

Western Stara Planina region – Bulgaria, cross-visit to Viscri/Saschiz, Târnava Mare, Romania

Visiting LA: Western Stara Planina Region HNV-Link partner: STEP Foundation Bulgaria

Host LA: Dealurile Clujului Est HNV-Link partner: USAMV Cluj-Napoca Romania

Dates: 25th-27th of June 2018

1. Participants in the cross-visit:

Between 25-27 June, a group of 12 stakeholders from the Western Stara Planina Region, Bulgaria visited the Târnava Mare region, Romania. The group consisted of researchers, advisors, farmers, producers, LAG representatives, (see the list of participants from Bulgaria, Annex 1). The visit was also attended by a group of 11 key actors from Dealurile Clujului Est, Romania (see the list of participants from Romania, Annex 2). The Romanian team consisted of researchers, farmers, LAG representatives. The Romanian team was accompanied by Maite Puig de Morales, the HNV-Link representative.

2. The objectives of the cross-visit were:

- to promote good –case scenarios in the area of social and marketing innovation;
- to give stake-holders the possibility to learn from other experiences;
- to see and understand inspiring HNV innovations shared by a motivated group of farmers, LAG members, NGOs, veterinary and advisory experts in the visited region.

3. The Programme of the visit (See Annex 3):

1st Day of the CROSS-Visit: 25th of June 2018

The meeting of the two groups took place in the afternoon, at the headquarters of the ADEPT Foundation in Saschiz, Mureş County. The meeting began with a presentation of all participants, the briefing on the Dealurile Clujului Est region in Romania and the visited LA Western Stara Planina Region, Bulgaria. The ADEPT Foundation representative, Ben Mehedin made a briefing of the Târnava area

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regarding the socio-economic aspects and history, a summary of the Foundation's activities, particularly in field of biodiversity conservation. A presentation of the programme of the cross-visit was made and the objectives pursued in the framework of the visit were also discussed.

The first objective of the visit was in relation to the Local Action Group Dealurile Târnavelor. The continuation of HNV farming in the area represents a priority for the LAG: "All the HNV aspects are in the selection criteria, in the type of activities that are financed by the LAG. We are always trying to link the activities and the measures with the conservation of biodiversity." (Anca Gaspar, LAG representative and Cristian Gherghiceanu, ADEPT representative).



Fig. 1 LAG Dealurile Târnavelor, Saschiz, Mureș County

The Tourist Information Centre Saschiz and Saschiz Pottery Workshop were visited, both representing alternative income sources for the rural community in the region. ADEPT is carrying out an integrated programme linking economic and social benefits with biodiversity conservation.

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Fig. 2 Tourist Information Centre, Saschiz, Mureș County



Fig. 3 Saschiz Pottery Workshop

In order to link the economic and social benefits with biodiversity conservation SES Fruleco was created more than 10 years ago - a community food processing unit which uses an innovative marketing scheme: baskets with local products, local branding, mobile phone apps, and a cooled delivery vehicle, to diversify the products using local resources.

The products made in the commune kitchen are unitary bottled and labelled with the logo SES Fruleco and the logo of the region Tarnava Mare indicating the identity of the region and adding value to the products.

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Fig. 4 SES Fruleco / Food Processing Unit

"The community processing unit was the most impressive thing for me, as such a model of organization would solve many of the problems of capitalizing on the products in the rural area. It is possible to have such an authorized processing point in every commune in our country, certainly taking into account the specificity of the area and the products obtained locally. In my opinion, it would be a successful model to help the development of small farmers, as they would be able to add value to the products they obtain on their farms or even to those collected from the spontaneous flora." (Florin Burzo, Farmer).

From Saschiz the participants travelled to Viscri, one of the Saxon villages of Transylvania, but a special one, due to its great fortified village church which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage. Here is where the debriefing after the first visits took place – the lessons learned; success factors; needs in the home learning area, tasting of local products and accommodation.



Fig. 5 Viscri, Braşov County

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2nd Day of the CROSS-Visit: 26th of June 2018

During the second day, there were field visits to a sheepfold, to the milking collecting point and meeting with members of the farmers' association in the Viscri area. The first case study seen was the Green Infrastructure Sheepfold Model that combines innovation with tradition to maintain historic management linked to traditional food and local incomes, and traditional way of life in villages. These are combined with touristic activities as a form of income diversification.

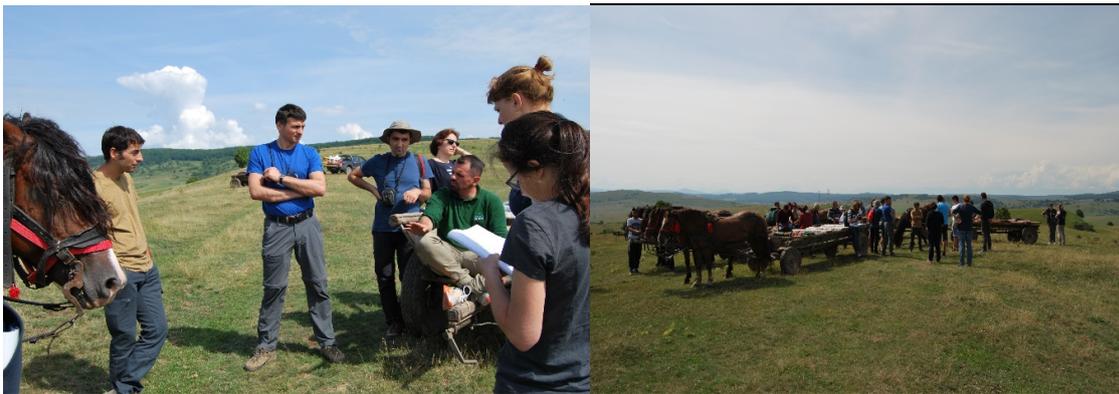


Fig. 6. Discussions on the grazing management on the way to the sheepfold

The sheepfold uses solar panels thus helping shepherds to improve their living conditions while staying with their flocks of sheep in the hills in the summer - electric light, power to charge their mobile phones to keep in touch with their families and to be able to use hot water to increase the hygienic condition up on the hills. In order to protect the pastures, an innovative "easy to move" mobile fence was used, but without great success. Local cheese and vegetables were tested at the sheepfold.



Fig. 7. Visit at the sheepfold near Viscri

On the way back to Viscri, a traditional blacksmith house was visited. The family makes horseshoes for the village but also represents a touristic attraction.



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Fig. 8 The blacksmith from Viscri, Braşov County



Fig. 9 Debriefing in the middle of the cross-visit.

The cross-visit continued with the meeting with the Viscri Farmers Association and the visit of the milk collection point. The ideas learned were: the necessity of bringing together simple training, equipment and negotiation for milk prices in order to solve economic and landscape conservation problems with minimal expenses; increased the viability of the association with innovative mowers – significant surfaces of abandoned meadows were reclaimed back to good hay land. The discussions were focused on issues like pasture management, feeding and marketing of the local products (milk, cheese, meat, etc.).

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The SMS System was presented, that is a free information service for farmers in the area, who regularly receive SMS messages on their mobile phones, suited to their needs.



Fig. 10 Discussions with the farmers from the Viscri Association

Strengthening the association is a tool for spreading innovation and improved milk quality.



Fig. 11 The milk collection point from Viscri

The 2nd day finished with the dinner in the agro touristic guesthouse (Viscrista 125) with local food and drinks and a surprise for the participants: the show of the traditional dance band from Viscri.

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Fig.12 The traditional dance band from Viscri

3rd Day of the CROSS-Visit: 27.06.2018

The 3rd day began with the presentation of Angofa innovative nature school made by Răzvan Popa, ADEPT Foundation. The farming school would be an educational centre for children from villages in the areas of Sighișoara–Târnava Mare. It will teach schoolchildren the importance of the natural heritage and environment preservation- Children will learn to understand and respect the environment; how wild plants and animals depend on how humans interact with the environment; how a clean environment provides healthy food, air and water.



Fig. 13 Presentation of Angofa innovative nature school and the conclusions of the visit

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The aspects of the Western Stara Planina key actors cross-visit to Viscri/Saschiz, Târnava Mare, Romania were presented in a report by a national TV channel ProTV.



Fig. 14 Cross-visit on ProTV

The visit finished in the city of Sighișoara, a popular tourist destination for its well-preserved walled old town, which is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

4. Conclusions of the visit

The cross-visit to Romania accomplished its objectives. There were exchanges of ideas, debates, contact exchanges for future connections between farmers from the two learning area, a lot of innovations and nice memories to take home for both teams.

The Bulgarian team was impressed especially by two aspects: - "the association of farmers (...) we asked a lot of questions about this aspect and we are going to speak with our authorities to make changes in legislation in order to encourage the association"; - "we were impressed by SES Fruleco, which was created 11 year ago, at first to show the best practices for

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farmers (...) but then it turned out to be a place where farmers can produce and sell their products in a better way, while respecting the food safety conditions. This initiative can be easily replicated in Bulgaria and these are the messages we are going to *take home*. ” (Vyara Stefanova, researcher, HNV-link, STEP).



Fig. 15 The participants in the cross-visit, Saschiz, Mureş County

The Romanian participants took back some innovations to their learning area: -”During our cross-visit in Târnava Mare we had the opportunity to visit innovative projects implemented in similar regions as ours. Activities and projects implemented by Adept Association are great examples of sustainable rural development. The way they integrate different sectors, such as agriculture and farmers, local authorities, NGOs, built and natural heritage, HNV fields and created tourist products using good quality marketing, is inspiring and it is a lesson to be learned for us. The information that was gathered during these visits can be used in my everyday work as an advisor for Local Action Groups in North Transylvania” (Laura Incze, LAG Someş Transilvan);

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-“The most noteworthy aspect to be observed, in my opinion, is the strategy they have been able to implement in the area, that is, the opportunity to capitalize on all the "goods" available in the area, the tourist potential, the gastronomic richness, the agricultural activities, animal husbandry, the blacksmith of the village. It is my belief that such an integrated area strategy, while also considering the specifics, would be a successful model for the sustainable development and HNV practices of all the regions of the country.” (Florin Burzo, Farmer).-“As a custodian of Nature 2000 site Eastern Hills of Cluj, I was very interested to find out new methods, through which farmers can increase the value of their products (with positive implications on both the quality of life and on the of grassland with high natural value). During the visit we had the opportunity to see up close such "innovations" as: the milk collection centre, centre for fruit and vegetable processing, tourist information centre, farms equipped with solar panels, traditional ceramic workshop etc. Even though some aspects can still be improved (e.g. lowering of the load of animals/ha), ADEPT team efforts invested in Natura 2000 site, Sighișoara-Târnava Mare are to be admired. I am grateful to the team from USAMV Cluj-Napoca, which through the HNV-Link project made the visit possible in the area Saschiz and Viscri” (Andrei Crișan, researcher, www.lepidoptera.ro).

The USAMV Cluj - Napoca research team wants to express its gratitude to the cross-visit hosts ADEPT NGO and to all participants from Bulgaria and Romania.

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Annex 1.

HNV-Link CROSS-Visits (Viscri/Saschiz, Târnava Mare, Romania)

25-27 June 2018

Cross-visits participation list from Bulgaria

No.	Name and surname	Professional orientation	Organisation	Email address
1	Asen Petrov Petrov	Farmer, Varshets municipality	Farmer, Varshets municipality	iva.pepi@abv.bg
2	Dimitrina Zarkova	Advisor	Chiprovtsi municipality	di60z@abv.bg
3	Grigoriy Stefanov Dimov	Advisor	Regional agricultural advisory office (RAAS)	montana.m@naas.government.bg
4	Irina Veselinova Gerasimova	Cultural	Natural Science Museum	lizards2007@gmail.com
5	Iva Georgieva Haramliyska – Tsenkova	NGO/ researcher	HNVLink; STEP	haramli@abv.bg
6	Latinka Saltirova Simova	LAG representative	LAG “Berkovitza-Godech”	lati_s@abv.bg
7	Mariya Marinova Yunakova	NGO/ researcher	HNVLink; STEP	myunakova@gmail.com
8	Maya Petkova Angelova	Food industry	Sinevka small enterprise for HNV products	sladka_maia@abv.bg

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9	Miroslaba Dikova Zervoudakis	NGO	NGO	miroslavadikova@yahoo.com
10	Petar Denkov	Farmer, Varshets municipality	Farmer, Varshets municipality	
11	Petyo Ivanov Krastev	Farmer/ Regional veterinary service	Farmer/ Regional veterinary service	ovichip@abv.bg
12	Vyara Konstantinova Stefanova	NGO/ researcher	HNVLink; STEP	v.stefanova65@gmail.com

Annex 2.

HNV-Link CROSS-Visits (Viscri/Saschiz, Târnava Mare, Romania)

25-27 June 2018

Cross-visits participation list from Romania

No.	Name and surname	Professional orientation	Organisation	Email adress
1	Burzo Florin	Farmer	Tibles Association	florinburzo22@gmail.com
2	Crisan Andrei	Researcher	LPS NGO	andrei.crel@gmail.com
3	Dumitras Diana	Researcher	HNV-link; USAMV Cluj	ddumitras@usamvcluj.ro
4	Horvath Mihai	Farmer	Somes Aries Cooperative	escaladamihai@yahoo.com
5	Horvath Tatiana	Farmer	Somes Aries Cooperative	escaladamihai@yahoo.com
6	Incze Laura	Advisor	LAG Somes Aries	lauraincze@gmail.com

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7	Ionut Lavinia	Farmer	Someseana Association	lavinia.ionut19@gmail.com
8	Jitea Mugurel	Researcher	HNV-link; USAMV Cluj	mjitea@usamvcluj.ro
9	Katona Roland	Farmer	Someseana Association	kroland19@yahoo.com
10	Mihai Valentin	Researcher	HNV-link; USAMV Cluj	valentin.mihai@usamvcluj.ro
11	Puig de Morales Maite	Researcher	HNV-link;	puigdemorales@iamm.fr
12	Rus Vasile	Farmer	Tibles Association	vasilerus1989@gmail.com

Annex 3.

HNV-Link CROSS-Visits (Viscri/Saschiz, Târnava Mare, Romania)

25-27 June 2018

Programme

Day 1 -25-06-2018

15.00 – Arrival in Saschiz (this can vary accordingly to the traffic between Bulgaria and Romania)

15.00-16.00 – Presentation and accommodation of participants

16.00 – 16.30 - Lunch in Saschiz ADEPT office

16.30- 17.00: Short presentation of the HNVLink project. Briefing on LA Dealurile Clujului and visiting LA. Main needs. Goals of the visit

17.00-18.30: Briefing on area and on ADEPT; Visit SES Fruleco, Food Processing Unit, and Tourist Information Centre and Saschiz Pottery Workshop

Innovations in a nutshell:

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1. SES Fruleco / Food Processing Unit: Community processing / marketing scheme.

Baskets, branding, mobile phone apps, and cooled delivery vehicle. Diversifying the products using local resources

2. Tourist Information Centre/ Saschiz Pottery Workshop

Alternative income sources for rural community. Develop a collectively touristic product to sell value added agricultural HNV products and craft products.

18.30-19.00: Debriefing after the first visits: lessons learned; success factors; needs in the learning area.

19.00-19.45: Transfer to Viscri

20.20-21.30: Supper and night in Viscri, no 22

Day 2 – 26-06-2018

08.30-09.30: Breakfast in Viscri no 22

09.40-11.00: Transportation to the Sheepfold (Viscrici area)

11.00-12.00: Green Infrastructure Model Sheepfold - study case

Innovations in a nutshell:

1. Sheepfold model – combine traditional farming practices with technical innovations

Combining innovation with tradition to maintain historic management linked to traditional food and local incomes, and traditional way of life in villages; Touristic activities as income diversification.

12.00-13.00: Debriefing after the study case: lessons learned; success factors; needs in the learning area.

13.00-14.00: Transfer back to Viscrici

14.00-14.30: Walk in Viscrici area – horseshoe

14.30-16.00: meet Viscrici association. LAG's representatives. Milk collection point plus common grazing system. Discuss about CAP payments problems. SMS System

Innovations in a nutshell:

1. Milk collection point – Strengthening the association as a tool for spreading innovation and improved milk Quality.

Bringing together simple training, small equipment and negotiation for milk prices, to solve economic and landscape conservation problems with minimal expense. Increased viability of the association with innovative mowers.

2. SMS System –

A free information service for Romanian farmers, who regularly receive SMS messages on their mobile phones, suited to their needs.

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16.00 – 17.00 Debriefing after the study case: lessons learned; success factors; needs in the learning area.

17.00-18.00: Optional visit the Medieval fortified church in Viscri

20.00-22.00: Supper and night in Viscri, no 125

Day 3 – 27-06-2018

08.00-09.00: Breakfast in Viscri no 22

09.00-10.10: Transfer to Angofa (explain school, farmhouse and area)

10.10-12.00: Presentation of Angofa farm (explain school, farmhouse and area)

Innovations in a nutshell:

1. ANGOFA innovative nature school –

Teach schoolchildren the importance of the natural heritage, and environment preservation.

12.00 – 13.00 Debriefing after the study case: lessons learned; success factors; needs in the learning area. Next steps and follow up activities

13.30-14.10: Transfer to Sighisoara

14.00-15.00: Lunch in Sighisoara

15.00 : Departure.

