

# Leader+

Q U A R T E R L Y

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LEADER+  
NETWORK



Dear Readers,

The summertime and early autumn was the period of intense work for Local Action Groups in which they focused on the organisation of open-air events. Out of the great variety of offers we selected six examples from various parts of Poland. LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” (Land of Gothic) from kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship presented, from its great achievements, the historical festivities, the contest between villages and the local product festival. The group was also engaged in the creation of 39 kindergartens for rural children and though the undertaking was not financed from Pilot Programme Leader+ (PPL+), it should be presented as a good example to be followed. LAG “Krzemienny Krąg” (Flint Circle) is proud to present the Bałtowski Jurassic Park, ceramics from Ćmielów or the 1st All Poland’s Sculpture Plein-air Workshop in Nietulisko. By implementing the Podkarpacie Cultural Centre Project, “C.K. Podkarpacie” is doing its best to influence the development of cultural and ecological education of the area inhabitants and to emphasise the importance of their identification with the history and rich heritage of their region.

In small fatherlands, areas of LAG activities, there are frequently special places with which famous Poles were connected. Tadeusz Kantor used to live in Wielopole Skrzyńskie, a village in the “C.K. Podkarpacie” area. Witold Gombrowicz was born in Małoszyce, located in the Sadów commune which is part of the LAG “Krzemienny Krąg” area. Thanks to LAG Krzemienny Krąg ingenuity, cultural events connected with this renowned writer, such as the All-Poland’s Gombrowicz Festival - Picnic, acquired an extra dimension. The area of Zwoleń, located in the South of mazowieckie voivodship, is a mine of literary and artistic talents. It was Jan Kochanowski, Adolf Dygasiński or Jacek Malczewski, who connected their lives and artistic work with this area. Local communities in these regions continue to draw inspiration from these famous artists and are very much attached to them. Great dedication of the LAG “Dziedzictwo i Rozwój” (Heritage and Development) is helpful in organising promotional events.

The LAG “Lider Pojezierza” (the Lake District Leader), located between the town of Gorzów Wielkopolski and Szczecin, pursues its activities exploiting the landscape resources, tourism potential and cultural heritage. The Association is open to cooperation with other Local Action Groups. It established contact, on a working basis, with a friendly LAG from Sweden “Astrid Lindgerens Hembygd”. It organises Fairs of Local and Avant-guard Initiatives, “TILIA”. The Association invites representatives of the academic communities from schools of higher education to joint events such as the organisation of meetings and conferences.

In this edition of the Quarterly it is worthwhile to draw particular attention to the articles by Dr Wojciech Knieć from the Institute of Sociology, Nicolas Copernicus University (UMK) in Toruń. The first focuses on the review of scientific studies on the Leader+ Programme, carried out by some schools of higher education in Poland. In the second, the author shows real models of power in LAGs based on the research conducted.

The Information Corner contains brief summary of the conference organised by the National Leader+ Network which took place in Przemyśl on 12-13 October 2007.

We wish you interesting reading

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### **Ziemia Gotyku — activity, action, passion!**

“Ziemia Gotyku” (the Land of Gothic) lies between the gothic town of Toruń and the town of lovers, Chełmno — the area of four communes cooperating with each other: Chełmża, Łysomice and Papowo Biskupie. The name “Ziemia Gotyku” refers to numerous gothic and neo-gothic buildings erected in the Local Action Group (LAG) area and to the surrounding gothic towns. The residents, very active and deeply involved in the local community development, want to show people passing through (en route Toruń-Gdańsk) and tourists (sightseeing Toruń mainly) that they also have something interesting to show: picturesque rural landscapes kept in good agricultural condition, local crafts and works of art made by folk artists. The establishment of the LAG and work on the strategy at the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006 released boundless energy and ingenuity of the “Ziemia Gotyku” area inhabitants, thanks to which numerous interesting initiatives were launched with financial support from the Pilot Programme Leader+. Some of them are presented below.

#### **Midsummer Eve — the feast of fire and water**

On the shortest night of the year the inhabitants from the “Ziemia Gotyku” land and their guests came to the Chełmżyńskie Lake to celebrate together the Midsummer Eve. All who met on that June night would confirm that it was a magic night, the feast of fire and water.

The organiser was the LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” Foundation which invited Association “Horyzont” from the Secondary School in Pluskowęsy, Centre for Cultural Initiatives of the Chełmża Commune and Commune Office in Chełmża.

Although the weather was changeable, the people enjoyed themselves. The organisers put up the stage production of traditional scenes, “Midsummer Eve”, performed by pupils from the Secondary School in Pluskowęsy. As it was the feast of fire, this force of nature played the leading role during the fire juggling show accompanied by the sound of drum players. Competitions for people bearing the name of Janek, Janina, Jan and the search for the fern flower generated great interest. The winners were awarded gifts funded by the “Ziemia Gotyku” Foundation.

The culmination was a night march of water nymphs with torches who threw garland flowers into the water and a picturesque show of fireworks — a symbolic combination of the two forces of nature: fire and water. All the participants, in particular “maids” from the area had an opportunity to throw a flower garlands and find the chosen one on this mysterious unique night of the year. The party lasted until late evening with the local band “Remix” from Pluskowęsy playing.

#### **Contest between villages**

On 26 August at the Sparta Stadium in Pigża the Contest between villages was organised by “Ziemia Gotyku” — the rivalry to find the best village in the “Ziemia Gotyku” area.

Eight events were held to check technical skills, strength and knowledge: bicycle slalom, scoring the goal, the “Ziemia Gotyku” knowledge contest, rubber boot throw, egg throw, contest be-

tween village leaders to find the one with the best knowledge of his/her place, tug-of-war, the 4x1 km relay. Internal eliminations and preparations for the contest between the villages started two months before the event so that to give the best performance on the day.

At a glance it was easy to identify contestants from particular villages as they were wearing the same T-shirts. After six hours of fierce competition the winners were announced: 1st place Pigża — 94 points, 2nd Biskupice — 91 points, 3rd — Bachnowo. In total, around 300 contestants in all teams took part in the contest.

The record number of spectators (approximately 1000 people) were watching the contest. To mark the occasion, all the villages were awarded by the organiser special cups and the contestants — unique commemorative medals. In addition to the main contest, attractive competitions for children were held.



#### **Historical events in the Bierzgowski Castle**

On 6 and 7 October 2007 the “Medieval Festivities in the Bierzgowski Castle” were organised for the first time. The Bierzgowski Castle used to belong to the Teutonic Knights. The Castle was erected on a small hill in harmony with its shape, preserving an irregular pentagonal plan. Constructed following 1270 of stone and bricks, it consisted of two major parts: the Castle and its bailey lying to the north surrounded by the wall and a deep external moat. Knights from Bydgoszcz, Malbork, Sztum, Świecie, Malbork, Police and Kwidzyn came to the Bierzgowski Castle to take part in the festivities.

The event started with the staging of Mikołaj from Ryńsk arrival together with the Teutonic Knights Master from Starogród and the announcement of the Grand Tournament of Infantry Warfare. The subsequent parts of the programme were as follows: the archery tournament for the spectators, the Grand Tournament of Infantry Warfare, presentation of medieval dances, plebeian parties, the staging of the battle: “Attack on the Bierzgowski

Castle”, tournament of infantry warfare to the glory of the Polish king Władysław Jagiełło, “trial by ordeal” of the Teutonic Order knights, demonstration of medieval artillery.

For several days the Bierzgowski Castle was vibrant with the life from several hundred years ago. The public could visit the castle premises, knights’ camp, look at the work of medieval craftsmen such as a smith, bronze worker or a paper maker. Stands with local products from the LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” area were an additional attraction. Among exhibitors there was Mr Olgierd Jonatowski with his paintings on wooden panels, the Nursing Home in Pigża with works made by its residents, “Węzetek” with crafts, Association of Active Village Renewal from Tylice with floral table decorations, Mr and Ms Flak’s apiary, the Bukowski’s apiary, Mr Korycki’s apiary “Brac Lulkowska”.

During the festivities visitors could taste old Polish cuisine dishes such as: bigos (cooked sauerkraut with meat inside), żurek (sour soup), prażuchy (potato dumplings), barszcz czerwony (beet root soup), kaszanka (blood sausage with buckwheat), sausages, brawn, bread with lard and gherkins. Guests from the LAG “Wrota Wielkopolski” (Gate to Wielkopolska) visited the festivities at the castle. They went on a sight-seeing tour of the beautiful castle that was the centre and the spirit of the events, admired knights’ shows, stands of craftsmen preserving medieval traditions and displays of “Ziemia Gotyku” local products.

<http://www.ziemiagotyku.com/>

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### **Festival of “Ziemia Gotyku” Local Products**

The Festival of “Ziemia Gotyku” Local Products is one of the most interesting events in which the leading role is played by ladies representing social organisations from the LAG area. They saw to it that the stands with local products looked beautiful and organised the tasting of dishes. It was an open-air festival held in the area of “Grodno” leisure centre in Miraków on 31 August 2007. The festivities were also attended by the representatives of the state administration and local government authorities, local leaders, representatives of local social organisations.

The objective of the festivities was to promote “Ziemia Gotyku” through the presentation of rich culinary traditions, table manners, handicrafts and social initiatives of four partnership communes: Chelmża, Łubianka, Łysomice and Papowo Biskupie. During the event the local bands: “Pomorze” and “Alebabki” gave their performances.



Undoubtedly, an important point of the festival was the culmination of the **1st Competition to award the “Ziemia Gotyku” Promotion Logo**. Twenty eight contestants took part in it in three different categories: important social initiatives, artistic products and foodstuffs. The competition was targeted at producers, services providers, organisations and individuals who through their activities in social and economic spheres contribute to the creation of the positive image of their communes and villages. The Promotion Logo is awarded by the Promotion Logo Award Committee for the period of 12 months.

In the 1st competition the “Ziemia Gotyku” Promotion Logo was granted to the following: artistic product category – Ms Katarzyna Orłowska’s embroidered doilies, Ms Lidia Lankauf’s paintings on wooden panels; foodstuffs category – Mr Henryk Korycki’s Barć Lulkowska (apiary), Krzysztof and Lidia





Bukowskis' bee honey, klekotek (a type of cake) made by the Circle of Rural Housewives from Zelgno; social initiative category - "Wandering kindergarten", Association Homo Homini, folk band ALEBABKI, youth dancing group MARWOJKI, the Grand Prix event. Distinctions were awarded to Dawid Golonko's amateur sculptures, głuchofski cheese cake made by the Circle of Rural Housewives in Głuchowo, the Patriotic Song Festival, Mr Stanisław Flak's bee products.

All those awarded distinctions were granted the occasional promotion logo together with a licence agreement which sets out the rights and rules of using the logo. Additionally, the competition winners would receive the promotion booklets with the picture of their product or products. Information about them can be found on the "Ziemia Gotyku" Foundation website. Furthermore, the distinction awarded products will become a permanent element of the area promotion described in publications and at LAG's stands at fairs and exhibitions.

Also the winners of the competition "**The most interesting stand displaying local 'Ziemia Gotyku' products**" were announced. Eighteen Circles of Rural Housewives (KGW) from the LAG area entered the competition. To take part in it, first a special competition questionnaire had to be filled in. In addition to the well-known products such as grzegorzanka (sour cherry liquor), zawijarce nawrzańskie (herring dish), klekotek (a type of cake), the new ones were exhibited such as knight's lard, Lutold's liquor, ciagutki (roasted candies), zalot (a vegetable salad), prażucha (potato dumplings), apple-stuffed crescent rolls, liquor from nut shells, grandma's yeast cake and harvest festival cake, fried cheeses, rice wine and many others. Apart from foodstuffs, beautiful crafts were exhibited and admired, e.g. embroidered

doilies, lace, paintings on wooden panels, sculptures, flower bouquets and many others. Stands with numerous apiary products made by the local best beekeepers added taste and colour to the KGW ladies' stands.

A great variety of products shown at the stands was assessed by the Competition Committee which took into account such criteria as the general appearance of the stand, its distinguishing features, product taste and variety as well as the charisma of the housewives who certainly had a great impact on the product display at their stands. As a result, KGW from Nawra took the 1st place, KGW from Łubianka – 2nd and KGW from Głuchów – 3rd. This is the Competition Committee's verdict, but we think that each stand was characterised by the wealth of colours and taste. All those who took part in the contest received commemorative diplomas and the winners – kitchen utensils.



#### **We learn from others and follow good examples**

Between 8 and 12 August 2007 the LAG "Ziemia Gotyku" Foundation members went on a study tour to the LAG "Łączy nas Babia Góra" (the Babia Mountain Unites us) in the framework of "**Exchange of experience between LAGs with regard to local products and rural tourism**".

The study tour's objective was to obtain more information on the local brand and products from Podbabiogórski region and to get acquainted with the broad spectrum of initiatives launched in this area. The study tour participants observed how success-

ful the LAG “Łączy nas Babia Góra” was in using effective tools for sustainable development of its area. Thanks to the presentation of LEADER+ in Podbabiogórski region, it was possible to exchange experience between the two LAGs and get acquainted with the good practices in order to improve the “Ziemia Gotyku” Foundation activity.

It is worthwhile to mention the determined charismatic inhabitants of Podbabiogórze who undertake initiatives and projects on their own. The owners of the “Bór” horse stud created an important centre for rehabilitation, hippo-therapy and horse riding. The traditional Polish Old Mansion in Wysoka was rebuilt from ruins by one man – Mr Pilch, an artist and curator. The Mansion became renown thanks to the lute concerts he gives there. Today the Mansion is a tourist attraction in the region. In a small bakery the local hostess makes the local product “bugielek” (bagel).

The study tour followed an interesting path of thematic museums scattered all over the region: **Ekomuzem (Eco-museum) “Łączy nas Babia Góra”** and Lanckrońskie Ekomuzeum which combine nature with history and the present activities of the region’s inhabitants. Agri-tourism farms and shops with local products match with the beautiful architecture from the 17 and 18th centuries and the nature of the area. The identification mark of the area are Stryszawskie ptaszki (birds) painted manually – each visitor may try to decorate them.

An interesting experience was the “Lesson” at environmental education school “On the Amber Route”, which enabled the visitors to familiarise themselves with the very idea of such activities. We saw the Tourist Information Bureau in the longest village in Poland and an educational route – the initiatives worth to be undertaken in the LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” area.

The instructive visit enchanted all the participants who described their impressions in their travel journals, e.g.:

– “The study tour to the Babiogórski Region deepened my knowledge of local products, agri-tourism, promotion of tourism and cultural heritage”.

– “It was nice to have met so many people with a passion. Their activity brings, as it did in the past, great success”.

– “We were bewitched by the neatness of the local product bakery “Bugielek” and ingenuity of its owner for who could hardly fulfil a large order, which confirms that she made a right decision and there is demand for local products on the market”. During the study tour the LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” established formal cooperation with the LAG “Podbabiogórze” and LAG “Gościniec 4 Żywiołów” (High Road of four Forces of Nature).

**In addition to the tasks under the Pilot Project Leader+ , the LAG “Ziemia Gotyku” is engaged in the implementation of the project “The Kindergarten opens the World” financed by the European Social Fund.** Measure Increasing access to education – promotion of lifelong learning, which is part of one of the priorities of the Sectoral Operational Programme “Human Resources Development 2004-2006” permitted to create 39 kindergartens in nine communes of kujawsko-pomorskie. More



than 500 children from the villages where there were no kindergartens were taken care of. Children aged from 3 to 5 go to the kindergartens. Groups consist of 8-15 toddlers who familiarise themselves with the world following the project method. A state-of-the-art teaching method is a strong incentive for the development of children at such an early stage. Before starting their work in the kindergartens, pre-school education teachers underwent training in the project method provided by trainers, specialists in the method, from the J.A. Komeński Foundation which is the partner in the project. The professional coordinator oversees tutoring given by the kindergarten teachers and supports the pre-school curricula followed. In addition, each kindergarten ensures speech therapy and psychological care. Other attractions for kids include trips and theatrical spectacles. The facilities have a nursing, educational, teaching and diagnostic-therapeutic role.

The objective of the measure was to reduce education disparities between villages and towns. The project “The Kindergarten opens the World” contributed to improvement in pre-school education in rural areas by ensuring the children care of well-qualified specialists and enabling access to the facilities equipped with teaching aids and plastic art devices. Unfortunately, the area of the project was limited to 39 villages only in kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship.

For more information see: <http://www.ziemiagotyku.com/>

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### Leader+ in "Krzemienny Krąg"

Implementation of Leader+ on the Tortoise and Dinosaur Track enabled three sectors (business, governmental and local governmental) to combine their efforts in nine communes located in the area of three poviats (counties) and two voivodships (provinces). The aim of the activities undertaken was to draw on the region's natural and cultural resources in such a way so that to preserve their quality and ensure present and future generations durable access to them. The most important objective of the joint efforts is to improve the quality of life in the LAG "Krzemienny Krąg" (Flint Circle) area by using new technologies with particular emphasis on tourism.

The implementation of the Leader's Scheme I enabled the setting up of the Local Action Group "Krzemienny Krąg" whose activities were addressed to the area of nine communes: Bałtów, Bodzechów, Ćmielów and Kunów in ostrowiecki powiat and Sadów and Tartów in opatowski powiat (świętokrzyskie voivodship) as well as to the communes of Chotcza, Lipsko and Solec situated near the Vistula river in lipski powiat (mazowieckie voivodship). Such vast area had three elements in common: the Kamienna River, dinosaur tracks in Bałtów, the mud tortoise refuge in the Borowiec Nature Reserves and the figure of Witold Gombrowicz.

With its picturesque bends in Podgrodzie and Bałtów, the Kamienna River is a natural common element of LAG "Krzemienny Krąg" area in the following poviats: ostrowiecki, opatowski and lipski. Throughout 50 000 years the river set the direction of migration of the region's inhabitants and traders who at the time Roman influence used to come through the river valley to the Świętokrzyskie Mountains to buy iron. Later the river was the main driving force in the development of the Staropolski Industrial District where the traces of our ancestors' industrial and commercial activity can be found in Nietulisko, Chmielów, Bodzechów, Ćmielów, Ruda Kościelna and Bałtów. The very active river also created unique nature resources. Thanks to the picturesque river bends Podgrodzie is called "Small Ojców", Bałtów became the model of nature resources management for tourism purposes and Kępa Piotrawińska is rich in flora and fauna in the "Ujście Kamiennej" Reserve. The discovery of dinosaur tracks in Bałtów led to another initiative thanks to which the first Jurassic Park in Poland was created. On the opposite side of the Dinosaur Land the "Borowiec" Reserve is located



with a unique mud tortoise living in natural conditions in the Zwolenka River valley. The Dinosaur and Tortoise Tracks are situated in a beautiful Vistula River scenery of a relic "flower step" collection in the Nature Reserve "Raj" where architectural jewels of the old royal Solec, Lipsko or Tartów can be found.

Another aspect of the LAG "Krzemienny Krąg" area is the figure of Witold Gombrowicz, a world famous novelist and dramatists who was born in Małoszyce (Sadowie commune) and grew up in the Gombrowicz and Kotkowskis' manor houses in opatowsko-ostrowieckie area, scattered between Wszczęświęty, Jakubowice, Potoczek near Tartów and Doły Biskupie Witulin, Bodzechowo.

The development strategy was devised for the LAG "Krzemienny Krag" area thus delineated. It was based on the research concluding that the area's strengths were: its location, nature, culture and historical attractions, a moderate climate and the clean environment, local traditions and the network of well-developed tourist routes. Its weaknesses were, among others: a high unemployment rate, the lack of the sewerage system and waste treatment plants, absence of restaurants and hotels, non-regulated issues of real estate ownership, including the buildings and areas designated for investment projects, few leaders and the aging population. Given the above, the conclusion was drawn that tourism, i.e. the leisure industry development, and EU programmes aimed at stimulating local activity would offer the best opportunities for the region's development. The Integrated Rural Development Strategy lays down the vision of the LAG "Krzemienny Krag" area's development. The area would be characterised by sustainable socio-economic development based on the clean environment as well as historical and cultural heritage which, thanks to partner co-operation of local-governments, enterprises and social organisations, would create conditions for the better quality of life of present and future region's inhabitants and for attractive leisure and recreation. The Foundation "Krzemienny Krag" mission is to resolve problems using the partner method, i.e. by combining resources, competences and capacities of the local government, social organisations and economic partners to work out integrated and coordinated activities aimed at active implementation of the vision outlined.

The implementation of the Pilot Programme Leader +, Scheme II led to activation of rural communities and organisation of all-Poland events. Thanks to Leader support the 5th All-Poland's Gombrowicz Festival - Picnic acquired a distinct dimension. The village of Doty Biskupie Witulin where the Festival - Picnic was held is the only place on earth directly associated with the author of the "Pornografia" (Pornography). The last owners of the quarry, where the stage was put up, was the writer's grandfather Leon Kotkowski and Witold's parents. The natural scenery of the quarry wall reminded of Hollywood and therefore it was decided to put the sign "Dollywood" on its top the following year. The play, performed by actors from the theatre in Radom, was directed by Krzysztof Galos. Based on the Witold Gombrowicz's "Dziennik" (Diary), it illustrated in an excellent way his views on the form and Polish megalomania, making up at the same time the novelist's biography. Furthermore, actors from the Lublin Dance Theatre gave a unique dance performance "PlepleJADY" and Agnieszka Matysiak sang beautifully Edith Piaf's songs. The culminating point of the 5th All-Poland's Gombrowicz Festival - Picnic was the spectacle "Indestructible Gombrowicz".

The 1st All-Poland's Sculpture Plein-air, Nietulisko 2007, organised under the slogan "We join in the "Krzemienny Krag"", was also a unique event. The effect of the work of artists bewitched by the landscape, nature and historical monuments of the Kunów area and, above all, the ruins of the old rolling mill surpassed all expectations. Dorota Banasik combined three elements: stone, water and glass referring to the Staszic rolling mill, built of stone and driven for years by water energy. Sylwester Ambroziak, most renowned among the plein-air participants, sculpted two his style "Negro-like" human figures one of which stood defiantly on its head. The viewers' attention was drawn to the message on human destiny as expressed by Grzegorz Popowicz's sailing ship made of stone or to Wojciech Nowak's civilisation experience or to Teresa Pastuszko-Kowalska's "lips of truth".



Thanks to PPL +, a "folk day" was organised during another big open-air event held in świętokrzyskie voivodship, "Świętokrzyskie Jurassic Picnic". It made a lasting impression of the Midsummer Eve tradition. According to the old Polish custom, dating back to pre-Christian times, girls threw their maiden flower garlands into the Kamienna River. The "family day" was the actress Bożena Dykiel' show who displayed her cuisine mastery and was one of the jury members of the competition to choose the most tasteful regional dish from Bałtów.

Moreover, owing to Leader +, we organised more smaller-scale events, which stimulated local communities by promoting our cultural identity. The Feast of the Forest and Honey was attended by villagers from Magonie (Bodzechów commune), the Summer in the Flint Circle by people from Jacentowo and the Family Picnic by Lipsko residents. We also joined in the organisation of the traditional Ceramist Day in Ćmielów and the Commune Harvest Festival in Tarłów and Bałtów as well as powiat and commune Harvest Festivities in Pawłowice (Solec commune). The on the Vistula River Picnic "Closer to Nature" Chotcza 2007 was the first event of this type held in the Chotcza commune area in 30 years, bringing together several thousand people.



The creators of our local products: Mr Edward Budzeń, a bee-keeper, and Mr Andrzej Boberek, a potter, who hold workshops for our guests, are winning renown. Around tourist attractions in Bałtów, Ćmielów, or Kunów more agri-tourism farms are being set up and new ideas are being put forward of how to consolidate the hitherto success and to make it a durable achievement for the local community.

In addition, we were a coordinator of the Programme “Amber Route Greenways”, financed by the initiative Central and Eastern European Greenways, in the framework of which we launched numerous interesting local projects aimed, in particular, at the IRDS implementation, especially the construction of small tourism infrastructure. Thanks to the Association “Nietulisko nad Wiśliną”, the old canal carrying water from the rolling mill, was cleaned and deepened. Small architecture facilities were constructed and green vegetation planted in the surroundings of the canal which became an excellent place for arranging angling contests and canoe regattas. The Commune Cultural Centre in Sadowie arranged the green area in the centre of Małoszyce where Witold Gombrowicz was born. The monument, and the information board remind people of the fact and the benches placed in the vicinity invite them to take a rest and fall into a reverie. The Association of the Friends of Solec put information boards near the ferry crossing in Kludź to remind tourists of the tradition of the place and the history of river transport which dates back to the Middle Ages. The rediscovered tradition will encourage the organisation of the Vistula rafting combined with education of the youth. Also the Association for the Development of the Bałtów Commune “Bałt” placed boards displaying information on the nature resources on the Tortoise and Dinosaur Track, accentuating the biggest paleontological and nature attractions of the area. The Association of the Bodzechów Commune Heritage “Kurhan” put signs on three educational routes and equipped them with small architecture facilities. The boards on particular routes display information on historical events and nature resources. Similarly, the Association of the Waśniów Friends “discovered” for its inhabitants and guests a forgotten spring “Wieprzka”, which is associated with the history of Waśniów and whose waters were known for their healing properties. The area around the spring was arranged, its outflow cased and the stylish wooden garden house with benches and the table is waiting for weary travellers. It was also the PTTK (Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Association) Branch in Lipsko which took care of the extraordinary spring by cleaning up a charming area around the stop “Źródło”. It was adapted with the view to tourist needs as its water has similar characteristics to that from the Spa of Nałęczów. The complex of Schools in Bałtów made a detailed inventory of over three-hundred year lime trees growing in the park at the Drucki-Lubecki’s palace. During that operation the documentation was drawn up on entry in the nature monument register of single trees and the whole alley complexes. The Association “Dobro Dziecka” rushed to rescue the old wide-stretching willow tree.

#### **How do you do that in “Krzemienny Krąg”?**

Thanks to a several-year adventure with the Leader+ Programme, we are willingly visited by LAGs from all across the country so that they can draw on our experience and see how we do that on the Kamienna river. We have already received representatives from the following LAGs: “Spichlerz Górnego Śląska”, “Górna Proсна”, “Czarnoziem na Soli”, “Dorzecze Koszarawy i Kocierzanki”, “Podbabiogórze” and the Bieszczady Mountains Foundation “Partnerstwo dla Środowiska”. All of them were enchanted by the Bałtowski Jurassic Park, Live Porcelain Museum, the idea of organising rafting in the lowland part of Poland,



Bałtowski Animal Collection, in particular by the people and initiatives on the Gombrowicz’s Route. Everyone was impressed by the great number of visitors (300 000) in the Bałtowski Jurassic Park in 2007, which makes it one of the top tourist attractions in świętokrzyskie voivodship. Most of our guests admired our achievements thanks to which LAG area villages and towns were marked on the tourist and economic map of Poland.

Many point out to the skilful combination of the three sectors’ activities, i.e. non-governmental, local government and business, the use of human resources and the demonstration of the common aspects of the vast area located in the territory of two voivodships, three poviats and nine communes covered by Leader+. Moreover, we do hope that most of our guests leave us with many ideas or at least guidelines about how to act in their areas so that to draw on the best natural and cultural resources of their regions.

**Jarosław Kuba**  
**Monika Bojas**  
LAG Krzemieny Krąg



## Association, Local Action Group C.K. Podkarpacie tribute to the future of small communities

### **The origins of the Association:**

On the initiative of two communes: Czudec and Wielopole Skrzyńskie, in December 2005 the Local Action Group, C.K. Podkarpacie Association, was formed. At the time the group was engaged in the implementation of the "Podkarpacie Cultural Centre" project.

The name of the Association comes from the first letter of the place "Czudec" and the first letter of Tadeusz Kantor's surname – an artist, painter, an expert in the field of theatre, born in Wielopole Skrzyńskie. It is a kind of tribute to an eminent figure from our region.

### **Area of C.K. Podkarpacie activity**

The communes that are members of the C.K. Podkarpacie LAG: Czudec (strzyżowski powiat (county)) and Wielopole Skrzyńskie (ropczycko-sędziszowski powiat) are located close to one another in the podkarpackie voivodship close to Rzeszów. The two communes have proved within the last few years that they have been able to effectively implement investment projects funded externally and that they are well-prepared for the EU funds absorption. Therefore, they have joined the Pilot Leader+ Programme. Furthermore, they share a similar social, economic and spatial profile, which justifies their integration and joint activities for the development of the area covered by the LAG C.K. Podkarpacie strategy.

### **Association's Governing Bodies**

Two local governments as well as social and economic partners from the area of the two communes have been invited to the LAG C.K. Podkarpacie. The following organisations have given recommendation to the members of the Management Board: the authorities of the Czudec and Wielopole Skrzyńskie communes, Voluntary Fire Brigade from Wielopole Skrzyńskie, the Podkarpackie Association of Active Rehabilitation, Podkarpackie Agri-tourism Association of Ropczycko-Sędziszewski Area, Association "Heritage and Tourism DziK", Association for Education in Strzyżowski Powiat and Development of Young Talents KOPERNIK.

### **Mission**

The LAG C.K. Podkarpacie treats its activities as social mission putting special emphasis on openness and broad representation of various social groups among members and partners. The leading theme is: the Local Action Group C.K. Podkarpacie is an open forum for the society oriented at partnership cooperation, aiming at the best possible use of natural, cultural and historical resources of this area and in consequence at the improvement of the quality of residents' life.

### **Objectives and main aims of the activities**

The LAG pursues the objectives and performs the tasks laid down in the Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS), devised on the basis of the socio-economic diagnosis, including the SWOT analysis, of the Czudec and Wielopole Skrzyńskie area.

The present activities of the Association are financed in the framework of the Pilot Programme Leader+, Scheme II.

The major objective of the LAG C.K. Podkarpacie is tourism development. To achieve it, it is necessary to take various initiatives aimed at strengthening tourism infrastructure in the region, including the offer of "active leisure" and the region's promotion through the creation of the "region's landmarks", presentation and preservation of holiday traditions, promotion of Tadeusz Kantor's works and his museum, organisation of cultural events. On the LAG initiative the local "Kantor's Chair" statuette was created to honour the founder of Cricot 2 Theatre, a renowned artist, painter, an expert in the field of theatre, professor of Fine Arts Academy in Kraków, an innovator in theatre, a playwright, an author of many dramas put on stage all over the world who spent the first 20 years of his life in the 19th century presbytery in Wielopole Skrzyńskie. The statuette is awarded to amateur theatres taking part in KANTORARIA or Presentations of Searching Theatres, cyclical contests in which alternative theatres from all over the world take part.

In addition, the Association wants to engage the local community in the "search for their own history" by teaching and promoting handicraft and local food. To this end workshops on crafts (painting, lino carving, woodcarving) and on the traditional Polish cuisine were organised. The youth could get acquainted with the techniques of wood processing, glass painting and lino carving. The ladies from the project area attended meetings during which they learned how to bake and cook dishes that our great-grandmothers liked so much. At this year's Cultural Fair young local artists exhibited their crafts. It was worthwhile to have a look at smith demonstrations. For the first time the tasting of regional food was arranged during the Wielopole Days. Bands and folk bands from the area to which strategy is addressed took part in all local events. Certainly, training, including environmental education of the youth and adults, is an important task performed by the LAG. The C.K. LAG Podkarpacie organised gratuitous, course of English as well as training in IT and Internet matters open to the public. The proposed training subjects met with great interest on the part of the inhabitants. Unfortunately, the number of trainees had to be limited.

Moreover, the LAG undertakes activities for the integration and cooperation of the rural community. For instance volunteers: the Michael Sisters and Capuchin Brothers helped to organise Wielopolandia, by taking care of the disabled participants.

By pursuing the objectives and implementing the tasks laid down in the strategy, the C.K. Podkarpacie Association is aiming primarily at improving the quality of life of the inhabitants living in the area at which IRDS is targeted.

**Małgorzata Szczygieł**  
**Joanna Pająk**  
LAG C.K. Podkarpacie

## LAG "Dziedzictwo i Rozwój"

### LAG "Dziedzictwo i Rozwój" (Heritage and Development) joining in the name day celebrations of the poet Jan Kochanowski held for the 18th time in Zwoleń

Thanks to harmonious cooperation of many partners, among them LAG "Dziedzictwo i Rozwój" which joined in for the first time, we celebrated for the 18th in Zwoleń time the name day of Jan Kochanowski. The honorary patronage of the event came from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Marshall of the Mazowieckie Voivodship (province), the Voivod of Mazowieckie and Starosta (Prefect) of Zwoleń. Efficient organization was ensured by the Association "Dziedzictwo i Rozwój", Regional Museum in Zwoleń, the Jan Kochanowski Library of the in Zwoleń Town and Commune and the Jan Kochanowski Association of the Zwoleń Town Enthusiasts.

Under the slogan "We the Contemporary Pay Tribute to Jan Kochanowski", two exhibitions were opened "Photography of Jan Kochanowski's Homeland" in the Gallery of Photography and Paintings of the Town Cultural Centre and "Jan Kochanowski in Folk Art" at the Regional Museum. Two competitions were also held: the Mazowiecki Literary Talent Contest to write an epigram, in which the prize was the Jan Kochanowski Statuette, and the Jan Kochanowski knowledge contest.

As every year, the procession of name day participants moved through the streets of Zwoleń to the Elevation of the Holy Cross Church where there is the Kochanowskis' Chapel with the poet's ashes. The culminating point of the celebrations was the Name Day Gala Concert held at the MKS Zwolenianka stadium. The concert including recitation and music was given by the students from the Complex of Jan Kochanowski Grammar Schools in Zwoleń, pupils from the Jan Kochanowski Secondary School, artistic bands and the declamation group from the Cultural Centre in Zwoleń, the "Gotardowie" group together with the folk band as well as the town residents and the guests invited. The concert was started with the sound of the bugle call of the Town of Zwoleń performed by the Town Brass Band.

An important event during the concert was the ceremony of awarding the Medals of Merit to those who rendered great service to the Zwoleń area by the Association of the Town of Zwoleń Enthusiasts.

In addition, during the event the Jan Kochanowski's Statuettes were awarded to persons who supported cultural initiatives in Zwoleń. The best sponsors turned out to be Janusz Janik and Leszek Janik from the Brat-Met company. Diplomas were also awarded to Kazimierz Hołuj, President of the Horticultural Export-Import Cooperative, and Jerzy Skrzyński, President of the Services Cooperative UNIVERSUM from Warsaw.

### The Wielgie village as a source of inspiration for Malczewski, Dygasiński, Karczewski

The links of the small village of Wielgie with literature and arts are obvious not only to the Zwoleń powiat (county) inhabitants. From Iłża to Czarnolas the paths for tourists follow the tracks of "great people of small fatherlands": Jan Kochanowski, Bolesław Leśmian, Adolf Dygasiński, Jacek Malczewski and Wacław Karczewski.

Bearing in mind Jan Kochanowski's words "Let's serve a just cause", it was noticed that the possibilities of developing the areas in the Zwolenianka and Iłzanka river valleys could be explored through the promotion of their nature resources and rich historical heritage. In the framework of the activities undertaken, books and brochures are published and the promotion meetings arranged. With the support from the Pilot Programme Leader + a book "W Wielgiem" (In Wielgie) by Wacław Karczewski and a collection of stories "Co się dzieje w gniazdach" (What is happening in Nests) by Adolf Dygasiński have been published so far.





A meeting organised by the LAG “Dziedzictwo i Rozwój” on 6th October 2007 in the Folk House in Wielgie was an opportunity to evoke memories. “Apparently something extraordinary must be going on in Wielgie during this fine morning” – the lord Wacław Karczewski’s expression became the leading theme of the event. Wielgie was an inspiration to Jacek Malczewski and Adolf Dygasiński who at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century used to live and create their works there. Katarzyna Posiadała from the Jacek Malczewski’s Museum in Radom discussed Jacek Malczewski’s paths, whereas Kazimierz Niedziela, the former Headmaster of the School in Wielgie, presented the figures of Adolf Dygasiński and Wacław Karczewski. Professor Henryk Bednarczyk discussed the heritage and possibilities of developing Jan Kochanowski’s homeland using the LEADER+ approach.

The lectures aroused great interest among the village inhabitants. Also senior people attended the event; they told many interesting legends about the LAG area from the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century, handed down from generation to generation. The participants in the meeting took part in the tasting of regional dishes. An artistic performance was given by the pupils from the Public Primary School in Wielgie, the band “Ulijanki” and Karolina Tyburska.

#### **LAG “Dziedzictwo i Rozwój” at the 15th International Tour & Travel Fair in Warsaw**

Thanks to financial support from Leader+ Scheme II, the LAG was able to take part in the “Village Global”, organised during the International Fair “TT Warsaw Tour & Travel” held in September in the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw. Folk bands and local artists from Zwoleń, Iłża and Czarnolas took part in the presentation of the LAG area, such as:

1. The folk and vocal-musical band from Strykowice Górne, Zwoleń commune (15 people), the leader – Ms Wanda Krawiec. The performance in the form of peasant rituals.
2. The vocal band “GOTARDOWIE” (5 people), the leader and performer - Ms Joanna Tęcza.
3. The vocal folk band from the area where Józef Myszka pursued his activities, Iłża commune (9 people).
4. The youth folk band KORALIKI, singing and playing musical instruments, from Maziarz, Iłża commune (9 people), the leader – Ms Barbara Krajewska.
5. The Knights from the Association “Smocza Kompania” (Dragon’s Company), from Iłża (10 people), the leader - Mr Piotr Wasek. The show of knights’ warfare.
6. Folk band “Sobótka” from Czarnolas (14 people), the leader – Ms Lucyna Wolszczak.

The LAG’s offer sparked so much interest that the organisers asked the Polish artists to give additional performances. The success of our local culture was really great given the fact that we competed with performers from the countries with much better developed tourism infrastructure and identifiable folklore, e.g. the band playing the Slovakian shepherd’s pipes, a musical band from Mexico, Egyptian dance and music group, a Spanish flamenco dancer, Turkish folk dancers.

In addition, the Association “Dziedzictwo i Rozwój” presented a tourist offer from its own area, i.e. the communes of Zwoleń, Iłża and Policzno. The visitors could admire the display of folk crafts and try regional dishes.

Almost sixty countries took part in the fair visited by thousands of people. It was an excellent opportunity for promotion, exchange of experience and establishment of contact with exhibitors from Poland and other countries.

#### **Piotr Wajs**

LAG “Dziedzictwo i Rozwój”



## Local Action Group

### "LIDER POJEZIERZA" ASSOCIATION

The Local Action Group, the Lider Pojezierza (Lake District Leader) Association, was established when the group of eighty activists from three sectors: social, public and economic, were working on the Integrated Rural Development Strategy which was to be implemented under Scheme I of the Pilot Programme LEADER+.

The "Lider Pojezierza" Association targets its activities at nine communes located alongside the southern border of zachodniopomorskie voivodship (province). The communes are part of the poviats (counties): myśliborski (Barlinek, Boleszkowice, Dębno, Myślibórz, Nowogródek Pomorski), pyrzycki (Lipiany, Przelewice), choszczeński (Krzęcin, Pełczyce). They are situated in the proximity of three agglomerations: Szczecin in the north, Poznań in the south-east and Berlin in the west. The area has a great potential of nature resources and cultural heritage, which arouses hopes of tourism development in the region.

One of the first effects of the "Lider Pojezierza" Association work was the popular version of the Integrated Strategy for Myśliborski Lake District entitled "How to change the world around, to live better?", published in 1 000 copies. The document reflects real problems, specifies the region's development targets and has become an essential guide for the LAG.

Equally important for the LAG was the organisation of the conference wrapping up the project "Strategy for the Lake District – integration of rural areas in nine communes in the south-eastern part of zachodniopomorskie voivodship". At the conference the partners taking part in the project presented their potential and capacities. They discussed their joint plans for the future and the great value of the effort made by the three sectors for rural development. At the conference, attended by approximately 200 persons, declarations of cooperation were signed with several new partners, including those from other countries. The association also created its website on which information on the project was posted and activities of the LAG are promoted: [www.liderpojezierza.pl](http://www.liderpojezierza.pl).

Currently, one of major actions for rural development the LAG is carrying out is the work on the Integrated Rural Development Strategy and implementation of the innovative projects resulting from it combining human, natural, cultural and historical resources and the promotion of the LAG area. This way the Association wants to create an attractive and consistent offer for tourists visiting the region. Furthermore, the LAG provides training to project managers who learn how to conceive and effectively implement projects addressed to rural communities.

To carry out these activities, the Association obtained financial support provided under the Pilot Programme LEADER+ , Scheme II.

Under the project implemented the network of Local Development Centres is being created; its aim is to support and

animate the local community. Thematic routes are being delineated, thanks to which a comprehensive tourist offer of the Pojezierze area will be created. In addition, meetings with partner LAGs, in Poland and abroad, are being held in order to exchange mutual experience and conclude cooperation agreements. The LAG also provides training. In June a study and training tour was organised for people interested in growing energy crops (willow, poplar, acacia trees, etc.) in order to produce bio-fuel and disseminate the idea of using crops as solid fuel. Forty five persons attended the training session. The trainees could familiarise themselves with energy crops cultivation, specialists' opinions in this field and, which is essential, could exchange their own experiences with the persons who apply an innovative technology in energy supply.

Moreover, LAG members took part in the study visit to the friendly LAG "Astrid Lindgerens Hemybygd" in Vimmerby (Sweden). The objective of the two organisations' meeting was greater integration and familiarisation of our group members with the methods of our partners' work and the Leader Initiative rules in Sweden. What we are mainly keen on during such visits is mutual exchange of experiences and a close look at the projects already implemented in order to derive inspiration and to transfer good examples to our area. It should be added that Sweden is a beautiful and hospitable country, the people are very nice and, what is crucial, willing to share their experience. They do not conceal their problems and difficulties in implementing projects. However, they are not discouraged because, as they say, the most important thing for them is satisfaction with what they are doing with great passion and involvement, bearing in mind all the time the maintenance of harmony between man and nature.

**The Fair of Local and Avant-guard Initiatives (TILIA = LIPA), organised every year in a different place, is to foster the unification of the LAG area.** The first Fair, "TILIA 2007", held in Barlinek on 7 and 8 September, was preceded by training for organisers and implementing entities. The participants learnt, inter alia, what was the objective of the participation in the fair, how to design a stand and space there and how to obtain essential information of the promotion forms used at the Fair.



This year's TILIA was organised by the "Lider Pojezierza" Association as part of the project: "**Lider Pojezierza**" – the way to change the region" implemented under the Pilot Programme LEADER+, Scheme II. "TILIA" is a joint, cyclically held event to present and promote the whole "Lider Pojezierza" area. The fairs show the achievements and potential of all the entities implementing jointly the Strategy. In addition, they are to become a place of experience exchange and an opportunity for encouraging broader cooperation, establishing links, finding project partners and promoting the ideas. "TILIA" is held for two days; on the first conferences are organised and on the second – the fair.

• On 7 September 2007 the conference "Cooperation for Development" was organised jointly with the Higher School of Public Administration in Szczecin and the Branch Faculty in Szczecin of the Higher School of Pedagogy of the Society of Public Knowledge (TWP) in Warsaw.

The aim of the conference was to integrate theoreticians and practitioners engaged in local development, in particular rural development, and to ensure exchange of experience, opinions and results of research on these subjects. Specialists and academics in local development attended the conference.



The conference was attended by, inter alia, representatives of three sectors: public, private and social, as well as delegates from institutions engaged in the activities for local development in zachodniopomorskie voivodship. The meeting also provided an excellent opportunity for launching cooperation with new partners from the scientific/academic circles. At the conference a tri-lateral agreement on cooperation between the "Lider Pojezierza" Association, the Higher School of Public Administration in Szczecin and the Branch Faculty in Szczecin of the Higher School of Pedagogy of the Society of Public Knowledge (TWP) in Warsaw was signed.

The themes of the conference were as follows:

- The area of the "Lider Pojezierza" Association and the so far joint achievements of the communities from the nine communes covered by the Pilot Programme LEADER+;
- The Leader Programme initiative as an instrument of local rural development;
- The Methodology of planning development;
- The role of the local government as a local development director;
- The potential of social activity in the process of local community transformation;
- Counteracting unemployment as a social policy element;
- Psychological aspects of regional policy;
- The model of rural school.

• On 8 September on the market place in Barlinek the Fair and competitions as well as other surprising events were held

During the event the potential of the "Lider Pojezierza" Association, including local entities, initiatives, offers, services and products, was shown. The idea and activities of the "Lider Pojezierza" Association was presented at a special stand.

At the Fair workshops on agri-tourism, organic farming and presentations on promotion of innovative approaches and new technologies in rural areas were organised. A great attraction of the event were artistic performances of groups from the "Lider Pojezierza" Association region, a Sailing Regatta, a Culinary Contest to win the title of the "Housekeeper", the Farewell to the



Summertime in Barlinek and other surprises in line with the leading theme "Water-tree-thought". The event culminated with the show of dancing fountains on the Barlineckie Lake which aroused great interest and enthusiasm. On the occasion of the Fair the "Fair Catalogue" presenting the LAG area was published.

In September 2007 our LAG attended the conference: **"LEADER Local Action Groups as a strong link in rural development activation in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship"** organised under the honorary patronage of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and zachodniopomorskie voivodship Marshal. During the conference the implementation of the Pilot Programme LEADER+ and its significance for rural community activation was discussed, based on the examples of Local Action Groups in zachodniopomorskie. Ms Anna Garzyńska made a presentation on our project "Lider Pojezierza – the method for developing the region". "ARS ANTIQUA" Consort from Bierzwnik, headed by Adam Denka, performed a concert. In addition, in order to promote our region, we arranged an exhibition stand.

To attract partners and promote further our region, characterised by rich nature resources and cultural heritage, between 28 and 30 September 2007 the LAG attended International Fair, "Farma 2007". We took there some samples of local products such as przelewickie soap from the Dendrological Garden, przelewicki delicacy made by Ms Bożena Fiszer and Krystyna Dębowska, well-known ceramics from the Cultural Centre in Barlinek – unfortunately a limited quantity, mysterious jars with the appetising content that we were not able to open as the lids were firmly on, artistic smithery products made by Mr Longin Juszczo

from Lipiany, artistic products from the Self-Help Centre in Krzęcin, palm trees manufactured by Mr Zbigniew Kotlarz from Lipiany which made the visitors ask a question "do they grow in your area?" Certainly, they do not, however, what is important is that they were made there and were admired. We promoted other products, e.g. "Lipoja" krzęciński delicacy made by Mr Janusz Głowacki, of exquisite taste that everyone liked very much, "mata" baked by the Ceno bakery in Pełczyce. We also distributed information and promotion materials on our area. During the Fair we established contacts with numerous Local Action Groups such as the "Naszyjnik Północy" (Northern Necklace) Foundation, LAG from Ostrzeszów, Bieszczady Mountain Foundation "Partnerstwo dla Środowiska" ("Partnership for the Environment"), Parnter Foundation "Duch Gór" (the Mountain Spirit), and, naturally, permanent cooperation with our neighbours from the Association "WIR" from Stargard Szczeciński. We also hosted FAPA representatives and persons interested in thematic villages to be established under PPL+, Scheme II. Mr Zdzisław Tararoko from the Polish Radio Szczecin conducted an interview with us about our products and the method of their promotion.

There is a great deal of work ahead of us and numerous activities will have to be undertaken, primarily the preparation of the LAG area inhabitants for the new programming period 2007-2013 so that they can grasp the opportunity provided by LEADER+.

**Anna Garzyńska**

LAG "LIDER POJEZIERZA" Association



### Information on implementation of Measure 2.7 Pilot Programme Leader +, Scheme II

149 projects have been implemented by Local Action Groups efficiently and effectively. After they received the advance payment, the Groups started to perform the tasks set out in the Integrated Rural Development Strategies (IRDS). The applications for intermediate payments were submitted from March 2007 to 12 November 2007. 221 applications totalling PLN 24.8 million were filed. Based on the positive verification of the applications, FAPA transferred to the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture 90 payment orders for PLN 8.5 million. In total beneficiaries were paid PLN 3 million.

FAPA is trying to maintain permanent contact with LAG representatives so that payment applications are prepared correctly and submitted. To this end all the documents and instructions indispensable to complete an application are posted, on a current basis, on website: [www.fapa.org.pl](http://www.fapa.org.pl). Information on most frequently made errors is also available there so that to eliminate such mistakes in subsequent documents prepared by LAGs. On 5 September and 30 October the Foundation organised consecutive training sessions for 60 beneficiaries submitting payment applications. In addition FAPA representatives took part in the meetings with LAGs held in different voivodships (regions).

Information on the implementation of Measure 2.7 Pilot Programme Leader+ Scheme II is posted, on a current basis, on the National Leader+ Network website: [www.leaderplus.org.pl](http://www.leaderplus.org.pl). In September 2007 the Foundation published a brochure "Implementation of the Leader+ Programme in Poland" which was dispatched to the Local Action Groups and is distributed during meetings, workshops and conferences.

#### Krzysztof Janiak

FAPA, Rural Development Unit



## Power in LAGs

There are several fundamental types of exercising power in a local community:

1. A traditional model gives the greatest and most important role to the local government which exercises power multi-dimensionally and in coordination with the inhabitants, primarily through a mechanism of frequently obligatory social consultations.
2. A partner model envisages the transfer of part of local government responsibilities to the third sector which fulfils the functions of the local government based on contracts or competitions, offering its conditions for performing tasks.
3. The so called “New Public Management” model foresees the formal division of power between the local government, private entities and public-private partnerships. It means that the local government transfers part of its responsibilities in strictly public spheres, e.g. education, health care, public transport, prisons, policing tasks etc. to a local private entity, independent from the local government authorities, through concessions, sale, lease of assets or abandonment of services provision by public institutions.

The type of power that is of interest to the Local Action Groups is a model based on partnership, promoted as an alternative or complementary solution in the LEADER+ Programme.

From the viewpoint of a sociological theory *Partnerships are relationships between groups and individuals that have common objectives, aim at their achievement jointly and do it in the spirit of cooperation and fairness* (John Marriott “The power of partnership – the next step”). Partnership is understood as a network of cooperation, based on trust, built on the basis of clear power proportions, which in turn are determined by **appropriate parities**, of significance from the view point of achieving the objectives.

In the LEADER+ Programme formal parities leading to the establishment of power proportions are of the following nature:

- gender parity (a minimum of 40% of one gender in governing bodies)
- sector parity (fewer than 50% of the public sector representatives in the governing body).

Informal parities that revealed themselves during LEADER implementation in Poland were as follows:

- territorial parities (the number of representatives in the governing body of the association/foundation corresponds to the territorial division of its area, e.g. there are 3 representatives from each of the three communes located in the LAG area in the Management Board),
- organisational parities (the number of representatives in the governing body of the association/foundation is based on the proportions laid down in the Statute, e.g. five representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), three from the Voluntary Fire Brigade, two from Rural Housewives’ Circles).

By overlapping, all the aforementioned parities complicated the

process of building partnerships at the stage of their formal creation.

Unfortunately, while parities were being defined and finally established, we observed during our research the occurrence of the phenomenon called “**clientelism**” by sociologists, i.e. the treatment of one group as privileged or even as a sole representative of a given sector. For instance, only representatives of the selected associations were recruited to the LAG’s Management Board, whereas the others were omitted. Clientelism is always accompanied by the patron – client relationship, where the privileged group renders its services to the patron that defines power in a given area.

Another pathology, inevitably emerging upon the definition of power parities in the partnership, is **discretionary power**, i.e. isolation of the decision making centre from partnership members and their clients. The decisions are made in the partnership by the autonomous power of the governing body which acts as a unit with exclusive power not distributing information, however, assigning work. The governing body in the discretionary power acts through informal, social, family and party networks. LAG-type partnership, which will go through the stage of defining power parities without the pathologies mentioned above, will be subsequently confronted with the problem of “**power redistribution**” in the face of:

- assumption of financial liability by the association’s Management Board, some of its members or supporting organisations,
- shift of financial liability to the commune authorities,
- transfer of partnership tasks to sub-contractors.

As a result of these activities, it is necessary to **redefine power relationships within the partnership (power redistribution)**, due to:

- increasing role and importance of the governing bodies,
- increasing significance of the officials responsible for the project implementation, competent as regards contacts with external institutions (FAPA, design offices, PR agencies, mass media, etc.).

Resulting from these changes, the following patterns can be observed: less intense (e.g. financial) involvement causes formal redefinition of parities. In consequence, assumption of financial liability such as contracting credit by the commune authorities leads to significant public authorities’ domination over LAG’s activities.

Possible effects of the lack of control by social partners over the power redefinition processes are as follows:

- **colonisation of the LAG office by the local government** and in consequence colonisation of the whole partnership by public partners,
- **greater importance of business partners** in a situation of full partnership – responsible, economically and administratively knowledgeable,
- **loss of control over subcontractors**, in particular when many tasks have been transferred to them by LAGs,

- **exclusive character of partnership** where access to it is difficult, if an organisation is not an element of the clientelism arrangement,
- **partnership collapse** at a time when it is not able to re-define power relationships.

General conclusions from the research on LAGs in Poland are listed below:

1. The key factor determining power relationships in LAGs are financial issues.
2. There are contributory factors to the colonisation of partnerships in the LEADER+ Programme by the authorities and the local government bureaucracy such as:
  - numerous LAGs are set up in an environment of the well-established clientelism relationships and the socialist regime legacy (unwillingness to be part of an association, suspiciousness);
  - numerous LAGs very often pursue their activities in an apathetic environment in which social action is always undertaken by the same actors.

The research we carried out indicates that the process of forming partnerships for rural development has been very successful – many “pure” partnerships are being established where conflicts are unavoidable, however, they are of a constructive and functional character. The power is exercised in an open manner based on the parities observed. Such partnerships are open to the world, in particular they are not of an exclusive character.

Their existence is the proof that rural inhabitants change an apathetic attitude to the subsequent development initiatives

and start to understand the partnership spirit. Where there are pathologies, lasting for months, if no attempt at their elimination is made, the “partnership is at the crossroads”. Then, it may overcome the crisis or give up partnership rules. Unfortunately, there are also pseudo-partnerships, dominated by the selected organisations that do not let persons from outside the exclusive group to take power, or partnerships colonised by the commune, powiat etc. administration where the idea of partnership is purely superficial.

To sum up, focus should be given to the fact that power in LAGs is a very sensitive issue but at the same time extremely important for the LEADER+ Programme success. However, it would be wrong not to undertake research into this subject or to pretend that power and its distribution in LAGs do not generate situations leading to the abandonment of the partnership idea, departure from the Programme objectives or even to pathologies. An objective and critical look at the first months of LAG activities will permit to evaluate PPL+ objectively and to draw correct conclusions for the future.

The author’s intention was not to show the LEADER’s idea from the perspective of the power pathologies generated, but to look at it through the frequently painful truth of which I am personally aware as a researcher and an active LAG member. I know that the enthusiasm generated by LEADER in Poland must not be wasted but it is only thanks to a reliable analysis and creative criticism of the Programme that we can make it a real alternative in the rural development management in Poland.

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#### Power models in LAGs – typology based on the research

Model	Characteristics	Power	Conflicts in LAGs	Financial liability	The following are active ...
“Pure partnership”	Open to new members, active	Established based on the parities that are complied with	Open, frequent, not intense, functional	LAG, bank credit, a loan from the commune, bills of exchange	Association members, sub-contractors, NGOs
“Partnership at the crossroad”	Between pure and pseudo-partnership, drifting, in the process of power redefinition	In the process of power redefinition	Mixed type of conflicts	Mixed	Mixed
“Clientelism-type pseudo-partnership”	The office and the Management Board dominated by the selected NGOs, close cooperation with the commune	Clientelism	Rare, suppressed	Loan from the commune authorities, bills of exchange, LAGs	The office, association members, officials
“Colonised pseudo-partnership”	Colonisation of administrative bodies and implementing bodies by the local government sector	Discretionary power	Rare, suppressed	Loan from the commune authorities, in fact – the commune	Commune officials, the office, subcontractors – consulting agencies

### Review of research initiatives related to the Leader + Programme implementation in Poland

On 8 June 2007 the Department of Rustic Areas Sociology, the Institute of Sociology, Nicolas Copernicus University (UMK) in Toruń, organised a conference: **“LEADER+ a new framework for rural development in Poland”**. Its main objective was to review sociological and psycho-social research initiatives relating to intensive implementation of the Leader+ Programme in Poland and to exchange first experiences based on such research.

In addition, the conference organisers came to the conclusion that the conference could become the basis for the discussion about a nationwide, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary research project.

Professor Andrzej Kaleta, Head of the Department of Rustic Areas Sociology, the Institute of Sociology, UMK in Toruń, has emphasised in his introduction diverse expectations of the programme beneficiaries as to the possible forms and targets of support. He pointed out to the fact that they frequently do not understand or misunderstand the LEADER’s idea, thinking that its functions should boil down to infrastructure development in rural areas. However, as Professor Kaleta has indicated, the essence of the programme is to create conditions for practical implementation of the idea of rural area activation, using an appropriate budget as well as a new formula of rural management, as proposed by LAGs composed of three sectors.

Hence, subsequent misunderstandings leading to the disappointment that investment projects cannot not be financed by LEADER. They stem from the fact that it is frequently the commune authorities that take on the whole financial burden in the period preceding the payment of fund tranches and are guarantors of loans provided to LAGs. As a result, an embarrassing situation arises – in exchange of the guarantees and financial support provided, the commune authorities expect a return, i.e. the financing of commune investments.

LEADER+ is, as Professor Kaleta has underlined, a decisively qualitative instrument, where the effects are hardly measurable statistically, and difficult to perceive physically. In this context, an extremely strong need arises to make the Programme “reliable” by including into it the activities different from those of the strictly activation character. Such temptation will always exist, unless the civil society in rural areas is strengthened and the local authorities lose a monopoly over the local resources management. Even when LAGs become institutionalised (through, inter alia, internal bureaucracy processes), they will be requested to change their functions, primarily due to the pressure of their governing bodies aiming at a political use of their expertise and work input.

Interestingly, Professor Kaleta has appealed for permanent control of the link between the Polish LEADER and the existing vision of rural renewal on which LEADER+ in Poland was based.

However, there is a serious fear that during the programme implementation the objectives laid down in the “Strategy for Rural Europe”, in as early as 1988, will be abandoned and targets different from those outlined there will be adopted due to the introduction of numerous bureaucratic provisions.

Mr Bartosz Szymański, Head of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) Section in Kujawsko-Pomorski Marshall Office, has recognised the need to combine the experience of the administration sector with the scientific results of the research on the processes of activation and renewal of rural communities in Poland. He has underlined that relationship between theory and practice is not too strong, which is not beneficial to the scientific world or the institutions implementing the programmes discussed. He has made an appeal to conduct nationwide research into LEADER which should go beyond the strictly “reporting” character and should combine sociological, political science, psychological and cultural themes.

Professor Hanna Podedworna from the Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw has emphasised the need to study the LEADER Programme from the perspective of the whole process, i.e. in its full complexity. Thus, account should be taken of the fact that practically each group is at a different development stage and everyone should be made aware that particular communities and groups’ level of preparedness for the programme implementation varies greatly.

Ruta Śpiewak, M.A., from the Institute of Rural Development and Agriculture, the Polish Academy of Sciences, has presented the first attempt at a general description of human resources quality in LAGs. She has pointed out to a very important cause of unequal development of this initiative in Poland which is the existent or, on the contrary, non-existent socio-historical background for such activities. One of its main components is the human resources quality. Paradoxically, the “Leader” idea is developing very well in suburban areas. LAGs’ activity is strongly correlated with other types of activity, i.e. social, economic or cultural. Thus, there is a real fear that the LEADER+ Programme, contrary to its objectives, will contribute to further polarisation of Polish rural areas. The theme has been continued by Wojciech Goszczyński, M.A., the Institute of Sociology, UMK in Toruń, who has delivered a paper on the role of LEADER+ in shaping the social capital in rural areas.

Katarzyna Hanke, M.A., the Institute of Sociology, Łódź University, has shown a very interesting perspective of the LEADER+ analysis, using the sociological theory of social exchange. In her presentation she has drawn attention of conference participants to the LAG impact on other organisations and local communities.

Dr Agnieszka Rosińska and Dr Dariusz Rosiński, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, have shown a psychological and psycho-social approach to the Programme analysis, examining social competences of the units taking part in the initiative. In Dariusz Rosiński view, LEADER+ encourages exchange of

resources and strengthens the cultural identity of the area by establishing specific rules for its implementation (e.g. the tri-sector formula provides the platform for the community integration based on an intensive and systematic exchange of resources). The researchers pointed out to a serious threat to the observance of the “Leader” rules through a psychological mechanism of “autonomous resources”, i.e. the envious guarding of resources by the boards, offices etc. Finally, the researchers indicated the community ability to make a self-diagnosis as a condition for acquiring social competences necessary for the Leader Programme implementation. Dr Rosińska has emphasised the importance of the readiness of the LAG management boards’, which are of great significance for the organisation permanence, to take risk. Moreover, the lecturer has noticed that identification and maintenance of the psychological mechanism of individuals’ motivation conversion to community motivation would be helpful to LEADER.

Justyna Laxy-Krupa from Wrocław University continued a psychological theme of the LEADER analysis, touching in her paper on psycho-sociological problems occurring during its implementation in Poland. She has presented a selected case of the initiative launch to show real and possible reasons for the disappearance of LAGs from the social activity map in Poland. The lack of motivation among inhabitants (they do not see realistically achievable objectives, of value for them), wrong information policy, authorities’ takeover of the programme lead to very weak legitimisation of LAGs in rural communities and make them look superficial or cause their fall.

Dr Wojciech Knieć, the Institute of Sociology, Nicolas Copernicus University (UMK) in Toruń, has delivered a lecture on power in the LEADER+ Programme, focussing on the construction of various models of exercising power inside LAGs. The theme is presented in more detail in the article “Power in LAGs”.

Finally, Anna Mówińska, the Institute of Sociology, Nicolas Copernicus University (UMK) in Toruń, has presented a historical and political background of the LEADER creation, analysing in particular its place within the EU Common Agricultural Policy.

During the discussion the conference participants have underlined the pioneer character of the Polish LEADER analyses. This implies that they involve the risk of error and contain too many comparisons to the experience of and conclusions from the programme implementation in other counties, so different culturally and historically from Poland.

However, it is beyond any doubt that there is a new quality in rural development management in Poland, i.e. the public administration monopoly role has been abandoned in planning and implementing the rural development strategy. LEADER+ introduces, much more strongly than ever before in Polish villages, the qualitative dimension of the social change in rural areas. Its merit is that it is already making rural elites, and in consequence the whole rural community, aware that improvement in the

quality of life cannot be reduced to infrastructure upgrading but that it has its cultural, intellectual, elite-forming and community dimensions. In cultural terms, the Programme contributes to the development of a specific cultural background, creating the identity of a given area so much needed by people tired of anonymity and mass culture. In intellectual terms, LEADER+ is the reason for social transformations, i.e. for counteracting the well-established customs, thereby eliminating activities in “bad faith” where the conviction of the world’s permanency is the source of pathologies of the community life and policy on village, commune and poviát (county) levels. In elite-formation terms, the LEADER is the platform for creating social promotion paths for those rural inhabitants who finished their education and career for various reasons. Furthermore, it contributes, in this sense, to the discovery of valuable but hidden human capital resources of rural communities. Finally, in community life terms, LEADER+ generates such social transformations which lead to the reconstruction or construction of new, cooperation networks, on village, commune, poviát, LAG area, region and state levels. In this context the LAG itself becomes a community and constantly supports the restoration of local rural communities facing a permanent crisis for over several dozen years.

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## Leader – Successes and Barriers International Conference of the International Leader + Network

For the second time this year, the National Leader+ Network invited Local Action Groups to the conference devoted to the perspective 2007-2013, thereby creating conditions for the exchange of experience, views and for the discussions about opportunities and threats in the new programming period. The participants in this international conference were primarily members of partner groups from Poland and other European countries, representatives of the European Commission, domestic and foreign institutions engaged in the Leader initiative implementation as well as research centres for rural development. LAG representatives noted with regret that representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development did not come to the conference, whereas thanks to their presence many doubts about LAG's future in Poland could be dispelled. The conference "Leader – Successes and Barriers" was held on 12 and 13 October 2007 in Przemyśl. The first day was divided into four panel sessions devoted to various issues of LAG activities in Poland and abroad. All the themes proposed sparked great interest among LAG representatives. On the second day two parallel workshops were organised, participants being divided into two groups, which focussed on the creation of strong partnerships and cooperation projects with Polish and foreign partners.

The persons listed below took part in the first panel "**Rural Development Programmes in the selected EU countries**":

- Breda Kovacic – Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture,
- Liisa Hame – expert for the LEADER implementation in Finland, responsible for international contacts in SYTY, Finish organisation performing the function of the National Leader+ Network,
- Hans Martin Lorenzen – expert, Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament,
- Janusz Rowiński – expert, Institute of Agriculture and Food Economics,
- Anna Potok – representative of the Polish Rural Forum (FAOW) as a moderator.

In his introduction to the discussion, Hans Lorenzen has emphasised that the Leader Initiative, an expression of trust in local communities' decisions on how to use the assistance provided to them, is an extremely important European Union policy on rural development. With greater social involvement in LAGs development, the role and significance of the Leader concept is growing, thereby convincing local communities and administration of the righteousness and effectiveness of such approach. He has also pointed out to the importance of the Leader Initiative as a complementary instrument to the Common Agricultural Policy. At present the European Commission is being criticised for too high outlays on agricultural programmes. Following the assessment of the effects of the

hitherto regulations, the proportion of funds in the EU budget allocated for rural development programmes may be increased. In Hans Lorenzen's opinion, LAGs are the best instrument for the effective implementation of such programmes. Despite the authorities' fears of losing control over the activities at the local level, it is necessary to go beyond traditional management and decision making patterns.

Further in the discussion the participants have tried to respond to the question to which extent national rural development programmes for 2007-2013 would effectively support areas out-of town areas.

Dr Janusz Rowiński has focussed mainly on the difficulties in drawing up the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for 2007-2013 in Poland. He has mentioned:

- the lack of clearly defined co-financing priorities as from the viewpoint of rural development all measures laid down in the RDP are beneficial and equally important;
- the necessity of taking into account the commitments made in the previous programming period (resulting in the need to allocate a specific amount of money for the measures started in 2004-2006),
- the lobbying of various interest groups to introduce specific measures into the programme;
- the incompetent people's "fiddling" upon formulation of the programme.

In consequence, in Dr Janusz Rowiński's view, a conformist programme was drawn up, without a clearly outlined objective, appropriating a more or less equal amount of funds for rural development, the development of other sectors of the economy, environmental protection and farmers' income support.

To wrap up the discussion, Mr Hans Lorenzen has concluded that a crucial task of EU operational programmes is to hold up the progressing depopulation of rural areas. He drew attention to the common need of inhabitants' integration at the local level, different dynamics of rural areas development and their diverse relations with towns in particular EU member states. He underlined the importance of flexible adjustment of the Programme to the changing reality. The panel participants have agreed that the Leader approach and projects implemented under this programme are efficient, effective and innovative in the rural development process.

The consecutive panels were devoted to the National Networks of Rural Areas and LAG activities in the new programming period. Polish proposals for 2007-13 concerning a new legal status for LAGs led to a heated discussion. Workshops in the framework of the conference "Leader – Successes and Barriers" held on the following day ensured the possibility of exchanging experiences and common problems. The workshop "**Building a strong LAG – how to include local partners and ensure transparency?**" has focussed on the need to promote the Leader initiative among local authorities and rural areas inhabitants. A limited knowledge of the idea does not foster trust in Local Action Groups and impedes the process of local

community empowerment. The participants in the workshop “How to create projects of cooperation with domestic and foreign partners?” have reached conclusions jointly and made recommendations for facilitating cooperation. In particular the need to precisely specify joint objectives has been stressed. Searching for a partner to take a specific action, according to strictly defined criteria, produces better effects than establishing random contacts to devise joint projects. The following cooperation themes have been mentioned as most popular: local products, the environment, tourism, new sources of energy and diversification of agricultural holdings. Intermediation of the National Leader+ Network has been specified as helpful, making the LAG offer more reliable.

More information, including the details on the panels and workshops, conclusions and recommendations and the content of the presentations delivered can be found on website: [www.leader.org.pl](http://www.leader.org.pl).

**Beata Szybińska**

FAPA





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