

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Since 2016, Darja Korelc has been running the social enterprise Makrobios Panonija, which brings new knowledge and methods to remote rural areas through various projects and trainings. Ten years ago, she and her family decided to buy an abandoned farm in Goričko. They moved from Ljubljana to a remote rural area that was struggling with problems such as depopulation, an unfavourable age structure of the population and a lack of knowledge, among others.



Figure 1. Darja in front of a building constructed from natural materials.

The change of location and career was triggered by her son's initiative to create an open space for collaboration and networking in the fields of environmental protection and self-sufficiency. In 2016, they registered the social enterprise Mikrobios Panonija, which introduces innovations and changes through various projects, such as responsible use of local materials for construction, agriculture, and more.

Darja also plays an important role in connecting with the local community, especially on environmental issues. The business will to gradually be passed to the younger generation, but Darja still has many ideas for the future. She is in the process of completing the renovation of old farm buildings and building a greenhouse. In the future, they also want to focus on empowering women, who are one of the more vulnerable groups in the region.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

The results of Mikrobios Panonija's activities are numerous and constantly evolving:

- Construction and renovation of farm buildings using natural materials (hemp and straw) while maintaining traditional construction methods.
- Employing three people and carrying out various activities. Employment of vulnerable groups.
- Carrying out numerous environmental protection projects, such as natural construction, installing bird nesting boxes, raised garden beds, colorful meadows, etc.
- Founding of the Pomurje Organic Farmers' Association Rodna Grūda and Cooperative. Raising awareness about organic farming.
- Close cooperation with the local community and residents, ensuring the transfer of specific local knowledge, and raising awareness among young people through cooperation with local schools.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.makrobios.si/>