

Key Messages/Lessons learnt

- **Creating a functional and healthy space** for introducing new trends in learning with a view to addressing current topics of society in Poľana Biosphere Reserve - Development of practical education based on the needs and current topics of children and young people in the Poľana Biosphere Reserve
- **Strengthening awareness** of the natural and cultural values of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve - Promoting regional identity and internal youth motivation in line with the UNESCO “Man and Biosphere” Program and SDG objectives
- **Enabling young people** to participate in decision-making processes and to join the Coordination Council of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve - Generating Generations with their own critical thinking in relation to their quality of life –
- **Public awareness and public relations** - Raising the general public's awareness of the region's natural and cultural values
- **Promoting partnerships** in the context of youth education and non-formal and informal learning - Maintaining cooperation with youth institutions in the region to improve young people mentoring

Biosphere Reserve description



Poľana is the highest volcano mountain in Slovakia. The whole range is part of the Carpathian arch. There are thermophiles species as well as mountain plant and animal species on a relatively small area due

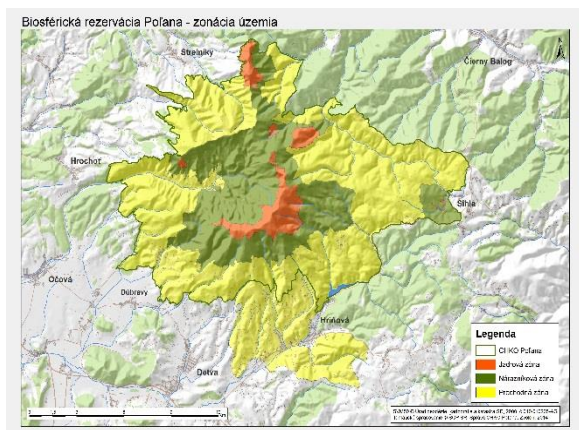
to its protrusion to south and altitude range of almost 1000 m (the lowest point is 460 m and the highest is 1458 a.s.l.).

The peak named Hrb (1255 m a.s.l.), which is at the north edge of Ľubietovský Vepor, is the geographic centre of the Slovakia. A unique geological and geomorphological character of this area is a result of volcanic activity from the period 13-15 millions years ago. The forests cover 85 % of the area. Large beech forests, fir-beech forests and hillside forest communities are typical for Poľana. They have primeval forest character at several places. Areas that were deforested long time ago are represented today by communities of meadows and pastures, which also encompass peat lands and meadows rich in

groundwater. Mountainous and sub-alpine species of grass are typical. Rock communities increase overall biodiversity of the area.

Thanks to high habitat biodiversity the representation of invertebrates is very rich as well. Many of them are endemic, rare or threatened. Since 2016 Hriňovské lazy belong to the transition area. It is a mosaic of small strips of land, interlaced by meadows and pastures at former arable land, lanes, sometimes overgrown by hip-roses, sloes and wild cherries. Horses and traditional farming tools are used in this area. The character of this landscape is highlighted by traditional wood houses, barns, potato cellars, painted wooden crosses and other folk art. Scattered settlements were created in Hriňová due to difficult accessibility of arable land.

The current area of individual zones in the Poľana Biosphere Reserve: core zone 1 332,70 ha, buffer zone 6 418,53 ha. In 2016, the transition zone of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve was extended by a part of Hriňovské lazy with an area of 2744 ha. The expansion of the transition zone has increased the area of land with permanent grassland. Transition zone 16 407,00 ha.



1. Map and position of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve

BR challenges

The inhabitants of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve live in small scattered villages and two larger towns (Detva, Hriňová), which are in contact with the territory or reach the transition zone of the Poľana BR. The settlement of Poľana BR and its surroundings is scattered in the mountains. The settlements represent small farms where one or two family generations live. Children and young people are attending schools daily in city centers or larger municipalities.

Children and young people learn about the region's natural and cultural values by working at home - on farms or with grandparents. The region is rich in dances, musical performances and folk costumes, which young artists maintain cultural traditions even today.

Within the school, the Poľana PLA Administration practices non-formal education and focuses on young people and children through environmental and regional education, which it prepares for children aged 4 to 15 and young people in secondary schools and universities. The PLA Poľana BR supports the interest in the natural and cultural heritage of Poľana BR and through dialogue with educators it helps to improve teaching.

Initiatives/Actions on SDG

4. The Biosphere Reserve thus contributes to the goals of SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Practical Outcomes/Achievements

1. Campaing and propagation of Poľana BR

Open Day of Poľana BR - Communication with the public during the Open Day of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve, where stakeholders present their activities in the area in terms of traditional land management, habits and original crafts. The programme provides visitors a comprehensive picture of the natural, cultural values and traditions of our region.

Become a star - Outdoor meeting with young people. Our challenge was to create big constellation "Great bear" with people and lights. The bear is a typical carnivore in the Poľana Biosphere Reserve. During the meeting we were talking with



2. "Land art" with young people in the town Detva

pupils and student about our region and we were trying to use "land art" for language how to speak with them.

2. Outdoor activities

Outdoor activities are important to discover Poľana BR and to learn about nature and history in each season. The play with practical experience a good feeling is the best way for creating identity and raise awareness of young people. The PLA Poľana Administration has been cooperating with primary schools in Poľana BR for long time. Employees of State Nature Conservancy Slovak republic with stakeholders provide trips and outdoor activities in protected areas in Poľana BR with the environmental activities and games. The aim is to show children geological history of volcano, fauna, flora, etc.



3. Environmental activities in protected areas of Biosphere reserve Poľana

3. Competitions for young people

Queen of Poľana – The one part of the Open Day of Poľana BR is traditional competition "Queen of the Poľana". It is the challenge to choose women from region who will personify the values of Poľana BR. The competition is not about physical beauty or age. It is about the



4. Queen of Poľana with stakeholders of Poľana BR

skills, good character and sense for vision and future of region.

Art competition "Around the world with Poľana" - create logo of BR Poľana - Art competition - challenge for young painters and movie makers, who like Poľana BR. Students and pupils created new person/logo for Poľana BR. The hundred and eight participants with painting proposals and three participants with movies joined the competition.



5. Poľana as a person. Winner of art competition: Dávid Kamenský, 14 years, Hriňová

4. Mentoring of young people

Workshops for few days – Workshops for young people on how to educate soft skills which are useful for young volunteer is good practise in Poľana BR. Young people represent strong potential for region Podpoľanie.

Discussion - To talk about power of young voice and how to make good decisions in life is an important a motivation moment for young people.

Students discussed with Slovak famous actors and presenters Adela Vincze and Viktor Vincze at



primary school in the town Detva.

6. Discussion with young people with famous actor and presenters

5. School education

Frequently environmental education at the kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools play an important role in preparing young people how to live in region. Wide spectrum of topics and targets (agriculture, forest, large carnivores, amphibians, universe,...) tell to children story about the value of Poľana Biosphere Reserve.

6. Eco centre at PLA Poľana Administration

Non-formal education with young people is providing with outdoor activities in the garden around the PLA Poľana Administration. Garden is live book for environmental education and games. The main goal is to show natural value of Poľana BR and increase the awareness about region.



7. Good practise with outdoor activities

Measures:

- involving young people in coordination council
- communications with schools with the aim to give an inspiration for new education with adventure and practise
- preparing hand book with activities which regards value of BR Poľana
- workshops for teachers and young people
- analyze needs and demands of young people
- cooperation between stakeholders and PLA – BR Poľana Administration

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