

NARAVA NAS UČI – PILOTNI PROJEKT BIODINAMIČNIH UČNIH VRTOV

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Povzetek: V okviru projekta Leader sta bila v občini Radovljica in občina Kranjska Gora vzpostavljena dva učna biodinamična vrtova z namenom aktivno spodbujati otroke, osnovnošolce, mlade, brezposelne, vrtničarje, občane k pridelavi zdrave hrane tudi z medgeneracijskim sodelovanjem, vključiti v izobraževalne cikle kmete in z učenjem biodinamičnega obdelovanja zagotoviti pridelavo visokokakovostne hrane in s tem prispevati tudi k večji samooskrbnosti. V izobraževalnih ciklikih (teorija in praksa) je sodelovalo preko 200 ljudi iz omenjenih občin. Otroci iz Waldorfskega vrta, osnovnošolci iz Waldorfske šole, šole A. T. Linhart, šole A. Janša, varovanci CUDV (center za usposabljanje, delo, varstvo Matevž Langus), dijaki in študentje BC Naklo so obdelovali vsak svoj del vrta. Kasneje so se projektu pridružili še prostovoljci in Ljudska Univerza Radovljica. Kot zadnja se je projektu pridružila srednja gostinska šola Radovljica, ki je pripravljala različne jedi iz zelenjave, ki je zrasla na vrtu. V šolskih vrtovih je skritega veliko potenciala in izziv nam bo nadaljevati in nadgrajevati začeto delo. Želimo ohraniti delovno mesto oskrbnika vrtov tudi v prihodnje in umestiti učni vrt v šolske učne programe, saj je praktično znanje in zavedanje, kako in na kakšen način vzgojiti in pridobiti visokokakovostno hrano eno temeljnih znanj in tudi hkrati navdih za ustvarjanje in medgeneracijsko druženje, ki je v modernem svetu že skoraj pozabljeno.

Ključne besede: biodinamika, učni vrt, medgeneracijsko sodelovanje, samooskrba, visokokakovostna hrana

NATURE IS TEACHING US – A PILOT PROJECT OF BIODYNAMIC SCHOOL GARDENS

Abstract: Two school gardens in Radovljica and Kranjska Gora were established within the project. The project aims to actively encourage children in kindergartens, primary schools, young people, unemployed people, and gardeners to produce healthy food with intergenerational cooperation. There were also farmers included in the educational programmes from biodynamic agriculture in order to ensure the production of high quality food and thereby contribute to greater self-sufficiency in the region. More than 200 people from these communities participated in the training cycles (theory and practice). Children from Waldorf kindergarten, primary Waldorf school, primary schools A. T. Linhart and A. Janša, CUDV clients (center for handicapped people), students BC Naklo are managing their own gardens. Later on the project was joined also by volunteer people from the municipality and some youngsters with social problems. Two months ago the pupils from Culinary School Radovljica joined the project and prepared a variety of dishes made from vegetables grown in the garden and together we made a degustation and showed the gardens to other interested people. We believe that there is a big potential hidden in the school gardens and it will be a challenge for us to continue and build upon the work done in the field of education, self-sufficiency, establishing new working places. We would like to maintain the green job of a

garden manager also in the future and install a school garden which should be integrated into the school curricula as there is an important practical knowledge (learning by doing) and an awareness of how to grow high-quality food; there are also impulses for intergenerational socialization, which seems in the modern world almost forgotten.

Keywords: biodynamics, school garden, intergenerational cooperation, self-sufficiency, high quality food

Introduction

Upper Gorenjska region is an area that has begun to emerge in the remote past on the territories, coinciding with the former possession of Brixen bishops and the counts of Ortenburg and has developed as a whole. This area definitely is one of the most beautiful and picturesque areas in Slovenia and also Europe. It is strongly connected with nature, natural resources, traditional farming and cultural heritage. In order to preserve the natural heritage and nature 'Ajda Gorenjska Association' was founded in 2002 with the main goal to further stimulate and concretely participate in teaching the members of the Association about food production according to the biodynamic method. The Association gathered more than 170 gardeners and farmers who were sharing experiences and learning together. There are currently 14 similar »Ajda« Associations in Slovenia, connected at the national level within the »Federation of the Associations« The Association Ajda Gorenjska has been working and developing its methods in close cooperation with the Slovenia Demeter Association, which gathers producers (farmers) and biodynamic food processors.

The mayors of the three municipalities of Upper Gorenjska region - Radovljica, Jesenice and Kranjska Gora took the decision to support the Leader pilot project entitled 'Nature is teaching us' with the basic aim to teach children, youth, and other interested citizens how to produce safe food and at the same time take care of maintaining the natural balance. The main financial support came from the municipality of Radovljica, the contractor was RAGOR (Development Agency of Upper Gorenjska Region) and its professional subcontractor was Demeter, Institute for biodynamic agriculture. Conceptual leaders were Maja Kolar and Franc Zavodnik, Aleš Jezeršek was the manager of the gardens (Kolar and Mesec, 2012). Ajda Association was included within the professional work, namely the mentors Mihaela Zalokar and Monika Brinšek.

The potential for development

The Radovljica basin is a kind of entry point in the beauty of unspoiled nature of upper Gorenjska region. The land covers the chain of high mountains in the north and the valley of the Sava River in the south (Bogožalec, 2006). In the eastern part of the hiking trails - around Obla Gorica hill, in a small basin between the school, kindergarten and ambulance, a large meadow was located, which was changed to the biodynamic school garden within the project. Another urban teaching garden was created on a slightly smaller area in Kranjska Gora, aiming at stimulating the food production in the alpine climate. Although on geographical maps Radovljica and Kranjska Gora are only nice small towns, such gardens enable the two towns to place themselves aside big cities such as Berlin and Basel.

The project aims were to actively promote participation of children in kindergartens, primary schools, young people, unemployed people, and gardeners in the production of healthy food with intergenerational cooperation. In order to ensure the production of high-quality food and contribution to greater self-sufficiency also farmers were involved in the educational programmes. More than 200 people from these communities participated in the training cycles (theory and practice). Children from Waldorf kindergarten, primary Waldorf school, primary schools A. T. Linhart and A. Janša, CUDV clients (center for handicapped people), students and pupils from Biotechnical Center Naklo were managing their own gardens. Later on also volunteers from the municipality and some youngsters with social problems joined the project. In the autumn the pupils from Culinary School Radovljica joined the project; they prepared a variety of dishes made from vegetables grown in the garden and together we made a degustation and showed the gardens to other interested people.

Demeter farmers, seed house Arcoiris, Institute Organic Seeds and the Association for organic and biodynamic management Pomurje donated seeds for the project. Both gardens are under organic and biodynamic certification for the first year now. The gardens will gain the international Demeter brand, which is a sign of the highest food

quality. The brand is used in 53 different countries, in 2013 the number of the certified projects increased to 4800.

The focus is on sowing and planting native, indigenous plants in the gardens. We planted an orchard with various fruit species and berries. The ornamental part of the garden is dedicated mainly to attracting beneficial insects. The surfaces were sprayed with biodynamic preparations; there was compost inoculated with the compost preparations. In order to explain the sowing calendar to the people a stone garden was established. Biodynamic farming and gardening is in fact older than organic, its founder was Dr. Rudolf Steiner (Turinek et al., 2009). The main difference is that the biodynamic approach understands the world not only from a materialistic point of view, but also spiritually. We believe that life is not only the sum of the chemical reactions, but rather an individual entity composed of rhythms and forces that enliven things. It is our goal to understand in the gardens the natural rhythms, to organize the work according to them and to look at the gardens as holistic organisms. Preparations used in biodynamics help the processes of growth; they promote maturation and development of taste. The highest quality products for human consumption are obtained when there is a balance between growth and maturation.

The need for local food production has been increasing at the global level. Through the local food production people got connected between themselves as well as with the local community. An important argument for a further encouraging of this development is the fact that such agriculture has decisively reduced the impact on the environment and has a smaller environmental footprint.

The picturesque landscape has always been famous for its rich tradition of beekeeping. In the village at the foot of mountain Stol, Anton Janša was born, the doyen of Slovenian beekeepers. The Museum of Apiculture was established in Radovljica. A modern beekeeping and educational center has been emerging in the nearby town Lesce and therefore we also wish to implement bees to the gardens in the future within the project.

Conclusion

We would like to upgrade the work that we already started by starting to build a small house there for intergenerational gathering and sharing of knowledge. We created a green job, as the garden manager is the employee of the municipalities. We would like to bring animals to the gardens like bees and chickens. We will start making biodynamic preparations, which belong to the basic principles of biodynamics. With regard to self-sufficiency we would like to connect to different cooperatives that provide food for schools and kindergartens. We wish to develop a quality education at all levels by incorporating outdoor classrooms. We will endeavour to work closely with the Biotechnical Centre Naklo in the field of education and research. Our common goal is to establish a center of interdisciplinary, innovative approach to ensuring quality of life based on the criteria of sustainable development in the field of biodynamic farming and gardening, education, culture, social entrepreneurship and research.

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