

CCI IN COMMUNITIES: TESTING CCI APPROACHES FOR ADDRESSING LOCAL NEEDS - KULTURCAFÉ

Regional Test Case Documentation

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0. Abstract

Public cultural zone named KULTURCAFÉ is set up as a first gathering point and role model for a multifunctional cultural-creative place in the non-metropolitan industrial area of Jesenice, which will in a long run offer diverse possibilities for gathering and acquiring creative knowledge. This test case explores the cooperation between CCI and the local community, in particular young people and elderly, to jointly work and enjoy creativity, learn new skills and practice multicultural and intergenerational exchange and stand on symbolizing the industrial identity of the neighbourhood.

1. Introduction

The industrial town Jesenice, where steel factory is still the prevailing employer, beside smaller SME-s mainly dealing with metal production and traditional services, there is still a low innovative spirit among the population. Most of the inhabitants are not very much connected - they work mostly in close circles in diverse associations or societies, where they rarely work together and exchange their knowledge or work on new joint items.

The city is also marked with a multicultural environment, since a lot of inhabitants came here to find a job in a steel factory 20 to 40 years ago and in some cases, it is facing first and second generation of migration families. Families are mixed and inclusion processes are slow. The younger generation and even adults, living in the local community, do not have many opportunities for spending quality free time while acquiring innovative knowledge, competences that are nowadays part of the innovative economic development.

According to the situation explained, we wanted to focus on the two main challenges:

How to motivate young people with diverse backgrounds to be involved in creative programmes, where they can express their ideas?

How to further stimulate the cooperation of all actors in the field of CCI, to bundle offers and to develop interesting new offers - with a special focus on the youth?

Since the ironmaking settlement Stara Sava was the heart of the steel industry in the past and was gradually restored through years and now is already revitalized with some public functions like park, museum, partly still needing new content. The opportunity is to generate additional offers in the cultural life of inhabitants, related to their identity of “iron tradition”, which can be part of the industrial area.

2. Objective

The idea of the test case was related to the identity-creating topic, thus we wanted to create a content based on stories that were created through the years of golden industry days. Industrial tradition would be a core message of the new story that would be achieved on numerous ways, like:

- To provide spatial and technical conditions, changing the industrial abandoned objects and plants into galleries, modern culture or educational centres,
- organization of different events, theatrical performances, concerts, art competitions,
- arrangement of recreation areas, playgrounds with connection to the traditional industry,
- creating slogans, symbols, sculptures, typical stories.

Besides keeping up old traditions, new ways would be possible through culture and stimulating the lust for cultural experiments to bind the youth to the region by a new strong identity. The novel about our test case would be to create a context for contemporary creativity and culture for the future development by stimulating the cooperation of all actors in the field of CCI, to bundle offers and to develop interesting new offers - with a special focus on the youth.

3. Applied approach

During the process of developing the test case, we cooperated with Upper Sava Valley Museum in Jesenice (The Museum in Jesenice) to define a community challenge in a former industrial area named Stara Sava. We proceeded from some facts that are typical for this part of the city:

- A beautiful settlement with preserved industrial tradition, which has a lack of interesting programmes and content.
- There are often groups of young people hanging around and spending their free time there, sometimes also damaging the exhibited objects.
- Sometimes older people are waiting for their grandchildren who attend music school there - they expressed the need for socializing in an organized manner.

According to those facts found in the investigation phase, we intended to provide a space with the content that would bring added value to the local community, especially to the young population and elderly, to better spend time and enhance their creativity. We first drew inspiration about the content from the first of such cultural / creative centres in Ljubljana - Metelkova city and tried to adapt it to a smaller peripheral space. We also looked for similar places already working in the region, therefore we found an urban cultural art centre Layer house, which works as a hub of cultural and social life in the capital of Gorenjska region. They started some 10 years ago with developing cultural content, and today they can already boast of international cooperation of artists, cultural figures, creatives and traditional festivals such as regional textile festival BIEN and COLLAGE festival.

Because of implementing this test case as part of the InduCCI project, another project partner helped us with exchanging information about the details of implementation, since they wanted to implement the similar idea in their region. We both wanted to research and develop cooperation between CCI and locals, especially young people.

The procedure of implementation started in 2020, after the detailed concept of the cultural-creative place Kulturcafé was prepared together with the main stakeholders of the area (The Museum in Jesenice, Public fund for culture activities, Adult Education Centre Jesenice, Theatre Tone Čufar Jesenice, photography club, Youth Centre Jesenice...).

The implementation phase was divided into 6 steps of work:

- 1) Preparation of outline plan (graphic design, list of needed equipment) in 2020
- 2) Tender for multimedia devices was launched in January 2021 and different elements of the furniture were bought from March until June 2021
- 3) Space arrangement with the needed equipment for painting and photography workshops, creative challenge for youngsters
- 4) Testing phase with the organized workshops from May to the end of June 2021
- 6) Public event with the exhibition of test case results (paintings, photographs, and performance of the youngsters) on 3 July 2021

4. Results

At the beginning of the implementation phase the content programme of the workshops and creative challenge was prepared together with relevant local stakeholders/societies that contributed with their own topics of organized workshops. The testing programme was implemented physically in the Museum of Jesenice premises in May and June 2021 (when the restriction of gathering more than 10 people was still on, due to the COVID-19 epidemic situation)

- **1 set of 7 painting workshops for 10 adults**

The adults worked on several graphic techniques and approaches together with their mentor, experienced young artist Helena Tahir. They combined their experiments in the final black and white or colour product, which was printed in a special digital printing technique (matte printing). The work took place in a pleasant group under the watchful eye of the mentor, who also conjured up youthful energy and a contemporary view on art. Their products they created based on features connected to the industrial area of Stara Sava and stories of identity-creating topics.

- **1 set of 5 painting workshops for 4 youngsters under 18 years of age**

Painting workshops were led by the academic painter Špela Oblak, who has a lot of experience in leading children's and youth painting workshops. They worked on trendy topics for pupils, like drawing techniques related to the landscape of industrial areas, collage techniques and making comics.

- **1 set of 5 photography workshops for 6 youngsters**

Photography workshops for young people were led by a young experienced photographer from Jesenice, Nik Bertonec. They tested themselves in digital photography, in making their own camera obscura, and in photography, photo development and processing techniques. The workshops took place partly in the field - in the tempting ambience of the Old Sava, where young people searched for motifs of Jesenice's cultural and industrial heritage, and in the studio, where young people processed their own photos under the mentorship.

- **Creative challenge for youngsters - a theatrical performance made by the Jesenice theatre youth group**

The challenge is based on the theme of the Ortenburg Mining Order, a document written in 1381 by Frederick III Ortenenburg. For many centuries, the charter dictated the work and life of the miners in the Jesenice area, so it was interesting to observe how young people would tackle the show. The play was written, directed and scripted by young creative who mentored the group from April until its premiere on 3 July 2021. The performance was recorded and the video is shown on the canals of Museum in Jesenice, and the play will revive the Stara Sava several times if necessary and by agreement.

- **Promotional activities**

We prepared a promotional video of the test case with the impressions of the participants and their satisfaction about the content and work on the workshops. On 3 July 2021, the Museum of Jesenice celebrated its 70th anniversary and they prepared a rich programme, where we exhibited works of art and photographs of creative workshops. In addition, the youth group of the theatre premiered a play directed by the artistic creator as a result of the creative challenge. At the official presentation of the test case one of the participants

of the painting workshops, publicly expressed her enthusiasm for such events and workshops, and everyone agreed that we want more such projects in the future.

The test case brought creativity - "quality time and content"- to young people and elderly and promoted alive connecting community - especially young generation with the creative cultural associations, where people with diverse national background have the opportunity to get to know each other, develop knowledge, skills and help young people learn about creativity, creative sector. We managed to connect some already existing cultural societies (photographers, painters, theatre...) and show youngsters the work of CCI by organizing workshops where they could express their own ideas and skills. Additionally, we also offered also opportunities to older people to socialize, share experiences, participate and exchange with other generations and CCI in the painting workshop. The actions brought some positive vibrant life into that industrial part Stara Sava in Jesenice.

Besides the content part, we also provided multimedia devices and some small needed inventory for the place called Kulturcafé.

Then we ordered needed equipment regarding the defined list in the AF and in the outline plan:

1. Multimedia devices: smart TV, computer, monitor, software for photography design, multifunctional printing and scanning device (6.306,44 EUR in total)
2. Interior furniture: multifunctional cupboard with the table, lockers for the wardrobe, workstation desk with the chair, 5 sitting bags, 45 m of exhibition rails, 20 easels (7.693,21 EUR in total)

Arrangement of the culture-creative space was done for the purpose of establishing a new place for additional programmes offered in the Museum by different cultural and creative associations as well as CCI in the future.

5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

The test case after its implementation fulfilled expectations of a planned idea for a new cultural and creative space that connects local stakeholders/societies and CCI within a quality cultural programme. We can say that in general, the Kulturcafé test case content is well accepted by the local community, creative community and involved participants in the workshops. We gave youngsters and elderly people a chance to express their skills and knowledge but the most important is that those kinds of initiatives will be regularly implemented as part of the cultural-creative centre. The Kulturcafé has a big potential, modular equipment gives several ways of adjustment to different use and purposes of activities. It is very appropriate for thematic workshops and presentation of diverse stakeholders.

Some problems need to be solved in the future:

- We still have to provide technical conditions for the operation of the centre in Ruard-Bucelli Mansion, which renovation was prolonged and the place will be available in the second part of the year 2022. Moreover, there is a lot of work to do to achieve visibility of the space and its content in the general public (promotion, communication strategy, local, regional and international integration ...).
- Some operational minorities in the space have to be arranged by the Museum of Jesenice that is responsible for further development and Kulturcafé management.

- Involve more CCI to be part of the Kulturcafé community, more participants in the workshops, to work on more innovative and interactive ways of product and technology presentation (escape room, creative challenges...)
- More initiatives to attract the local people to that part of the city and to reach the point, when people would feel the environment as a generator of connections, support for new entrepreneurs, meeting point of creative community and production space.

6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

It is very important that we as Business support Centre Kranj made a long-term cooperation agreement with the Museum of Jesenice, which will work as a generator of culture and creative ideas, and that will give them new perspectives, programmes and dedication. An honest wish for synergy and a culture gets together, an active commitment towards the town and society in Jesenice. Moreover, it is also crucial that Kulturcafé is settled in the museum's building and there is a person coordinating the content programme and it is foreseen to be opened for a fixed period of time with the possibility to use equipment for free.

There are many abandoned places, like brownfields, where industry used to have strong power and influence on the social and economic development in Slovenia, as well as wider in Europe. Our test case is an example of how to deal with multicultural environments in those parts of the cities, especially with the bottom-up approach of community's needs. The responsible institutions for issues including inhabitant background in local communities could take care of the multigenerational and multicultural cooperation.

The positive effects, which can be easily transferred to the other industrial areas, are:

- Strengthening local identity through culture and creativity content and boosting creativity
- Merging different societies under a common umbrella
- Involving CCI to help solving the social problems in municipalities
- New innovative cultural/creative offerings in the museums or other public institutions (libraries, co-working centres, development agencies, educational institutions, cultural associations...)

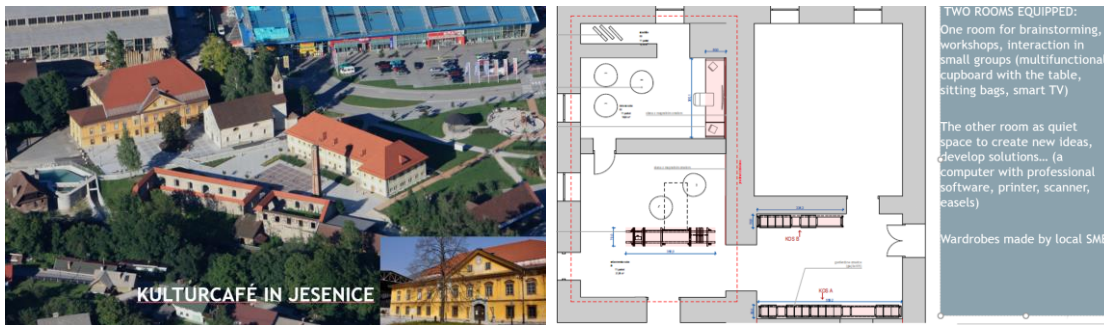
We learned from the Kulturcafé test case that a strong cooperation with all involved stakeholders, which are dealing with the cultural and creative topic, as much as listening to the community and their needs, can bring a great result but it needs strong management. Understanding, trust and support of all included, are the key principles that can be a lesson learnt for the others as well.

7. Annexes

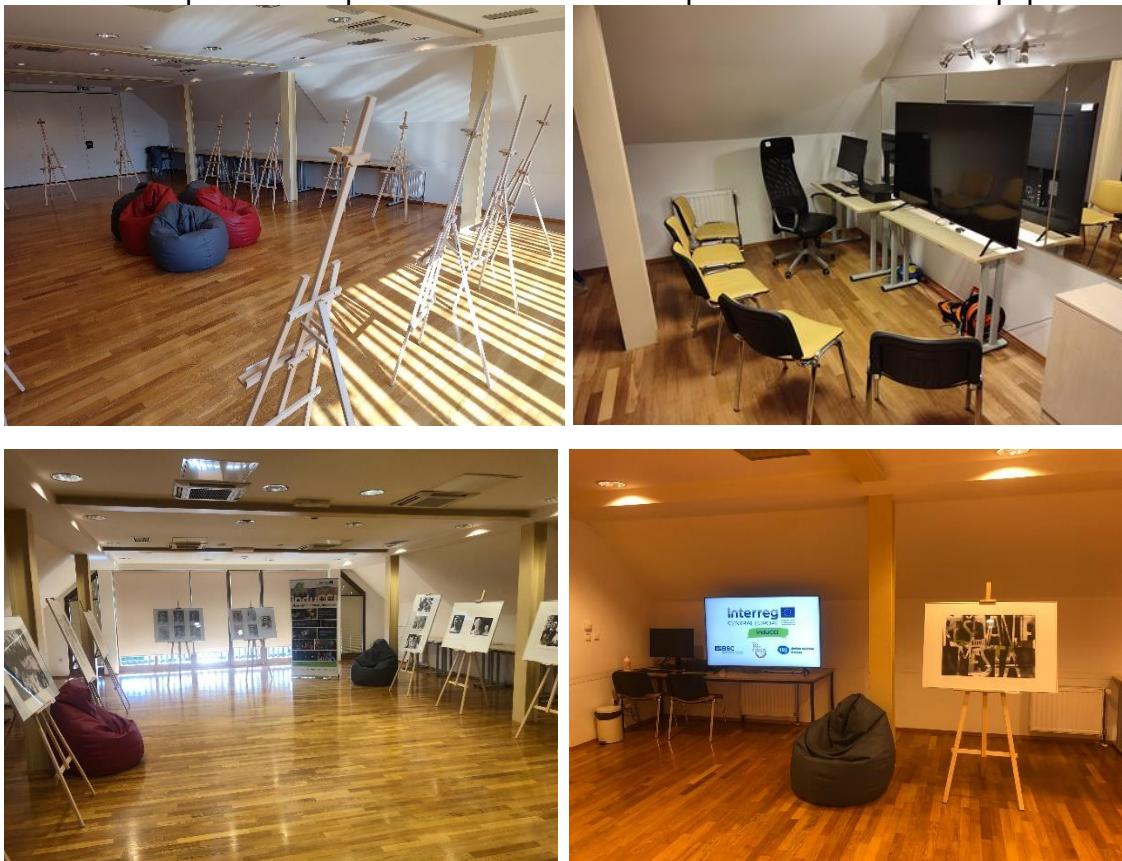
I. INVESTMENT

- The location of the test case

The industrial area of Jesenice: Stara Sava settlement



- The replacement space of culture-creative space Kulturcafé with equipment:





II. PILOT TESTING

- 1 set of 7 painting workshops organized for adults: 10 participants in total



- 1 set of 5 painting workshops for young people under 18 years of age: 4 participants in total



- 1 set of 6 photography workshops for younger people: 6 participants in total



- Creative challenge for young people: Theatrical performance <https://youtu.be/h6dh-PG1rrs>
- Promotional activities:

FB promotion, invitation

Promotional movie about the Kulturcafé pilot test and satisfaction of the workshop's participants: https://youtu.be/FUU-ctQ27_c

Promotional event with presentation of test case results on 3 July 2021

