



The blind water carrier

Storytelling and heritage for sustainable tourism



(HR)

BAKAR



7,600



Recovery and resilience through cultural heritage in a post-pandemic world



Challenge

Bakar was one of former Yugoslavia's most important industrial centres. Then, for five decades it carried the stigma of a polluted city with little opportunity for economic recovery and tourism. The main factory closed in 1994. The Tourism Board was started in 2009 to work with the community to reinvigorate local traditions but managing this during the pandemic was a challenge.



Solution

Bakar Tourism Board decided to work with children to create a book that would be an open, a self-guided tour following Ivan Čop, born in 1869, a blind water carrier who kept going despite all odds. With the book, visitors could continue exploring and learning about local heritage despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Bakar saw an opportunity to show that tourism could be meaningful, respectful and educational.



How ?

- 1 The process took less than a year. The idea was to uncover local cultural heritage and teach inclusivity.
- 2 With online support from Iva Silla, a top Croatian trainer in heritage interpretation, 100 local children wrote and illustrated a book and audiobook.
- 3 Bakar was determined to make a version that could be used by the blind, an audiobook, and to include the blind and visually impaired in the creation process. The regional association of the blind participated in workshops to help children understand the life of the blind.
- 4 Local artists, graphic designers and creative companies enriched the project with their expertise.
- 5 The final products were an illustrated book and audiobook titled 'Pebbles of tears' together with accompanying souvenirs, a gamified tour, and even a sculpture of Ivan Čop crafted by the blind sculptor Emil Mandarić.
- 6 Around 100 people contributed to the project and 1,000 copies were published. The project was presented to experts at the Croatian National Forum of Heritage Interpretation in October 2021. National television covered the official presentation of the project in November 2021 in Bakar.

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Budget/Financing

€8,500

- The total budget for the project was about €8,500: €2,100 for authors fees, €2,600 for the printed book, €1,000 kunas for the audiobook, €1,200 for the gamified tour, €700 for education and €900 for souvenirs and other expenses.



Management

- Bakar Tourism Board partnered with elementary schools in Bakar and Hreljin, the association of the blind of Primorsko-Goranska County and Kazivačica, and privately owned businesses. The project was realised with the support of the City of Bakar, Primorsko-Goranska County, Croatian tourism board, Kvarner Tourism Board, and local companies.



Creative Media (c) Siniša Barčić



Transferability

- Challenge the community: educate them, motivate them, guide them, but find the way to help them become creators.
- When you're developing a project that relies on local culture to educate and raise awareness of some social issues, no matter how good your intentions are, don't forget to include the groups that are most affected by those issues.



Impact

The project gathered the local community, from school children and experts to public bodies and private businesses. Feedback was very positive. Other associations contacted Bakar to sponsor projects. The idea received good media coverage and spread to other cities. Bakar hopes to connect with these areas to create a network.

The project resulted in better awareness of the needs of the disabled, who will be involved in future projects. Local children are proud of being guardians of their heritage.



Links

Website: <https://www.tz-bakar.hr/bakarski-vodonosa>

Videos: <https://youtu.be/g3qjELNLEMA>



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(c) Miljenko Segulja

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