

Case Study 9: Integrated Project OPE+ LAG Horní Pomoraví I

Abstract



The case study focuses on the *Integrated Project OPE+ LAG Horní Pomoraví I*, which provides comprehensive social support to five disadvantaged target groups. The interventions chosen are based on the local action group's (LAG) strategy, which includes needs analysis and cooperation with partners. In general, the project addresses social problems associated with social exclusion, especially in the northern part of the LAG territory. The project mediates assistance to target groups and

coordinates services provided in the area. The project also supports the continuation of existing activities, such as the food bank or senior taxi, which the LAG has taken over into its project and thus enabled their continuation. The added value of the project is its complexity and coverage of a wide range of target groups and activities with the aim of reducing social exclusion.

Project subject

The project addressed significant problems of the area associated with social exclusion. There are insufficient job opportunities in the region, the population is ageing and depopulation is occurring. The problems are complex and relate to low incomes and social isolation. The project is divided into five concurrent smaller activities that target a different target group and aim at different outputs. Examples include permeable employment, work with informal carers, senior taxi service or food and material assistance. A common element of these activities is that they support target groups through comprehensive interconnected support to improve their situation. The project involves intensive cooperation between actors, including the state administration, LAG, non-profit organisations and social services.

LAG Horní Pomoraví and partners

Within the framework of the evaluated project, the LAG cooperates with several partners, namely with the town of Hanušovice and partner organizations (Podané ruce Society, SPOLU-JEKHETANE and Caritas Zábřeh). The LAG is firmly anchored in the territory and can communicate across different levels, which was also reflected in the preparation of the project. There are also working groups in the area where problems across disciplines are solved. A significant added value of the project was the ability to involve a number of actors and establish an interdisciplinary team.

The project was targeted at several target groups, namely **informal carers, socially excluded people and people in risk of social exclusion, people with accumulated disabilities in the labour market, and seniors and people with disabilities**. The LAG has been supporting some target groups for a long time, such as socially disadvantaged families or long-term unemployed people. The LAG territory is inhomogeneous in terms of the occurrence of social phenomena and the problems to which the project

responds are geographically distributed throughout the region. The LAG actively communicates with other services and coordinates the coverage of the provision of services to the target group so that there is no duplication. Thanks to the project, for example, the following shifts in the lives of the target groups have occurred.

		
Improvement of the living situation by promoting self-sufficiency, improving competencies and involvement in the labour market. Support was provided, for example, through a multidisciplinary team and cooperation with schools.	Improvement of competencies for caring for a relative thanks to the support of LAG staff, education and meetings for carers.	Reducing the impact of social exclusion or isolation by ensuring access to basic needs. Examples include greater mobility thanks to senior taxis and the provision of basic food thanks to the food bank.



Example of good practice – Comprehensive support across target groups

The project focuses on a number of activities and target groups. Emphasis is placed on the complexity of support and coordination of local actors. There **is an interdisciplinary team** in the project, which focuses on targeting support within individual areas (e.g. debt counselling, employment) with a focus not only on individuals, but also on their families and surroundings. Support for vulnerable people is also maintained through **the registered social service of the LAG – social counselling**¹, which is a specific and unusual setting. Cooperation with schools and kindergartens is also supported. A significant benefit is also the support of informal caregivers, who did not work in the area and were difficult to access. Workers focused on working with the target group were perceived very positively.



"Everyone takes care of the sick, but not those who take care of the sick, they are on the sidelines and sometimes it's really crazy. The support is great, because at the beginning, when he came, he helped me a lot to lift him. Now my husband is a little better, he takes him out in a wheelchair so that I can do something. So it's a big help for those carers. When it stayed lying down, I was bad and didn't know what to turn to. Such an angel came.

It also includes meetings, we meet on the first Monday of the month and it's great. You find out that it's not so bad, that it can be worse. We talk about our problems for a while, and then we have a normal conversation."

- Target group representative

¹ Social service Counselling Centre Hanušovice: <https://www.infosumperk.cz/dr-cs/3713-mas-horni-pomoravi-o-p-s-odborne-socialni-poradenstvi.html>



- ▶ **Supporting the community and local connections**, for example through the regional brand JESENÍKY original product. The LAG participates in local events and supports their creation by providing equipment (children's stands, stalls). It also implements, for example, suburban camps.
- ▶ **Support for increasing the availability of services** through the coordination of local actors and the development of interdisciplinary cooperation. The LAG is also trying to address the lack of coverage of the territory by services (especially in the northern part) and has registered a social service itself. The added value is that the LAG is able to work with the whole family in the range of its activities. This helps to improve the overall situation of the target group.
- ▶ The added value of the LAG is also **the identification of needs across the region, i.e. the transfer of needs higher than individual entities**. Needs are presented at a higher level, such as political meetings, and thus reach stakeholders.
- ▶ **The LAG cooperates bilaterally with the Norwegian organization Furim Institute**, with which it shares experience, methodologies and good practice in the social inclusion of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. This cooperation also gave rise to the handbook Every Child Has a Place. International cooperation and knowledge transfer is an added value of the LAG.

- The project was positively perceived, so that it could cover the specifics of the region and the complex of target groups and activities. The project managed to fill job positions appropriately, for example in debt counseling or informal care. The involvement **and networking of local organizations was beneficial**.
- The selection of activities and their planning were based on the CLLD strategy, which helped to better set up activities and meet the needs of the territory. Thanks to anchoring in the strategy, the services provided to the target group are effectively coordinated, cover the necessary areas and at the same time do not duplicate each other.
- ✗ The LAG has partly struggled with **the replacement of people in project positions**, which has complicated the transfer of information. Furthermore, **one of the partners** (Caritas Zábřeh), who was in charge of one of the key activities, left the project. This activity was then devoted to a social worker of the LAG.
- ✗ Last but not least, the LAG struggled with **the unwillingness of some actors** (especially the leadership of some municipalities) and the initial reluctance of schools and kindergartens to cooperate. According to the LAG, cooperation developed gradually and its full potential was only achieved after two years. During this period, the LAG actively established relations with schools – it participated in meetings, presented the work of the team and the connection also took place through the MAP.