Vital Landscapes – People and landscape hand in hand

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European landscapes are hidden development potentials. Practice proves that as complex heritage areas, they can be efficiently involved in development with active participation of locals. Participation works in favour of people empowerment and enforcement of protection laws.

Landscapes offer development opportunities, if local people know how to grab and exploit them. This is most actual relevant for landscapes in transfer, losing cultural identity either by natural processes (overgrowing) or by intensive agricultural use. Many landscapes could develop sustainably if their full development potentials were discovered on time. In the Vital Landscapes project we proved that by involving local people into developmental game lead by creative group of professionals, the hidden potentials are more likely to be released successfully. Newcomers can provide fresh knowledge and perspectives that are necessary for the empowerment of local resources, people knowledge, heritage, arts and crafts.

We The project proved that with an innovative workshop system which can simultaneously serves as a field research tool, a community identity builder and an innovative tourist offer. Activities, based on the culture of land use, also help raising awareness about landscape values and landscape identity. Each of them matters and helps in further decisioning and deaccessioning about landscape development. The workshops are planned to bring together different generations, professions, inner and outer interested public. They follow initial desktop and field research, first as a set of workshops for school kids and later on as a creative tourist offer, developed afterwards between the creative team of tutors and craftsmen. The »Creative workshops system« this way serves as community and capacity building tool. The Vital Landscapes project results revealed, revealed that landscape development potentials could be best released by active participatory development process which works in favour of landscape protection as well as of a new development activity.

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