



# CoP Public Infrastructure and Social Services

## Example of Good Practice

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## Allerleierei – a modern farmer’s shop

Living Lab Metropolitan Area of Styria, Austria

**Key words: farm shops, multi-sectoral cooperation, regional food supply,  
social meeting place, zero waste**

### 1. Introduction

The “Allerleierei”<sup>1</sup> is a new type of a “farm shop”, which is run in cooperation by a hotelier, a restaurant owner and an organic vegetable farmer. Farmers and other suppliers (bakery, juice producers, winegrowers) can deliver and sell their food products as well as innovative and processed high-quality food products (local gin, popcorn, rice) there. The shop is located in Laßnitzhöhe, a small municipality about 20 km east of the styrian capital Graz in the district of Graz-Umgebung and has 2,762 inhabitants (see figures 1 and 2)<sup>2</sup>.

The primary intention of the Allerleierei is to supply residents and visitors with fresh local food and products of high quality, as good as possible from organic production. In addition, the shop creates a social meeting point in the center of the municipality. Beyond food supply, the Allereierei also offers daily fresh cooked meals as well as coffee, deli food, pastries and desserts. Thus, it is a hybrid between a farm shop and a café, and definitely an emerging social anchor point in the municipality. Core principles of this local service, to which all three partners consent, are *regionality, sustainability* and *zero waste*.

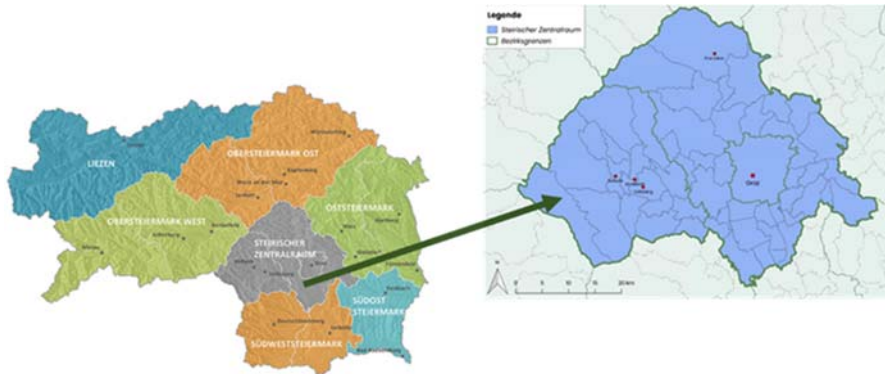
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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the German word “Allerleierei” is that you can buy many different things.

<sup>2</sup> Statistical Office of Styria, 2019.



Figure 1: Map of the Metropolitan Area of Styria



Source: Land Steiermark & RMSZR and BAB, 2019

The municipality of Laßnitzhöhe represents a traditional health resort with many rehabilitation patients and spa guests as well as people looking for short-term recreation. In the last years the number of inhabitants has increased substantially, mainly through people moving here from Graz, and population numbers are still growing.

Figure 2: Municipality Laßnitzhöhe in the Metropolitan Area of Styria – 20 km east of the styrian capital Graz



Source: Google Maps 2020

Laßnitzhöhe is part of the Local Action Group (LAG) “Hügel- und Schöcklland” of LEADER<sup>3</sup>. The LAG is very active and supportive in projects like “Slow region” or “Regional stores” which aim at supplying people with (organic) regional food in a sustainable and resource-saving way. The municipality of Laßnitzhöhe is within the recreation area of Graz, and welcomes many daily visitors, especially during weekends. On the other side, many residents are working in Graz and are commuting daily.

<sup>3</sup> LEADER means: Liaison Entre les Actions de Développement de l’Économie Rurale.



Within the cooperative approach of the “Allerleierei” – both, the responsibilities and tasks between the business partners – hotelier, restaurant owner, organic vegetable farmer – can be shared *and* the concept of sustainable circular economy can be implemented meaningfully. Furthermore, the social aspect of the farm shop – to create a new meeting point – can be emphasized adequately.

Figure 3: The shop “Allerleierei” in Laßnitzhöhe in the Metropolitan Area of Styria



Source: RMSZR & BAB 2019

The innovatory aspect and the signaling effect of this example can be seen in the manner how the three project operators have entered new ground by offering a wide range of new local high-quality food products and innovative farm products for local customers, adopting the principles of sustainability and resource-saving as well as waste-avoidance as determining guidelines. Also, the extended opening hours on working days and weekends are convenient for commuters to buy fresh regional food on their way home. Moreover, the shop offers farmers from the region and other regional suppliers to sell their products without long transport routes.

## 2. Project Intention / Background information

In Laßnitzhöhe, for many years there existed a farmers’ market in the center of the municipality which was operated by local and regional farmers who shared the delivery and sale of their products. When a new “main square” in the center of the municipality was planned in 2015-2016, the intention was to integrate that local farmers’ market into the planning concept. The building in which the farmers’ market was formerly located has been replaced by a new community center with a business area on the ground floor. The municipality supported the idea that a farmers’ market would increase the attractiveness of the main square and the municipality in general.

Thus, the business partners of the "Allerleierei", which follows the concept of "Land&Wirt"<sup>4</sup> which means literally "countryside & host" rented one of these shops and offered the farmers, who previously had delivered to the farmers' market, to sell their products in the new designed shop. Furthermore, new suppliers were gained, which by and by enriches and complements the product range<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 4: Vegetables, noodles in the shop "Allerleierei" in Laßnitzhöhe in the Metropolitan Area of Styria



Source: RMSZR & BAB 2019

The target group of the "Allerleierei" is very diverse. From customers who have already bought food in the former farmers' market, local and regional residents as well as guests of the health resort and patients of the hospital and its staff, all customer groups are represented. Basically, the business focuses on regional products and not strictly on organic production. This limitation is due to the limited number of organic farmers in the region who are able to provide their products. But there are many other small farms in the region who practice similar to organic management styles and deliver their food products to the Allerleierei. The main financial support for the project came through LEADER measures of the LAG Hügel- and Schöcklland (EAGGF), with additional grants from other EU funds (ERDF). In some phases the business partners faced substantial difficulties when they applied for funding because they were not used to apply the appropriate wording in the application forms. The LAG management supported them during the application process and finally, they were given financial funding.

<sup>4</sup> In this concept, a wide variety of products is offered from regional partners for sale and whoever wants can also taste the products in advance. The products are used for cooking the dishes which are offered for lunch.

<sup>5</sup> Currently it extends to the following product groups: Organic juices & lemonades, flowers & gifts, bread, flour & cereals, various fish & meat types, pickled vegetables, vinegar & mustard, honey & honey products, coffee & tea, cheese, quark, yogurt, butter, jams, pastries, noodles, fruit & vegetables, oils, ham specialties, spirits, sweets & nibbles, wine & sparkling wine.

### 3. Main Description

The underlying idea of linking life and products of the “countryside” with providing services of “hosts” (in German addressed as the concept “countryside & host”) refers to making use of the synergies by linking the skills and available resources of the three entrepreneurs. It is based on the aspects, firstly, to present “new products”, secondly to create an opportunity to “taste products on the site” and thirdly to offer a social “meeting point” for the local population. The Allerleierei is open all week, including Sunday mornings, and is therefore an important local supplier in the center of Laßnitzhöhe. The extended opening hours are construed for local people, commuters, guests and employees in health care institutions, but also address specific behaviors, e.g. of church visitors to attract them to take a coffee and buy groceries on Sundays. The lunch offer is supplied by the hotelier and the restaurant owner, since there is no proper kitchen facility in the Allerleierei. Every autumn, suppliers are also invited to present their products and to provide appropriate recipes and food preparation recommendations. There are two full-time employees, one part-time employee as well as two marginally employed students working in the farmer shop.

Figure 3: The menu of the “Allerleierei” in Laßnitzhöhe in the Metropolitan Area of Styria



Source: RMSZR & BAB 2019

By dividing the tasks and agendas between the three business partners working in different branches, synergies are evident in several areas. For instance, if food or products can no longer be offered in the shop due to visual imperfections they are recycled in the restaurant or hotel. Therefore, the suppliers receive a guarantee for a complete acceptance of their products without the need of taking back unsold food. The low share of product loss and waste as well as the shared responsibility also reduce the risk of the business.



The division of labor and responsibilities is as following:

- Hotelier: Design of the sales room with high demands on appearance and aesthetics, new and innovative products such as Styrian rice, organic coffee from a local roaster, alternating delivery of the lunch table;
- Restaurant owner: Finance, accounting, alternating delivery of the lunch table;
- Organic vegetable farmer: Vegetable and fruit deliveries.

The business partners made large investments in this project, which was a precondition for gaining the funding. Shortly, before the store opened, a water pipe damage ruined the furniture of the shop. This was a big setback and it took a lot of motivation to start again. But the common “spirit” of the three partners helped to overcome such obstacles at the start of the joint project.

High quality standards, regionality and seasonality are the main characteristics of the food products in the Allerleierei. This orientation towards sustainable production and the commitment to provide products originating in the region are evidence for the resource-saving approach. Thus, a large share of the added value remains within the region, particularly with the farmers and enterprises of the region<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the project addresses principles of the concept of circular economy because hardly any food or products are wasted. They circulate and are further processed either in the café or in the restaurant and hotel kitchen of the business partners. The sales strategy is continuously elaborated towards reusable and resource-saving packaging and zero waste. Another positive aspect can be seen in the pronounced customer orientation related to the extended opening hours in the evening and on Sundays.

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<sup>6</sup> Exact figures about the added value were not dealt in the interview with one business partner of the Allerleierei.



## 4. References

Interview with the mayor of Laßnitzhöhe and one business partner of Allerleierei (hotelier) on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.

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