

## **Project “Place for culture in the heart of nature. Centre for cultural initiatives in Chojnice.”**

Chojnice is a subregional centre surrounded by smaller towns and villages. The town is situated in the southern part of Pomeranian region, near “Tuchola Woods” National Park and Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO.

Chojnice is situated in an area which is far more known for its natural heritage than cultural heritage. Cultural heritage of the area is connected with its natural resources. One can see its traces in embroidery, sculptures, paintings. Many cultural activities in Chojnice and its surroundings take place outdoors, because it makes them more attractive.

Chojnice has also a long history of being border-town, where different cultures, nationalities and ethnic groups lived next to each other. The town is called “the gate to Pomerania”, what means that it is the place where the region “connected with the sea” (Pomerania) starts.

House of Culture in Chojnice is the biggest cultural facility in the area. Its seat was built in 1970 as cinema-theatre. The whole building is in very bad condition. The space is limited - most of workshops, classes and meetings take place in the basement. The building is not accessible for disabled people. Even though the place is not attractive, the facility is unable to present offer for all inhabitants who are interested in taking part in cultural activities because of lack of space.

We can see results of this situation: less people are interested in participating in cultural and social life of local society, people are not aware of cultural heritage of our area (both inhabitants and tourists), it loosens the link between young people and their place of living (they tend to emigrate to bigger cities and abroad), cultural offer of the area is not attractive enough for tourists.

Within the confines of the project we want to create the place which will be at the same time:

- attractive place for education (use of ICT to explain links between culture and nature, for example: such topics as work of human brain while listening to music) and presentation of cultural heritage,
- place for organizing cultural activities (workshops, exhibitions, cinema, theatre etc.).

Works planned within the project are: tearing down the old building and construction of new, modern and accessible place for cultural activities (5 251 square meters of space), installation of equipment, promotion (website, advertisement).

The project will **focus on relations between nature and culture**. Chojnice as a town situated in the heart of nature has opportunity to bring culture and nature together. The project will explain to the public that human is the source of culture, but human itself is a part of nature. It will help to understand why human needs culture and what “cultural heritage” is. It will show what are the links between culture and nature - how nature influences culture and how nature can be influenced by culture (for example how culture can act in defense of nature). Yet most important message we want to present is that everybody can participate in culture because we all create culture. We want to offer a variety of different workshops and classes – theatre, dance, music, pottery, embroidery, drawing and painting etc.

We would like to invite all partners from Baltic Sea Region to add their ideas and contributions to the project. We are looking for:

- partners interested in taking part in future “small projects” in the areas of theatre, dance, painting, pottery etc. - youth exchanges, workshops for staff, participation in events (festivals),
- partners like culture facilities, research institutions, universities who are interested in exchange of ideas concerning links between culture and nature,
- possibility of organizing The Festival of the Baltic Cities or other UBC cultural events in Chojnice.

We are preparing ourselves to apply with our project to European Economic Area Financial Mechanism. We would appreciate your support!

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