

Lenkeprojekt

Long-term eco-social community building project targeting Roma communities living in deep poverty



I) Lenkeprojekt 2012

Lenkeprojekt started in the village of Bódvalenke located in Borsod county, Hungary in July, 2012. Bódvalenke's inhabitants are struggling from extreme poverty, the majority of them belong to the Roma ethnic group. The long-term social improvement project was born as a result of the collaboration of two university student groups: the sustainability research lab of Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design called MOME EcoLab, and Corvinus University's sociology and economics students who study at Széchenyi István College.

The participating groups conducted researches and design practices with an aim of bringing a positive change to the lives of the village people by actively involving Bódvalenke's community into the complex developmental process. The student groups focus on helping the inhabitants' social integration with the tools of social design, gastronomy and social innovation. They've put an emphasis on building a developmental model that could be extended to several other villages affected by the same dire conditions at the North-Eastern region of Hungary.

As a first step of the development process, the multi-disciplinary group made up of students of sociology, economics, product design, architecture, photography and design management mapped the different sources and values of the eating and cooking culture of the locals. They interviewed every family in each and every house of the village, tasted their food and observing their cooking traditions and methods. As a result of their research, a gastronomy book was created under the name of Lenkeland's machinery.

As the second step of the development process, the groups designed and created such simple functional equipments with the help of which local people are easily able dry and parch fruits, vegetables, mushrooms and herbs that grow abundantly in the area and which the inhabitants are used to collect. The goal is to create products out of the dried and parched foods, make them commercially available in cities and thus to help the people make their own income. They created a unique product palette, a brand promoting a new model of packaging and fair trade.

About MOME EcoLab:

MOME EcoLab is the sustainability research lab of Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest. Its aim is to find tangible design solutions for our 21st century social and ecological challenges. Project website: <http://bodvalenkeprojekt.blogspot.hu>

II) The Goal of the Project

The goal of *Lenkeprojekt* is to develop a sustainability model which is based on the complex use of design tools, cultural mediation and sociology that would help the integration of socially underprivileged communities.

III) Aims and Realization

a) Social Integration

Target group: The inhabitants of the North-Western subregions of Hungary living in deep poverty, the majority of whom belong to Roma ethnic groups

How?

We intend to create better functioning communities and strengthen the identity of our focus groups by using income generating tools. In 2012 we developed a model framework for fair trade methods that can provide self-sufficient sources of income to the working-age population of the subject regions with the

help of appropriate partners and support. The three basic elements of the framework that we developed are as follows: (a) drying and parching equipments that utilize local produce such as herbs, mushrooms and fruits. When buying a compact, value-added food dryer designed to be used at urban environments like balconies, we finance the building of extensive food dryers at Bódvalenke, thus the different produce can be dried and parched locally. (b) designing packagings that can be made locally after giving a short training to the people (c) creating a fair trade brand called PluszOK.

Continuing the development process in 2013 we intend to utilize local craftsmanship as well as the newly opened sewing manufactory of Bódvalenke. We aim at providing a new alternative for the women to make an income (more details in Section V.).

b) Social Sensitization

Target group: urban middle class society who live far away from the problems affecting the remote villages, and thus are easily influenced by negative preconceptions and prejudice

How?

We aim at strengthening the social appreciation of Roma inhabitants of Bódvalenke and of similar villages with the tools of cultural mediation. In 2012 the main theme of the development project was gastronomy. Gastronomy provided a common language, with which we as guests could approach the villagers. In 2013 the common denominator will be the theme of fairytale culture (more details in Section V.)

c) Emphasising the Social Role of Design and Culture

Target group: Hungarian organizations whose mission is to provide social assistance, also, economic and political stakeholders who are obliged to carry through greater social development programs.

How?

With Lenkeproject we would like to highlight the potentials inherent within design and cultural mediation. These potentials have been already recognized by international organizations and they use them as tools in solving social and economic problems in developing countries. We aim to promote the idea in Hungary that design and cultural mediation could also be accepted and practical tools in social convergence programs.

In 2013 we wish to put a greater emphasis on reaching the public as well as on a wider promotion of Lenkeproject to those organizations and political stakeholders who are used to giving social assistance with traditionally accepted methods.

IV) Participants, Phases of Implementation and Finances

a) Participants, Partners, Sponsors in 2012

Organizers: MOME EcoLab és Széchenyi István College (SZISZ)

Project Leaders: Dániel Barcza (MOME EcoLab, founder), Borbála Fehér (MOME EcoLab, Managing Director), Andrea Schmidt (SZISZ, professor)

Participants of the creative and research week: Dániel Barcza, Péter Bokor, Sarolta Ember, Borbála Fehér, Katalin Holányi, Éva Holb, Bálint Néray, Júlia Oravecz, Péter Pettendi Szabó, Andrea Schmidt, Edit Szabó, Éva Tornyánszki, Eszter Vay-Farkas

Lenkeland's Machinery - gastronomic publication:

Graphic design: Katalin, Holányi

Photo: Sarolta Ember, Péter Pettendi Szabó, Anett Zsupponits

Authors: Péter Bokor, Éva Holb, Bálint Néray, Júlia Oravecz, Edit Szabó, Eszter Vay-Farkas

Editorial work: András Beck, Zsejke Nagy

PLUSZ OK brand and product family:

Graphic Design: Borbála Kovács, Veronika Szalai

LENKE DRYER: Dániel Barcza, Borbála Fehér, Simon Hukaya, Eszter Kollár, Borbála Kovács, Veronika Szalai

Prototype of the Dryer: Dániel Barcza, Sári Berzicza, Tamás Erdélyi, Borbála Fehér, Simon Hukaya, Katalin Holányi, Eszter Kollár

Partners: Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, MOMEline, Kultúrgorilla

Sponsor: Országos Főépítészeti Iroda

b) Schedule

March – June 2012	Preparation of Lenkeproject
26th July 2012 – 1st August	Eco-social creative and research week in Bódvalenke

2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. building of the community development tool (spice dryer wall) designed at Bódvalenke 2. preparation of publication and social research (recipe gathering, interviewing) 3. eco-social brand and product preparation 4. acknowledgements accompanied by public presentation of photos
August-September 2012	PluszOK brand and product development, creating presentation items (urban dryer, packaging) Creating the publication of „Lenkeland's Machinery”, preliminary printing
October 2012	Presentation of the results of Lenkeproject 2012 in Budapest <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design Week Budapest, exhibition, Design terminál, 28th September – 28th October 2012. 2. Chew it well! Festival, Fogasház, 5th October 2012
February 2013	Printing „Lenkeland's Machinery” publication in high quantities
7th March 2013	Lenke-ball – donating event, 2nd presentation of the publication
March – June 2013	Lenkeproject 2013 – preparation
22nd -28th July 2013	Eco-social creative and research week at Bódvalenke <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. building of the community development tool designed to Bódvalenke 2. preparation of a tale book and social research 3. preparation of contemporary handicraft design product and its brand 4. acknowledgements accompanied by public presentation of photos
August – September 2013	Brand and product development, creating presentation items Preparation of tale book
October 2013	Presentation of the results of Lenkeproject 2013 in Budapest
December 2013	Publishing of tale book created within the frame of Lenkeproject 2013

c) Budget

Project preparation (Conference series, visit to Bódvalenke)	1000 Eur
Summer creative workshop (travel, accommodation, material expenses)	1500 Eur
Brand and product development (dryer, packaging)	1500 Eur
Gastronomic publication (Editing, printing)	3000 Eur
Project management (personal expenses)	1000 Eur
Communication	1000 Eur

V) Lenkeproject 2013

In 2013 we continue the implementation of Lenkeproject in a structure similar to last year's. We intend to follow our goals written in Section III. above. While we continue looking for partners for the activation of the system we developed in 2012, we will work on and initiate new alternatives.

We set three goals to achieve in 2013: brand and product development; cultural publication; locally designed community building tools.

- In order to strengthen the target community's identity and income generating power which would lead to social integration, this year we intend to design contemporary marketable products based on local craftsmanship and on the sewing manufactory that opened just recently. This year's workshop week will be centered around one theme again; fairy tale culture at this time.
- Social sensitization would be achieved through a unique fairy tale book that would be created by tale writers, graphic designers and drama pedagogists with active help and involvement of the local children.
- On the workshop week we will install a public community and identity strengthening facility the theme of which will revolve around storytelling and games.