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TELECOTTAGE
HUNGARY

Hungarian Telecottage Story and Perspective

by

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The beginning 1993-94

- A movement that started „from below”, from a little village (Csákberény)
- The basis have been the need for community and village development
- All important actors of the village have taken part in the preparations
- It was a collective creative enterprise process



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Joining the local forces, supporters - 1994

- The telecottage has become an important community affair
- Uniting the community and its and resources
- Governmental support at the beginning (Minsity of Social Affairs)
- The interest of the business sector is present from the very beginning
- Opening of the first telecottage, 1994. June 14.



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Working to change the public opinion, the turning point - 1996-98

- Self-sacrificing work of the enthusiasts
- Founding of the Hungarian Telecottage Association
- Continuous press campaign for two years
- An American aid program (1997, 30 Telecottages)
- The national government starts to support the initiative



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The involvement of the national government

- Setting up rural developmental Telecottages (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1999-2002)
- Telecottages are part of the modernisation program of public administration
- The telecottages are going to be involved into regional developmental programs too, at the NUTS IV level



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Telecottages in Hungary - present and future

- Currently there are 400 operating telecottages
- Additional 40 Telecottages are under development
- The biggest rural community network, villages on the Internet,
- Until 2006 we expect to have 800 to cover completely the Hungarian countryside



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Telecottages in Hungary – actual results and planned programs

- Public ITC access for 1 million citizens
- Providing free email address for everyone
- Telecottage based employment creation – 350-400 jobs and 1500 volunteers
- Telecottage know-how export – Telecottage program in Yugoslavia and in Romania



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How the telecottages are operating, and what are they doing?

- Each telecottage is an independent organisation
- The Telecottage is an electronic public access point
- They need to meet the Telecottage minimum criteria (Technical, organisational and service)
- Providing public services (educational, social and public information)
- Services for local businesses (office, communication, financial, and commercial services)
- Services for NGOs (helping to write applications, consultation)



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Mission of the Movement

- Telecottages are local, community based responses to the challenges of the information society.
- Their mission is to provide equal opportunities for everyone, especially for rural communities
- Telecottages are the most effective actors in rural development, helping to diminish economic and cultural obstacles.



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The conditions for long term sustainability

- Buying telecottage services by the National and by the local governments (services and public access point)
- Stronger demand for business network services
- Multi-sectoral, balanced operation that is controlled by the local community,
- Telecottages are the engines of local economic development



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