

No. 16	Dobra Pot Institute	Slovenia	Brkini, South-western Slovenia	Sežana
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Categories of cultural heritage

Professional craftspeople	Knowledge transfer	Presentation of crafts	Network for preservation of crafts	Local community building	Crafts within tourism
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Description

Dobra Pot was founded in 2015, emerging from a grassroots initiative focused on preserving local cultural and natural heritage. It began with a small group of passionate individuals, including experts in traditional handicrafts. Initially functioning on a volunteer basis, the founders collaborated on various heritage-related themes, which led to the formal establishment of the institute. Over time, it transitioned from volunteer-driven projects to a structured organization, eventually leading to employment opportunities for its members. The primary goal of Dobra Pot is to protect and promote cultural heritage, with a strong emphasis on local traditions and traditional handicrafts. The institute focuses on a variety of craft areas, such as basket weaving and archaeological exploration, while also integrating modern technologies to enhance traditional practices. Recent key projects include the *Izročilo (Legacy)* documentary series and the *Zapisi spomina (Records of Memory)* app, which encourage the documentation and preservation of oral histories. Dobra Pot was created to address the need for preserving local heritage that was at risk of being overlooked. The founders aimed to revitalize interest in cultural traditions and provide a platform for education and community engagement in heritage-related activities. Dobra Pot's initiatives exemplify a successful blend of tradition and innovation, fostering community involvement and promoting cultural awareness among various age groups.

Types of handicrafts

Pottery Knitting Weaving Woodworking	Embroidery Leatherworking Herbalism Culinary craft	Candle making Glassblowing Copper engraving Quilting Jewellery making	Basket weaving Stonemasonry Blacksmithing Traditional agriculture practice
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Craft touchpoints - where to find?

Workshop of an artisan (directly from the craftsman) Handicraft Centre of more than one local artisan Regular local market Local events/festivals	Shop selling local artisans' products Local tourism agency / souvenir shop Web-shops Social media accounts
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What can we learn?

Heritage preservation / valorisation practice	What do they expose with their practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, including basket weaving, stonemasonry, archaeological exploration, and herbalism ● the combination of heritage preservation with digital innovations ● aim to make heritage and traditional handicrafts more accessible via technology, like creating apps, providing courses on using digital technologies, using different visual media etc.
Success factors	Achievements and strengths that make this case inspiring for other attempts in the DR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● diverse programme selection and development – focusing on cultural heritage, but adapting their work depending on local preferences, wishes and engagements, creating a wide range of workshops and educational programs focused on various aspects of cultural heritage ● educational outreach and innovative use of technology ● community involvement, active engagement of local residents, ● partnerships, successful grant applications and recognition built this way
Local community involvement	Fundamental values that help to connect the target groups for the social prosperity of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the institute's work is based on collaborating with and including the local community ● programs and initiatives that connect people between different generations ● creating content based on the needs and wishes of the local community ● links to many community-based organisations and programs, educational programs etc.

<p>Link to professional network</p>	<p>Reflecting on its strategic position in the region; making the most of networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Municipalities partnerships (Divača, Sežana, Hrpelje-Kozina): ● Partnership with Park Škocjanske jame for workshops and events ● Collaborations with Kosovelov Dom for film screenings and events ● Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM): collaborations, i.e. contributed expertise in developing the Zapisi Spomina app. ● Maribor's KIBLA and Idrija Association: collaboration on the creation of the Digital Heritage Incubator project. ● Educational institutions: they collaborate with local schools and other educational institutions for educational purposes, for carrying out workshops, for involvement of the youth ● Experts: they collaborate with professionals and experts (ethnologists, filmmakers, teachers etc.) in different areas, to get their expertise or their professional views on their work
<p>Communication</p>	<p>The use of social networks to disseminate and promote their mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mostly web-based promotion ● Social media, especially Facebook, is key for promoting events and engaging the community, while Instagram targets younger audiences ● YouTube is used for sharing (educational) videos ● Newsletter (e-mail subscription based) for information about past or upcoming events, mostly keeps regular participants informed of events and workshops ● Flyers are used for local promotion in villages where events are held
<p>Sustainability factor</p>	<p>Operations and maintenance that drive the practice forward; opportunities for financial sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The initiative is mostly grant-based, so financially they mostly rely on applying for different grants on different levels (local, regional, national, EU) ● An important factor is their volunteer base, where some workshops and other actions are carried out completely voluntarily

What makes it a best practice?

Dobra pot Institute is community-centric, meaning that most of their work stems from collaborating with the local community. They engage local residents in cultural heritage initiatives, including organizing workshops and events that directly involve community members, encouraging them to share their skills and knowledge. They foster an intergenerational dialogue with emphasizing the importance of knowledge transfer between generations (i.e. *Zapisi spomina (Records of Memory)* project, where they encouraged elderly members of the community to share their stories and knowledge, another example are the documentary films and videos, documenting a specific skill like weaving, stonemasonry, or knowledge, available on Dobra pot's YouTube channel). The institute is also very good at their responsiveness; they are very open to feedback and suggestions, for which they make sure are heard and included in any way possible. This goes for any future plans, projects, events, views on past organizations or contents etc. During their active years, their support, engagement in involvement in the workshops, events and other collaborations has grown significantly, with number of participants growing steadily, although the participants remain mostly middle-aged or older people.

Furthermore, their recognition and participation has also grown in connection with other local initiatives and organizations, fostering community cohesion. Especially important for involving the local community is their work with educational institutions, where they include children in schools, as well as college students. They either educate them on different aspects of (cultural) heritage or provide opportunities for them to participate in workshops, or encourage them to participate in different phases of the projects, for example with recording oral histories from their elderly family members, or photography and videography students providing visual media for documentaries etc. This is possible because the institute emphasizes connecting aspects of heritage with modern technology, in part providing a bridge to involvement with heritage for the youth (apps, 3D-scanners, social media), but also providing educational courses for educating others on how to connect heritage and digital technologies.

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