**Success story of Community-based Action for a GREEN transition (CO-GREEN)**

**Introduction and summary**

Write a short, half-page “story” of the case study, making sure to include the following information in the story:

* The local community characteristics, e.g. size, rural or mixed, agricultural of commuter-village etc
* The main issues faced by the community, e.g. depopulation, migration of young people, lack of community spirit, reluctance to face green challenges etc
* The initiative on which the success story is based, and the issue it tried to solve.
* Who took the initiative
* How public participatory helped
* Lessons learnt

Starachowice is a district town located in the north of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. At the end of 2021, it had a population of 45,700. A peculiarity of the city is its conventional 'separation' by river and railway line into northern and southern parts. Almost all industrial plants and the former residential area are located in the northern part, while the southern part contains newer housing estates, single-family housing and attractive recreational areas. Residents earn their living mainly by working for local companies or running their own businesses. A major demographic problem in the city is the systematic decline in the number of inhabitants and the ageing population. An asset are the modern industrial plants of various branches, which provide employment for qualified and specialised personnel not only for the inhabitants of the town but also for the inhabitants of the surrounding municipalities. Starachowice has a well-organised network of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools with fairly good teaching and accompanying facilities. A Social Services Centre was established in Starachowice in 2021, which carries out a range of pro-social activities especially for the needy, dependent, disabled and the growing group of senior citizens. Several dozen non-governmental organisations operate in the city. They are often the initiators of environmental activities, both for the community as a whole and for their members. Their involvement in solving local community problems has built up a very good relationship with the city's local government, which has enabled many of these initiatives to be realised with city funds and external funding. NGOs are also very active in various types of public consultations on investments planned by the municipal government. The same was true of the so-called 'good practices', for which broad public acceptance was essential for their successful implementation. This is why the model of broad public participation from the moment a problem is identified and an idea is generated until it is realised is very important for the municipality and local communities and organisations. So far, it has worked well, thanks to which many pro-environmental initiatives have been implemented in Starachowice, involving various social groups from the general public to NGOs, senior citizens and young people.

In every case: get the agreement of the stakeholders to be placed on the website of co-Green, and present it as a success-story. Without agreement, they cannot be shared.

**Keywords**: add here a couple (3-4 keywords) that can be used as a “search-term” for the library. **Please select from the followings the most suitable:** public participation, green deal, community engagement, green activators, green motivators, participatory processes, community activators, green transition, rural communities

*Place a photo here*



**Name of Community WIĄZOWNA**

**General information**

| Community Information | Write here |
| --- | --- |
| Population | 45,700 (at the end of 2021) |
| Main occupation of inhabitants (e.g. agriculture, services, industry , mixed) | Starachowice is a city with rich industrial traditions, so most residents work in Starachowice companies located in the Starachowice Economic Zone and other industrial sectors of the city. The main industries are: automotive (MAN, Star San Duo), foundry, metal industry, ceramic and gres tiles (Cerrad), sanitary fittings (Cersanit), wood processing and others. |
| What is the main comparative advantage / strength of the community? | The community's strength is its well-educated workforce, both at the management level of companies as well as in production and service professions. |
| What is the main disadvantage/weakness of the community | Ageing population, migration of young people to larger urban and academic centres and a steady decline in the number of inhabitants (Forecasted population loss of 10% between 2020 and 2030) |
| Has the community a history of public participation and engagement? | The community of Starachowice is involved in many social initiatives but the activity of the inhabitants expressed in the number of NGOs is at a low level. |

**initiative**

| Description of initiative | Write here |
| --- | --- |
| Objectives – main issue addressed | The actions taken are aimed at:  - improving the condition of Starachowice's environment and the quality of life of its inhabitants  - reducing the operating costs of public entities  - increasing the tourist and investment attractiveness of the city |
| Achievements- related to green transition | * Gmina Starachowice, poprzez służby Urzędu Miejskiego, instytucji gminnych, różnych organizacji pozarządowych i lokalnych społeczności realizuje wiele przedsięwzięć, których celem jest poprawa stanu środowiska naturalnego, rozwój alternatywnych źródeł energii i zapobieganie niekorzystnym zmianom klimatycznym. Działania te prowadzone są w oparciu o strategiczne dokumenty uchwalone przez Radę Miejską: * PROGRAM OGRANICZENIA NISKIEJ EMISJI DLA GMINY STARACHOWICE – przyjęty uchwałą nr II/8/2014 Rady Miejskiej w Starachowicach z dnia 4 marca 2014 r. * PLAN ADAPTACJI DO ZMIAN KLIMATU MIASTA STARACHOWICE Z PERSPEKTYWĄ DO 2030 ROKU przyjęty uchwałą nr IX/8/2023 Rady Miejskiej w Starachowicach z dnia 29 września 2023 r. |
| Achievements- related to community participation and engagement | GREEN SCHOOL CIVIC BUDGET  As part of the project "Direction for the Future - Starachowice Local Development Programme", funds in the amount of PLN 42,000 were set aside for the implementation of projects submitted by young people from Starachowice primary schools.  Forty-seven ideas for various pro-ecological activities were submitted from eight schools. The selection of the best idea in each school will take place by voting (in 2024).  The selected project will receive a grant of PLN 5,000 for implementation.  Some of the more interesting projects entered in the competition include: the creation of a quiet room and rest areas, the construction of an ecological wall, the creation of a strawberry and vegetable garden, aromatherapy workshops, the construction of bird feeders, and many others.  The city's Youth Council was actively involved in the project, leading workshops and consultations on the ideas submitted to the competition. |
| Who were the actors involved in implementing or animating the initiative? E.g. Local NGO, group of citizens, members of the local a local municipality, other | The range of green transformation activities implemented required the involvement of many actors, both public and nongovernmental. In the case of city-wide projects, such as free public transport or urban cycling, the initiative came first and foremost from the city authorities, taking into account extensive analyses of the expected benefits and necessary costs. The long-term effect was important, not a one-off. The voice of the municipal authorities, especially the City Council, was important in taking these measures. In the case of smaller projects, such as community gardens, among others, the initiative was shown by groups of residents, e.g. the community of the Wzgórze estate or participants of the University of the Third Age. It is also important to emphasise the strong involvement of the Youth City Council in inspiring and implementing environmental projects mainly in the youth community. |
| How was the community motivated and inspired to take part? What methods were used? | Communities were motivated to act by organising meetings and workshops and by presenting good practices from other localities. It was important to empower local leaders to convince people to cooperate and take action. It was also important to do some of the work themselves, which built relationships between people. |
| What kind of resources were used? E.g. expert knowledge, financial support etc | The costs of the activities carried out were mainly covered by municipal resources and EU funding. |
| Has the initiative been sustained? How? | Pro-environmental initiatives in Starachowice continue . An example of this is the Strategy for Electromobility Development 2020-2030, commissioned by the City Council, which aims to improve air quality in the city and promote public means of transport as an alternative to private vehicles. |
| Any other information you consider important for the successful completion of the initiative | The analyses carried out show that the environmental initiatives in Starachowice have been very positively evaluated by the local community, which is keen to benefit from the effects of these activities and, as part of various public consultations, puts forward further ideas for green energy and environmental protection activities. |

**OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FOR Community ENGAGEMENT**

| **Description of challenge** | **Write here** |
| --- | --- |
| What were the main challenges/obstacles for the successful conduct of this initiative? | The biggest obstacle to the implementation of these initiatives, was the low level of conviction of the local community that the actions taken would directly improve the standard of living of the residents and the state of the environment. There was also concern about the involvement of large financial resources compared to the expected effects, especially as these are usually visible over a long period of time. |
| How were they overcome? All or some of them? | A number of public consultations, presentations of ideas at meetings with various organisations and informal groups have helped to build broad public support for the activities carried out. |
| Who had a prime role in helping overcome the obstacles/challenges? | In most cases, these were local government bodies and groups of residents who were the direct beneficiaries of the activities carried out. |
| Any other information you consider important regarding the local community’s attitude towards the initiative | In principle, there were no major protests from local communities in relation to the measures described. Some groups or organisations in opposition to the city authorities, only raised the economic sense of the projects implemented and the proportion of the expenses incurred in relation to the effects achieved (mainly short-term). |