

Annual Report 2019



Společnost Rožmberk o.p.s.
Rozmberk Society p.b.c.

Summary¹

Most of the year 2019 was dedicated to the final activities for our NETWORKLD project on preserving First World War (WWI) heritage. In April, a student exchange took place in Slovenia, with Czech students learning about and honouring the Czech soldiers fallen during WWI. Summer and fall were used for final reporting on the project.

Visitor numbers to our two visitor centres was somewhat below the level of previous years, and also other income was less than expected. The Society was able to employ only two persons under Labour Office projects.

I. Introduction

The Rozmberk Society (hereafter the Society) was established in 1998 as a public benefit corporation. Its mission is heritage preservation combined with regional development. Our main operating area covers most of the Trebon Basin and Novohradská foothills in the eastern part of South Bohemia, Czech Republic.

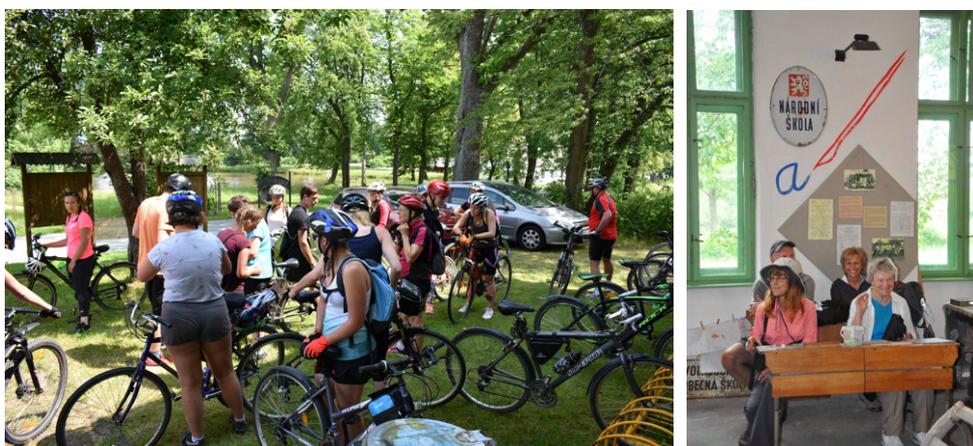
The Society runs projects and operates two visitor centres. Since 2001, the Society operates the [Peasant and Emigration Museum](#) in the former school in the village of Kojakovice. The museum focuses on village life and emigration to America in the period 1850 – 1918 and on WWI. Since 2004, we also run the historic blacksmith workshop (the Smithy) in Nove Hradý.

The Rozmberk Society has no permanent employees. The director is on a long-term unpaid appointment and the co-director is a permanent volunteer. Additional employees (mostly 4 – 7 persons) are hired within the framework of grants and projects. Volunteers work on the basis of needs and availability. When possible, the Society hires temporary employees from socially disadvantaged groups to help cover the main visitor period of the year.

II. Events and ongoing activities

Kojakovice Peasant and Emigration Museum

The Museum was open full-time only from mid-June through mid-September. About 600 visitors (adults, seniors and children) went through, including some US and other foreign groups. Most foreigners came to the museum through the [Greenways Travel Club](#) or through visiting our [Czech Emigration Museum](#) website. The museum was opened outside those dates upon request.



Cyclists and American tourists in our museum.

¹ Since most of the readers of the report are foreign, especially the funding organizations, the Annual Report is written only in English, as is allowed.

Nove Hradý Historic Blacksmith Workshop

From May till October, the Smithy was open for visitors. About 2 300 visitors (adults, seniors, and children) passed through.

Apprentice blacksmiths demonstrated occasionally during the summer season. The apprentices also used the Smithy outside the season for accommodation and training while continuing their blacksmith education with master blacksmith [Daniel Cerny](#).

We also did special demonstrations events for schools, groups, and disabled people. During most of these events, children were also active in other crafts and activities such as baking decorative breads on the historical oven, egg decoration techniques, and gingerbread painting.



Explaining old equipment and doing activities with school groups

Traditional annual events

The Smithy hosts three traditional one-day cultural events: Easter, Potato-day, and Devil's Forging. These events provide activities for children and adults, and tasting of many types of South Bohemian sweet pies. All events were well visited by locals and visitors from the region alike.



Easter: inside painting eggs, outside learning how to braid the traditional Easter whips from twigs.



Potato day, celebrating the potato harvest and using the Autumn leaves and nuts to make pictures



December 6: St Nicolas day, with Devil's Forging.



Letting kids try their hand at forging is always part of our events.

Since 2001, the Society helps with the logistics and finances of the week-long summer camp at the Nakolice fish pond. Around 60 children of the Jílovce primary school and other children from the region and 8 adult supervisors attended this thematic camp this year.

III. Projects

Danube Transnational Programme project *NETWORLD*

The *NETWORLD* project was completed this year. Its main objectives were to increase the awareness of WWI heritage and to use this heritage to develop transnational quality cultural tourism. More information on the project background can be found at the [DTP *NETWORLD* site](#).

The most important action was the student exchange we did with our Slovenian partners along the Soci Front. In April, nine Czech students and five supervisors-organizers completed a Youth Exchange visiting Slovenia and Italy. These mainly blacksmith apprentices forged remembrance poppies during a demonstration at the Iron Forging Museum in Kropa, Italy.



Forging commemoration poppies in Kropa

Later, we moved to the Kobarid region, known for its Walk of Peace trails following the WWI Soca Front. Despite bad weather forecasts, the group walked the trails several hours on two consecutive days. At the second day, the walk extended from the mountain cabin near Mnt Krn to just below the top of Mnt. Mrzli Vrh. There, the students placed the forged poppies at the recently restored monument in honour of Czech soldiers fallen at Mrzli Vrh during WW I.



The forged poppies ant the monument with poppies.



Starting point of the trail (left) and location of the monument on Mnt. Mrzli Vrh (right)

At the end of the trip we also visited the European Centre for Heritage Crafts and Professions, Thiene, Italy, where the students learned how they as apprentices could become involved as crafts persons in heritage preservation and commemoration.

Visegrad project “Let’s mix the Quartet of Built and Cultural Heritage, Gastronomy and Handicraft”

In 2019, the Society participated in the first year of the VISEGRAD project on combining local assets to develop nice cultural tourism. Four partners from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland participated in this project, under leadership of the Town of Szarvas, Hungary.

The Rozmberk Society hosted the kick-off meeting in Nove Hradky in June 2020. In December, Robert Dulfer and Olga Cerna visited the partners in Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland. The final meeting will take place in 2020 in Szarvas, Hungary.

Ecomuseum project ECHOES

The Society hosted a kick-off partner meeting for the ECHOES partners in Prague. The outline for a contract of cooperation was agreed upon, waiting final approval by the legal representatives and boards of the partners. The start of activities will take place in 2020.

Project applications

In 2018 and early 2019, we applied for several projects under Eu and Czech programs. Unfortunately, those applications all failed. This is in part due to the ending of the EU funding rounds for the period 2014-2020. At the end of these programs, funds are running low and number of applications is high, reducing the changes of projects being approved.

IV. Other activities – Memberships

LAG Ruze

Since the LAG was established, the Society has been a member of the Local Action Group [MAS Sdružení Růže](#). Society co-director Olga Cerna is active in the working group for social activities and is member of the Commission selecting projects for funding.

Newcastles of the World

The town of Nove Hradky (South Bohemia) is a member of the governing board of the Newcastles of the World Alliance. Society Director Robert Dulfer together with the mayor Vladimir Hokr are the representatives for Nove Hradky on the Board. In addition, the Society is hosting and managing the [Newcastles Conferences](#) website and the [Newcastles Forum](#) website.

V Human Resources

In 2019, the Society employed four people on long- and short-term contracts.

Society's co-directors Robert Dulfer and Olga Cerna were hired within the NETWORLD project. The Society also received funding from the regional Labour Office to hire two persons from economically disadvantaged groups on short-term 6-months contracts as support staff for running the visitor centres.

VI Future plans

At the time of writing this Annual Report, the Covid-19 pandemic and accompanying restrictions already had a large impact on normal live. Currently it is unclear how this will develop further. In addition, this is the start of the new period 2021-2027 for EU funding, and for us relevant calls have not yet been announced.

As such, our plans for 2020 and further are halted until the full impact over time of the pandemic is known better.

VII. Summary Financial Year 2019

The financial year 2019 ended with a negative result for income and expenditure. This is largely due to the fact that the final instalment for the NETWORLD project has not yet been paid. The negative balance was covered by the pre-financing loan for the NETWORD project.

The balance sheet and more detailed financial information over the year 2019 are available on our website and upon request.

NETWORLD project funding

The NETWORLD project is co-funded (85%) by EUROPEAN UNION funds (ERDF and IPA). The Society has to arrange 15% co-funding. In addition, the project has to be fully prefinanced by the Society. For this, a bank loan has been obtained through our bank WSPK. The budget for the Society is 114 600 € for 30 months. The Progress Report for Period 4 (1.7.2018-31.12.2018) was approved by Czech and EU controllers. The instalment for period 4 (18 632 €) was received in July 2019.

The Progress Reports for Period 5 (1.1.2019-30.6.2019) is still under review and the final instalment is expected in the first half of 2020.

Other income

Support from the Labour Office this year amounted to approximately 5 600 €. Additional funding was received from the Town of Nove Hradky (cca 3 000 €), the Waldviertel Sparkasse (our bank) and other local or regional sources.

The Visegrad project was paid through invoice to the project leader (1 740 €). Additional income was also obtained through our two visitors' centres (cca 5 500 €) and through other services provided.

For the Summer Camp, all costs including renting the camp space and tents, transport for excursions, allowance for adults, material for games, and overhead were covered by the contribution of the children. No income was derived from this.

VIII. Last but not least

The Society is constantly receiving very positive verbal comments from public and authorities on our work, but due to limited sources so far there is no written form of such a feedback. It is one of our aims in near future to establish some public online platform for gathering comments and recommendations.

We would like to thank to all who provided us with enormous moral and other support. We are looking forward continuing our work and good relations in 2020.

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