

FIELD TRIPS

We will organise 3 groups. Each group will visit one project/ initiative. Please make up your mind until Thursday evening!

S.C. LARIX SRL

S.C. LARIX SRL. is a medium size enterprise founded in 1992 in Sovata, Transylvania. The main products of the company are teas, cosmetics and dried medicinal plants. The raw material for these products is coming from different sources. One side there are in the region local farmers and families who are growing on the small-scale level medicinal and aromatic plants. On the other side wild collection is very popular in Romania. Unemployed low skilled people, pensioners are working in the season for the company.

Thanks to the growing market for products made from medicinal and aromatic plants and the challenges on the global market the company is also importing and exporting dried medicinal and aromatic plants.

Now they are distributing the products in 23 counties in Romania, 154 cities, totally in 1428 Pharmacies & Shops. In the same time, they are exporting medicinal and aromatic plants to other EU countries like Germany and France.

Visiting this factory, we will hear about the history of the company and the challenges thanks to the Romanian legislation in this field and how can you be on the market and see the global challenges on the local level. Link: <http://larix.ro/en>

The “Kájoni Herbárium” and Teehaus

Sumuleu Ciuc is a place in Harghita County and well known for the Pilgrimage Church, the Franciscan Monastery and the surrounding area. In this place a Franciscan monk, Bőjte Csaba established a children's home called St. Stephen's Home. Under the leading of a very active woman, who is responsible for the children home, Balázs Zsóka, the children are learning about growing medicinal and aromatic plants in the Closter garden and about different processing methods. The products made by the children are sold on the market under the Kájoni Herbárium brand. The name “Kájoni Herbárium” comes from János Kájoni, a Franciscan monk, who lived and worked there and in 1673 wrote the famous book Hungarian Herbarium.

In 2015 the garden became an open community garden with a teahouse. So, for pilgrims and tourists is a good place to take rest, go to the garden, collect some herbs and make some tea.

In 2016 it was organized here the I. Regional Herb Day and since this every year more and more local producers and farmers present and sell their product.

Some impressions on the Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/kajoniherbarium>.

Transylvanian Herb Garden

The initiative *Transylvanian Herb Garden* was started in 2015 by Civitas Foundation for Civil Society. The project is focusing on

- social integration of disadvantaged people
- revaluation of biodiversity and the traditional knowledge of the target region related to the local aromatic and medicinal herb varieties and species.

In this way the target groups of the project are disadvantaged people from the rural area from Transylvania: unemployed, Roma people, women, small scale farmers with low income, disabled young people, etc. The women, who benefit from the project are coming from the rural areas and during generations preserved the knowledge about rare local herb varieties and species, about the cultural and ethnographical aspect of these plants, about identification and classification, breeding, collection and harvesting of wild and cultivate plants. This knowledge was collected and used for promoting the products developed in the competence center. The new cost effective and environment friendly small-scale processing methods were taught for the multipliers. Through these activities additional income possibilities for families interested in herb breeding and processing are relieved.

What were the core activities of the project?

Network of communities and NGOs. At the beginning it was very important to establish a network of communities and NGOs to facilitate social integration. Positive change in the rural area can't be achieved without the active participation of the local community members.

Transfer of expertise and knowledge. The second core activities of the project were focusing on the transfer of expertise and knowledge related to collection, processing and use of local varieties and species of aromatic and medicinal plant. The 2 competence centers established in the project are the heart of this activities and are functioning as a training and expertise center where knowledge and experience can be acquired by the visitors or by the participants at different workshops. The herb garden serves for learning practical skills about herbs.

Promoting local economic activities. The third core activities were focusing on encouraging and promoting local economic activities and sustainable development to offer social integration of the disadvantaged people from the rural area.

During the project period (2,5 Years) 25 communities coming from two sub regions of Transylvania were involved.

In two developing regions Odorheiu Secuiesc and Cluj Napoca were established 2 competence centers with demonstration herbal garden, where interested groups have the possibility to learn about the cultivation, wild crafting and processing of medicinal plants.

As follow up of the project it was established the Transylvanian Herb Garden Association.

In the frame of the field visit we will travel to Locodenito see the competence center with the herbal garden. Link: <http://www.naturalherbs.ro>.