

ALPJOB

Anticipate Future Jobs on Alpine Remote Areas



Work package 3.3

Report on
Promising local capitals, values and competences

Valposchiavo

Comuni di Poschiavo e Brusio

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1. List of promising local capitals, values and competences

For Valposchiavo the following capitals, values and competences can be considered as local “treasure” for development:

tangible:

1. Bernina Railway
2. Historic Monuments in the valley
3. Land use and landscape
4. Water resources and energy production

Intangible:

5. Agricultural practices
6. 100% Valposchiavo (local brand)
7. Development of competences

Events:

8. Gastronomic events
9. Cultural events

2.1. Bernina Railway



One of the most important tangible capitals of Valposchiavo is the Bernina Railway, opened in 1910 and since 2008 part of the UNESCO world heritage. The railway is one of the main attractions of the valley.

The railway, which is part of the state-owned Rhaetian Railways, is an important employer for the valley, with around 95 employees. The company is also giving the opportunity to six young people to do an apprenticeship. The type of jobs provided by the railways vary a lot; from ticket inspector to polytechnic, from machinist to office worker.

The number of passengers for the Bernina Railway in a year is around one million. The local hotels and restaurants benefit from it as well. The railway is an important tourist attraction for the valley, it attracts a vast number of people and gives visibility to the valley. It is important for the whole economy of the valley, contributing directly and indirectly to the local economy. Even though the vast majority of the passengers of the railway just pass by without stopping in Valposchiavo, there is still an important number who stays in Valposchiavo. Age and nationality of the passengers varies a lot.

The main resource on which the railway is relying is electricity. For the operation of the line care of the landscape is also a key factor since the line is surrounded by woods and steep slopes. Regular lumber cuts and avalanche protections partly avoid traffic interruptions.

The railway has several links with critical scenarios. First of all, sustainability issues could have a great impact on the line. Climate change could bring more landslides, floods and other extreme weather conditions that could damage the line. Connecting technologies could also have an impact, reducing the number of employees due to digitalisation.

This is a treasure considered to grow because the railway is one of the main tourist attractions. Working more closely with the railway could benefit local tourism, increasing the number of stays in the region.



2.2. Historic Monuments

The historical monuments in Valposchiavo are also an important tangible capital. Most of them were built between the 19th and 20th century by emigrated confectioners who made fortune abroad, giving Poschiavo an urban appearance.

It's difficult to estimate how many people are actively involved in this tangible capital. There is not an association that focuses directly on

the historical monuments, but the local museum and the local historical society are working on the valorisation of the history of the buildings. The architectural features are protected by the preservation laws. Also the municipality is aware of the importance of this capital and developed strategies to valorise and safeguard it.

The number of users of this treasure it's also difficult to estimate, most of the buildings are still inhabited and privately owned. The inhabitants (around 100 people) are directly profiting from them. But the historical monuments offer much more than a place to live. They are part of the identity of the village, and what makes the village of Poschiavo stand out in comparison with other villages in the alps. The historical buildings are also important for the local tourism: guided tours in the village are part of the local tourist offer.

Historical buildings rely on the existing historic preservation laws, that if liberalized could lead to renovation that could ruin the integrity of the monuments. Vital for this treasure is also a good maintenance policy and investments that avoid the deterioration of the buildings.

This capital is linked with tourism. If the investments to maintain them are guaranteed, no critical events should tackle this treasure, except for extreme weather conditions due to climate change (sustainability issues)



This could be considered a treasure to grow because historical monuments are part of the tourist offer of the valley. The unique architectural features of the village are what distinguishes Poschiavo from other villages, so it's sensible to exploit this treasure.



2.3. Land use and landscape

The landscape of Valposchiavo is characterised by its mountains, many of which are higher than 3000 meters above sea level, and its lakes. The Landscape of Valposchiavo is included in the perimeter of the UNESCO world heritage of the Bernina Railway.



Landscape is primarily shaped by farmers and foresters. In 2015 there were in Valposchiavo 322 employees in the agricultural and forestry sector. In 2017 the association Terra Nostra was founded by locals in order to safeguard the rural landscape and works to revalue the territory of Valposchiavo. A significant role is also played by the Polo Poschiavo, the local competence centre for the continuous training and the accompaniment of development projects. Since Years Polo Poschiavo that is actively involved in projects for the care of the landscape, such as courses on how to build and maintain dry stone walls. Finally, the whole local population has an influence in the care of the territory.

The whole population benefits from a healthy and well used landscape. Besides its beauty, a healthy landscape vital for agriculture and tourism. It makes local food production possible, it creates job for manufacturer and it attracts tourists and clients. The whole local economy can thrive thanks to this capital.

A good land usage relies on skilled farmers and foresters, who are able to use the land in a sustainable way, on water (rainfall and irrigation) and on a good infrastructure that makes the maintenance and agriculture possible (good streets that connects the fields and the woods with the villages).



Sustainability issues could be a challenge for this treasure. Extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and storms could damage the vegetation and the landscape, rising temperatures could melt the permafrost and cause landslides. On the other side connection technologies could make the maintenance of the territory easier (drones could easily access inaccessible areas). The links with tourism and agriculture are also very important.

This could be considered a treasure to grow because the landscape is both a source of income as well as a place of leisure and it's vital for a good economy and quality of life.

2.4. Water resources and energy production

Valposchiavo has a long history of exploitation of its water resources for energy production, the first power plants were built at the beginning of the 20th century in order to power the Bernina Railway. Today hydroelectric power plants and the company who runs them, Repower, are an important part of the local economy.



Repower is the main private employer of the valley, with around 180 employees in the valley and 427 in Switzerland. Repower guarantees a large number of qualified jobs, both in energy production and in the management of the company. It also gives the opportunity to young people (around 30) to do an apprenticeship.

The whole local economy benefits from the energy production. The municipalities receive water fees and the company is a good taxpayer. Moreover, Repower does a lot of investments in the region, providing work also for other companies (for example in constructions).

The main resource for hydroelectric power plants is obviously water. Essential for the company are also skilled workers and a good energy policies (subsidies for green energy production).

New technologies and digitalisation will use more and more energy so renewable energy provided by hydroelectric power plants will likely be important in the future. Sustainability issues could tackle the production of energy, long droughts and few snow during the winter could cause scarcity of water limiting the amount of energy produced.

This could be considered a treasure to grow because Switzerland and Europe are trying to abandon fossil and nuclear energy and hydroelectric power plants offer a green alternative. Since the production of solar and wind energy is not always possible, hydroelectric power plants can be used in moment of needs providing a more secure supplying. In the future the realisation of LagoBianco project, a pumped storage plant, could be a further solution for the storage of clean energy.



3. Intangible capitals

3.1. Agricultural and food production practices

Agriculture and food production practices have been the main source of livelihood for centuries in Valposchiavo and they still play an important role in the local economy. Valposchiavo is an alpine valley, where agriculture has never been easy. In order to sustain the population, farmers had to develop special techniques to make food production possible in the hostile environment.

In the valley, more 322 people are employed in agriculture and for around 70-80 families it's the main source of income. The farms in the valley are small-medium business, most of which are managed by families. Almost all the farms in the valley are organic certified (95%). The local museums are also trying to contribute to the intergenerational transmission of the local agricultural cultural heritage, with a permanent exhibition and interactive activities such as "dal campo alla tavola", where it's possible to follow food production from the field to the table. Polo Poschiavo is also working for the valorization and safeguarding Food Cultural Heritage and is coordinating a multinational candidature of the Alpine Food heritage as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage through the project AlpFoodway.

For more than 300 people agriculture it's the main source of income, but agricultural practices are not important just for farmers. In the recent years more and more people are interested in sustainable, local and qualitative food production. Traditional agricultural practices can provide good quality organic food that is very requested in niche markets. Tourism can profit as well from a high-quality cuisine and interactive programs such as "dal campo alla tavola".

Agricultural practices rely on land, water and infrastructure (good street network that makes all fields accessible). Important for traditional agricultural practices are also subsidies that support traditional practices and make nonindustrial farming economically interesting.

In the next 12 years sustainability issues could make agriculture more difficult, due to draughts or floods. This could be partly resolved with new connecting



technologies, that would help farmers in their activities, making traditional techniques less strenuous and more reliable.

This could be considered a treasure to grow because there is a general trend that leans towards traditional, sustainable and natural agriculture. People are willing to spend more money for quality products and the market for this kind of products (organic and local) is growing. Traditional agricultural practices include all these features, and are an interesting sustainable opportunity for the local economy.

3.2. 100% Valposchiavo

The project 100% is a territorial branding that enhances local products with two labels: “100% Valposchiavo” and “Fait sù in Valposchiavo” (made in Valposchiavo). The first brand is for products that are completely produced and manufactured in the valley, the second is for products manufactured in the valley, but which contain components from outside the valley. The project wants to make a clear traceability for all the products of the valley, creating an easily recognizable brand for the customers.

FAIT SÜ IN



100%



The project was born from a collaboration of the agricultural associations of the valley, the destination management organisation and the artisans and traders association. Around 44 businesses are involved, 13 of them are restaurants. 16 businesses are producing “100% Valposchiavo” products and 9 of them are producing “fait sù in Valposchiavo” products.

The project benefits the whole valley, from the farmers to the hoteliers. 100% Valposchiavo is giving a lot of visibility to the valley, allowing businesses to reach new potential clients. The concept of the project is simple, yet effective. For the client is easy recognisable and it can be applied to many different products (not only food but also wooden utensils, soap etc.)

The 100% Valposchiavo relies on numerous different factors. First of all, the raw material that are used for the production of the products for the brand. Secondly it relies on the variety of products and the quality of them, that make the branding interesting. A control system it's also very important, it gives more credibility to the project and it allows clients to trust it.

The project 100% Valposchiavo is strongly linked with agriculture, tourism and industry. Connecting technology could ease the marketing, advertisement and distribution of the brand. Since the project strongly relies on agriculture, climate change and sustainability issues could limit the amount and the number of products produced in the valley, damaging the brand.

This is considered a treasure to grow because it's an innovative brand, that uses resources available in the region and it involves the whole production chain, benefiting the whole economy. The philosophy of the project is focused on local production and sustainability, following the current trends and safeguarding the local resources.

3.3. Gastronomic events

Valposchiavo has large gastronomic culture. Part of the gastronomic offer are four main events, one for each season: in spring the "Festival delle erbe spontanee" (Festival of wild herbs), in summer the "Stramangiada", in autumn the "Sagra della castagna" (Chestnut festival) and in winter "Pane e neve".



The organisation of these events is mainly based on volunteering. The local associations (various sport associations of the valley) usually help with the organisation, the preparation of the food and to serve the costumers. For the "Festival delle erbe spontanee" the number of volunteers is around 70, for "Pane e neve" the number are around 100, the "Stramangiada" 120 and for the Sagra della Castagna are 80.



These events are the biggest events organised in Valposchiavo attracting tourists as well as locals. At the "festival delle erbe spontanee" the number of participants was around 200, Stramangiada 1300, at the "Sagra della castagna" "Pane e neve" around 800. Local shops (diary, butcher's shop) and farmers benefit as well from the events, since most of the served food is locally produced. The events benefits hotels as well, because tourists come to the event.

The events rely on the local food production and volunteers. Without the help of associations and volunteers it wouldn't be possible to organise them.



Such events are a showcase for the local business and farmers, tourists and locals have an opportunity to try their products and get to know them. The events give also visibility to the valley, they expand the tourist offer since there is an event per season. The events are also in with the philosophy of 100% Valposchiavo, promoting local food production.

This is considered a treasure to grow because it matches the idea of a sustainable, local and natural tourism. It's in harmony with the branding of the valley and it enhances the local resources.



3.4. Cultural events

Valposchiavo has a vibrant cultural offer. During the summer several concerts, theatres and movies are played across the valley. The lack of a cultural centre made the organiser of cultural events inventive and now they are held in private gardens, historical private buildings and public spaces.

The cultural events in the valley are mainly organised by volunteers and are non-profit. There is a local cultural commission that counts 5 members which decide which events should receive funds by the municipality. Annually the municipality of Poschiavo provides 81'000 Swiss francs for cultural projects.

Culture is a significant aspect of the local daily life, and it involves the majority of the population, both as organizers and public. During the summer, there are several events per week, and depending on the type of event and the location the number of audience can go from 30 to 100-200 people. Culture benefits the whole population, it widens horizons, it gives a sense of identity and it brings the community together. Tourism can benefit from culture as well, a qualitative and varied cultural programme can attract more people in the region.



The main resource of culture are the people. To make events possible in a remote place such as Valposchiavo volunteering is essential, otherwise it would be financially impossible. The

contribution of the municipalities is also vital, giving the possibility to the organisers to cover the costs of the events.

Cultural events are linked with tourism. They also make life better for locals.

Cultural events could be considered a treasure to grow because they are part of the tourist offer. They attract people in the valley and make the stay for tourists more pleasant. They are also important for locals, they raise the quality of life and encourage people to stay in the valley.



3.5. Development of competences

In order to be able to be competitive in the future innovation is key. Particularly in the digital age being up to date with new technologies is vital. Providing continuous education for all sectors is an added value for the economy and an important service for the population. In Valposchiavo this is provided by the Polo Poschiavo.

Polo Poschiavo was founded in 2002 and it's the local competence centre for the continuous training and the accompaniment of development projects. Polo Poschiavo offers several courses for adults, such as language courses, IT and courses for the care of the landscape. It also takes part as a partner in project of the cross-border cooperation program Interreg Italy-Switzerland and Interreg Alpine Space. Polo Poschiavo has 3 part-time employees and collaborates yearly with 15-20 teachers for the courses. Polo Poschiavo is also offering courses in the nearby Val Bregaglia.

The whole population and the local businesses can profit from this capital. As an employee is advantageous to have more skills (it's possible to find jobs more easily, higher salary) and for a business owner having skilled worker provides products with a higher quality. Another benefit for the population is that further education is provided in the valley in Italian language, eliminating the need to travel to the neighbouring German speaking areas for further education. Between 2010 and 2017 the Polo Poschiavo organized 260 courses with a total of 3339 participants.

Polo Poschiavo relies on qualified people that are able to hold qualitative courses and on public contributions, that make the vast offer of courses possible.

This treasure is linked with connecting technologies. New technologies and digitalisation require new skills in almost every field. While young people can learn how to use new technologies at school, adults rely on further education. The quick development in this field makes updating courses really important. In order to be competitive a continuous training centre as the Polo Poschiavo is a key factor.



This is considered a treasure to grow because education is a fundamental part of the development of a region. In the next 12 years technology will furthermore change our world and climate change will force us to develop new techniques in order to cope with new challenges and adult education will play an essential role in this.

