

GERMANY

Promoting economic development in rural areas

Location
Ballstädt

Programming period
2014-2020

Priority
P6 - Social inclusion & local development

Measure
M19 - LEADER

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 35 947
RDP 17 952
Private 17 995

Project duration
2015 – 2016

Project promoter
Ballstädt Citizen Cooperative

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The local community of Ballstadt created a financially self-sustaining combined village shop and café, which acts as an important meeting place for the local community.

Summary

A local cooperative responded to the loss of local shops and services in the village of Ballstädt (population 700) in central Germany, by establishing a community-run shop and café.

It restored and converted a building in the heart of the village creating a shop, café and meeting

place. Efforts included extensive ceiling, drywall, painting and plasterwork, as well as fitting: a kitchen; ventilation and heating systems; and outdoor storage spaces. A small seated area was created in one corner of the shop as a free meeting place.



Results

- The new community-based store and cafe is providing 70-110 daily customers from the village and surrounding areas with access to basic goods and services.
- The cooperative store is financially self-sufficient and provides the equivalent of three full-time jobs.
- The shop quickly became the centre of village life during the day and an important meeting place
- Increased the independence of many older local people who no longer rely on others to go shopping for them in nearby towns

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ RDP support can help local groups to make the initial investment to create community services that are then self-sustaining.
- ❑ Local commitment is essential.
- ❑ Combining the shop with a café encouraged interaction between local people and across generations
- ❑ Including a seated area made the shop also a meeting place for local people.
- ❑ Locating the store next to a doctor's surgery and child day-care centre made it a convenient meeting place.
- ❑ The cooperative benefitted from a management board of trained specialists from retail, finance and IT.

Context

The village of Ballstädt is located in the district of Gotha, a rather disadvantaged area in Thuringia, central Germany.

A village of only 700 inhabitants, its only bakery/shop closed in 2014. At the same time, the only privately run restaurant also closed down.

The inhabitants of the village were faced with the loss of the last meeting places and supply possibilities in the area.

Objectives

The community came together and sought LEADER funding to run their own shop and café as a cooperative.

They aimed to ensure the provision of basic goods and services and at the same time offer a social meeting place in the village to all residents of Ballstädt and the surrounding areas.

Activities

The cooperative used LEADER funding to restore and convert a village building into a community shop and café. The building is at the heart of the village, next to a children's day-care centre and doctor's surgery.

Considerable work was needed including:

- Ceiling and drywall work
- Painting and plasterwork
- Fitting a kitchen
- Creating outside storage spaces
- Carpentry, including to create a small seated area in one corner of the store
- Installation of ventilation and heating systems

The group then dedicated their efforts to advertising and promotion of the shop.



Results

- A new community-based cooperative store and café is providing the people of the village and surrounding areas with access to basic goods and services.
- The cooperative store is financially self-sufficient and provides the equivalent of three full-time jobs.
- Between 70 and 110 customers are served daily
- Increased independence of many older local people who no longer depend on others to go to shops
- The shop quickly became the centre of village life during the day and an important meeting place – especially for many older and retired people as well as many craftsman and businessmen who use the café at breakfast, lunch and after work
- Also a sense of community has grown between the generations
- In 2016, further support of nearly €7000 was provided for a LEADER project to install new refrigerated wall cabinets

Lessons

- RDP support can help local groups to make the initial investment to create community services that are then self-sustaining.
- The cooperative benefitted from a management board of trained specialists from retail, finance and IT.
- Local commitment is essential - the members of the cooperative are willing to support voluntarily when business gets very busy.
- Combining the shop with a café met different community needs under the same roof and encouraged interaction between generations
- Including a seated area in the shop was a successful initiative to make the shop also a meeting place for local people.
- Locating the store next to a doctor's surgery and child day-care centre made it a convenient meeting place.

"A feeling of community is growing again between the generations. There is a new feeling of belonging and pride among everyone at the new situation in Ballstädt."

Horst Dunkel, Mayor of Ballstädt