

NETHERLANDS

Implementing local development strategies

Location
Oostdijk

Programming period
2007 – 2013

Axis / Priority
Axis 4 – LEADER

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 43 500
EAFRD 20 000
National/regional 20 000
Private 3 500

Project duration
2014 – 2015

Project promoter
Foundation De Putter

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Website
www.deputter-oostdijk.nl

De Putter is an example of how small communities that are facing a declining level of services can improve their livelihood and promote social cohesion.

Summary

The five hundred inhabitants of Oostdijk were facing a declining level of available services. The shops were shutting down and the library closed down as well. Due to cutbacks and the decentralisation of the care system, the healthcare services were also under pressure.



To revert this situation the village council decided to convert the old kindergarten into a multifunctional community centre, called De Putter. As soon as financing was granted, the building was renovated by professionals, volunteers and civil engineering students. Thanks to De Putter, the village has not only a supermarket but also a meeting place, a modest tourist attraction and a library.

Results

From Monday to Friday De Putter offers day-to-day support to the local people.

Due to the small-scale care service, the number of clients is limited to a maximum of five patients per day.

De Putter has a functional library, a store and a cafe and provides both educational and healthcare services to the municipality.

Over 36 volunteers are actively involved.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Applying for support under the rural development programme requires time, attention and patience (far more than expected).
- ❑ It may be difficult to find specialized knowledge in a small community and this might create problems on the project implementation.
- ❑ Starting a shop and setting up a care system at the same time can be a challenge since it is difficult to share attention and time on both fields.
- ❑ Key success factors include the proactive support of the local community to the project and taking ownership over it, as well as the commitment of volunteers to contribute for the common good.