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# Good Practice – Zsuzsi narrow-gauge railway

## Matúra and Natúra Foundation

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## GP 4 – Zsuzsi railway & Matúra and Natúra



# Definition of the GP

- **Zsuzsi railway** is an excellent example of how infrastructure elements previously used for other purposes could be transferred in order to enhance the importance of natural and cultural heritage.
- **Matura and Natura Foundation** (Matúra és Natúra Alapítvány) is a public benefit foundation, aiming at:
  - environment and nature protection
  - environmental education
  - dissemination of scientific knowledge.
- Zsuzsi and Matúra Natúra are cooperating in the Eastern part of the city, around the terminus station of Zsuzsi.
- A Good Practice that contributes to:
  - put some unknown areas on the human mental map
  - the co-operation of an NGO and a city-owned nonprofit organisation
  - co-operation of different stakeholders

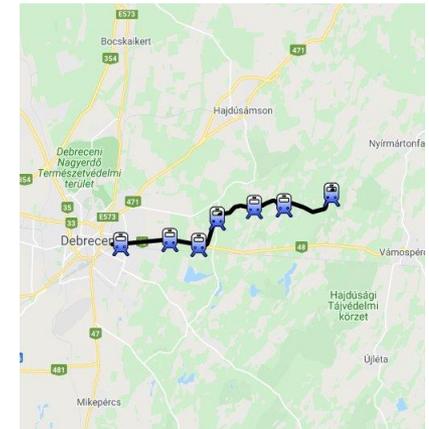
# Aligning with PROSPERA

- Objective: Preserving natural and cultural heritage + raising awareness
- It aligns with PROSPERA leverage: **Sustainable public-private partnership**
- How?
  - by public-civil society partnerships
  - by raising public awareness
  - by educating
  - by improving the environment of the terminus station



# Some facts about the Zsuzsi railway

- The oldest, still-operating narrow-gauge railway in the Carpathian Basin
- It has undergone a major transformation (timber transportation – commuting – recreational function). Operated by a non-profit organisation owned by the city.
- It's protected as a historical monument (including the buildings, locomotives and the 17 km of historic railway line)
- Part of Debrecen's (and Hungary's) cultural heritage, the terminus station located in a forested area (natural heritage)



# Activities of Zsuzsi railway I.

- Connecting urban and peri-urban areas (unique mode of transport):
  - Operation, maintenance
  - Infrastructure renovation – passenger friendly image



# Activities of Zsuzsi railway II.

- Organised guided tours in the vicinity of the terminus station: bird ringing, forest walks, thematic walks, star gazing etc. – cooperation with different stakeholders:
  - Matúra Natúra – NGO
  - Farmers, families in the peri-urban area
  - Local Forestry



# Activities of Zsuzsi railway III.

- Educational activities (outside from school) which aiming at:
  - Preservation and transmission cultural and natural heritage to future generations
  - Forest pedagogy
  - Environmental protection
  - Health promotion, education for healthy/sports lifestyle
  - Strengthening Hungarian and local identity



# Introducing Matúra and Natúra Foundation

- public benefit foundation established in Debrecen 20 years ago
- In 2014 the foundation established the so-called Nature Archive (Természetjár) – huge success
- 3 workers, 20-25 volunteers
- Collaborating with different stakeholders
  - Zsuzsi railway
  - Hortobágy National Park
  - Museums, Library



# Activities of Matúra and Natúra I.

- Organizing thematic tours in different parts of the city:
  - Guided walks in different themes: ornithology, botany, ecology etc. – adapted to the season and age groups
  - Connection with Zsuzsi railway – introducing the natural values of „Erdőpuszták”
  - Thematic tours in the Big Forest (Nagyerdő)
- Talent management – outside from school
  - Participation in study competitions
  - Organizing (cooperation with Hortobágy NP – GP3) study competitions



# Activities of Matúra and Natúra II.

- Extra-educational activities:
  - provides additional knowledge inside the school, supporting both teaching and learning
  - using live teaching tools (experiments, model), interactive lectures
- Cultural programmes:
  - Temporary and permanent exhibitions
  - programmes
- Programmes for families:
  - Learning by playing, jigsaw puzzles
  - Cooperation with the local ZOO, Library



# Activities of Matúra and Natúra III.

- Community building:
  - Participating in urban projects (coop. with the Municipality):
    - Green city projects: lectures and practices in balcony gardening
    - Creating guerilla gardens in cooperation with the residents
    - Help to establish the first community garden – became self-organised community
    - Coordinating the „Tree of the year – Europe”
- Organizing summer schools and camps
- Present in the virtual world: the most popular Facebook page in the country in this topic



# Activities of Matúra and Natúra IV.



**Természetjár**  
Közösség

Kapcsolatfelvétel

termesztjar.hu

Kezdőlap Névjegy Fényképek Továbbiak

Kedveled Üzenet

**Névjegy** Az összes megtekintése

Ha itt végignéztél, gyere a honlapra [www.termesztjar.hu](http://www.termesztjar.hu), de előtte nyomd meg a tetszik gombot.

171 362 embernek tetszik, többek között 64 ismerősödnék

176 517 ember követi.

<http://www.termesztjar.hu/>

Üzenet küldése

termesztjar@gmail.com

**Bejegyzés létrehozása**

Fénykép/videó Bejelentkezés

**RÖGÍTETT BEJEGYZÉS**

**Természetjár**  
33 p. ·

Ha nyár, akkor Természetjár szaktábor! Bogarak és madarak, ősszálatok és gombák, az emberi test működése, csillagászat, terepgyakorlat, erdőismeret és meglepetésekben sem lesz hiány. Vár ránk rengeteg felfedezni való, hisz tudjátok, természetbúvárnak lenni ig... Továbbiak

# Challenges for the Municipality

- Key challenges for Debrecen:
  - Zsuzsi part of the cultural tradition - the city should maintain
  - Lack of quality facilities/sites in the peri-urban areas of the city
  - Residents do not know the values of peri-urban areas
  - Existing recreational areas are overloaded – need for including new destinations
  - Strengthening environmental awareness



# Challenges for Zsuzsi

- COVID situation:
  - Zsuzsi is undergoing a transformation (ongoing process) – replacing old attractions with adventure activities
  - Result: more and more children are using it – greater demand for recreational areas in the peri-urban landscape
- increasing revenues and cost-effectiveness of Zsuzsi:
  - To develop accommodation facilities around the terminus station (renovation of summer school)
  - To strengthen cooperation with local farmers, gastro-tourism
  - Programmes for all seasons



# Challenges for Matúra and Natúra

- COVID situation:
  - Using online platforms
- Financing:
  - Organizing different events: exhibitions, summer camps
  - Use of EU grants, tendering
  - Donation
- To decongest the city's popular recreational areas by putting new places to the mental maps of the residents





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European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

# Thank you!

Questions welcome



*Project smedia*