is its impact on the formation and everyday work of partnerships. It seems to exert a large influence on the real shape of the LEADER Programme in Poland. However, it is not so that low trust and capacity for cooperation has impact on the level of projects implemented by a given group only. It also influences the creation of mutual relations within a partnership and has a negative impact on the effectiveness of its activities and the development prospects of a given LAG. In this context opinions voiced by some researchers that the process of LAGs' formation and operation has been distorted should not be regarded as astonishing. A strong domination of one sector leads to the establishment of clientelistic and colonised partnerships. On the other hand, there are numerous groups that have managed to avoid such crunch and whose authority is exercised

³ (Fox 1996)

relatively equitably and partnerships operate extremely effectively. This gives rise to a question whether it is possible to put the problematic LAGs on the right track, to create anew, new models of cooperation between various partners of different power potential or, in other words, to create an atmosphere of trust within the group. Obviously, I do not claim the right to produce ready-made solutions, moreover, the process is most likely to be extremely complicated and staggered in time. However, such tools as training for moderators, persons animating the work of LAGs, may bring about positive effects. Their outcome could be solving conflicts and dismantling, by the trained personnel, structures and situations potentially threatening to the operation of a given group. Such a person would have a possibility of encouraging or even enforcing collaboration and cooperation. In consequence, this would permit to generate new standards of cooperation, thereby strengthening trust among the cooperating partners.

Finally, I would like to present two charts. Picture 1 shows a model example of LAG operation that may enhance trust and capacity of cooperation. Picture 2 presents an outcome of the research carried out in one of Polish LAGs, observed during the implementation of the Pilot Programme LEADER+ project. The analysis of the charts may indicate the need for a certain adjustment of measures carried out by the partnerships.

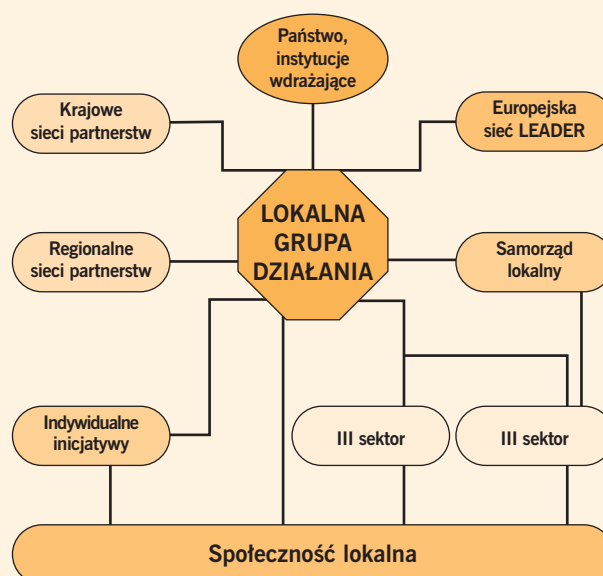
The first model example shows the LAG connecting the activities of institutions and structures of a different type. In this type of arrangement, partnership is a kind of bridge between the inhabitants and organisations. If trust is limited to the institutions outside the local level, such group may seem to fulfil intermediary functions, gradually familiarising the inhabitants with activities of NGOs and public organisations as well as those of state and private entrepreneurs. In the first example the LAG has a possibility of going beyond the local area, by transferring know-how and experience from the region to the national and European levels. When translated into the network language, the partnership thus formed permits the local community to “get connected”, to increase the possibilities of taking actions. In consequence, this may have a positive impact in the form of greater trust in persons, institutions and initiatives focussed on rural development operating at various levels. As regards the functioning of the partnership, the first model enables people operating in a LAG to preserve independence. Influence of public bodies, NGOs and ministerial institutions is balanced. Maintaining direct contact with the community of a given area and NGOs operating locally enables the LAG’s work to take roots, creating a sound basis for its operation.

The second chart refers to the research carried out in one of the LAGs and indicates a certain asymmetry in the partnership formation. In the second model, a key, central role is played by the local government and the partnership is just an element supporting its actions. Thus, the group’s potential is not fully

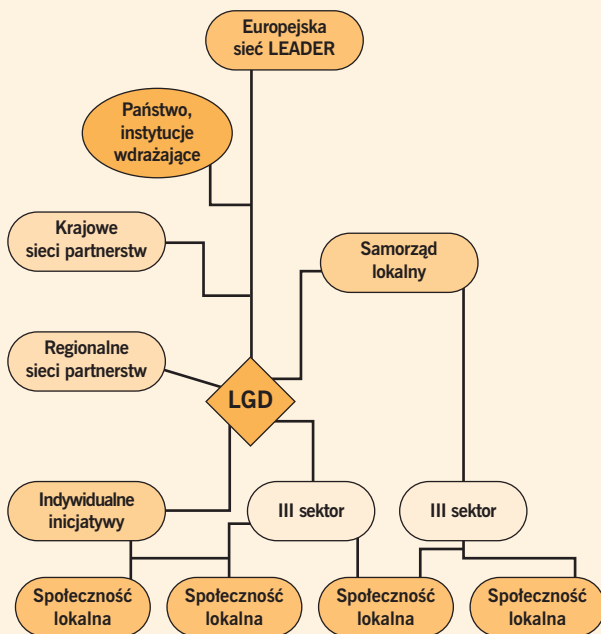
exploited and the benefits from the transfer of examples and know-how may not impact the social life of particular villages. This example shows that the LAG may become one more NGO operating on the regional level. Obviously, LAG fulfils an essential role. However, being dominated by one sector and with few links with local organisations and the communities themselves, the LAG is of rather marginal importance from the view point of building up trust and capacity for collaboration at the whole region’s level. Wrong organisation of the group’s measures does not let it go beyond the programme’s motto, diluting the innovativeness of the mechanism. In other words, the second example shows how, entangled in locally specific conditions, the LAG loses some of the possibilities of influencing the development and future of rural areas.

In addition, a crucial, though unnoticed problem, is the diversification of the local communities, to which the initiative is addressed. In this specific example, the fragmentation aimed at meeting the needs of all areas covered by the programme, combined with the lack of measures to support such cooperation, leads to the marginalisation of the programme’s significance on the region’s level. While examining an internal structure of such partnership, account should be taken of its ostensible character. The public sector remains the most important disposer of funds, while internally LAG’s members seem to be dependent on the stronger actor. This makes it difficult to mobilise and moderate social activity of the area’s inhabitants.

Picture 1. A model example of LAG’s operation (from the perspective of mechanisms for building social potential in the area)



Picture 2. Observed model of LAG's operation (from the perspective of mechanisms for building social potential in the area)



Państwo, instytucje wdrażające – State, implementing authorities
 Krajowe sieci partnerstw – National partnership networks
 Europejska sieć Leader – European Leader Network
 Regionalne sieci partnerstw – Regional partnership networks
 LOKALNA GRUPA DZIAŁANIA – LOCAL ACTION GROUP
 Samorząd lokalny – Local government
 Indywidualne inicjatywy – Individual initiatives
 III sektor – 3rd sector
 Społeczność lokalna – Local community
 Zdolność do współpracy, współdziałania, zaufanie – Capacity for cooperation and collaboration; trust

To sum up this article, it must be emphasised that the problem of building up trust, creating patterns of collaboration and cooperation seems to be one of major elements shaping the future of rural areas. Certainly, it is an extremely complicated problem and LAGs do not only have to cope with the lack of trust in the area where they operate but they also experience the lack of trust among its partners. I am convinced that LEADER has the potential and mechanisms permitting to build up greater trust and capacity for cooperation in rural communities. This imposes fundamental requirements on partnerships. The effects of the social potential strengthening will not be seen immediately. Furthermore, these are difficult and costly measures, not always in line with the urgent need for co-financing investment projects, key initiatives. On the other hand, Leader is a kind of laboratory, a tool thanks to which we may confront non-typical problems. However, that requires the change in the mode of taking action, making actors aware of the social factors of rural development. The examples of the states with strong social links, given in the introduction to this article, show that the cooperating local community may become the basis for economic development.

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