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Territorial uncertainty and vulnerability as a challenge for urban and regional policy

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Landscape in memories –
case study from the South Moravian village Božice

Project Landscape memory as rural heritage aims to map how the inhabitants remember their landscape and its changes during their lives. That is why mainly respondents above 65 years were interviewed. The expected project outcome will be the „Modern chronicle of the village“, that synthesizes acquired knowledge, archive video and audio documents, treasuring original and unique information.

Surveyed area is represented by the community Božice, which is one of the largest settlements (1541 inhabitants) of Hrušovansko microregion. The main factor that influenced the history and landscape of the studied area was a post-war expulsion of most of the German population and the arrival of new Czech colonists. Another contributing factor was collectivization in the 50s and 60s and also vicinity of the border with Austria (restrictions towards inhabitants and transformation to a peripheral region). Landscape of the study area is a gently undulating and intensively farmed Dyje-Svatka valley. Human activity strongly formed this area, mainly by agricultural activities (fields, vineyards, ponds, irrigation channels).

Debate with seniors and art competition for primary school pupils were already held in Božice municipality. Children painted a favourite place in the open countryside. Commonly, they painted the local wetland (Figure 1). Appreciation of the art competition was conceived as a public event presenting the project Landscape memory so the generation of parents of these children were approached and invited to discuss about their relation to landscape.

During the interviews, many surprises are discovered; recordings of the memory of a piece of land that has disappeared and younger residents have no idea about it. To such discoveries the project placed great emphasis, as they can be successfully integrated into local plans, and designed to recovery. The project could help to restore the valuable elements of the landscape as for example, in Božice village it was pointed out the defunct cherry avenue that led from the train station to the village center.

Figure 1: Wetlands near the village – favorite place for walks for residents