Culture | Education | Sustainability | Science

Grójec Free School

Wolna Szkoła Grójec

LOCATION

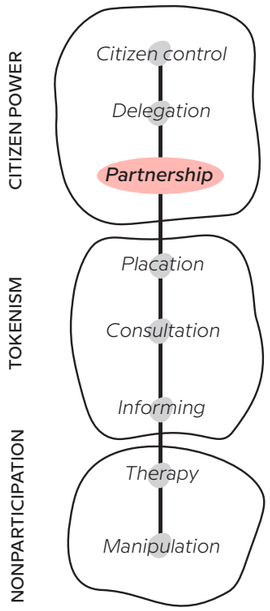
Grójec, Poland

TIME PERIOD

Since 2013

THE PROJECT

A group of people who cared about their nearest environment and ecological education **established a private school called Grójec Free School**. The initiative was launched by Fundacja Tropy Przyrody (Nature Trail Foundation), which organized Earth Day events in Grójec since 2013. The project tackled several challenges: introducing **alternative education methods, supporting the development of local communities,** creating forms of recreation, and running an educational workshop centre for the community.



DESCRIPTION OF THE SPACE

Grójec is a remote place which suffers from **geographical barriers and poor transportation links**. Despite its location near the capital of Poland, there are still areas that require improvement. Moreover, the **number of services offered in the city does not meet the expectations of the inhabitants** and it does not allow them to be fully independent. Grójec has a **few public spaces**, but they are not all well-equipped. The local population also pointed out the shortage of places where people could spend their free time and relax with friends.

INITIATION AND ACTORS

The project was **created and coordinated by Fundacja Tropy Przyrody (Nature Trail Foundation)**. This organization wanted to support the development of the local community through joint development activities, culture and environmental protection, as well as promoting a lifestyle that respects the environment.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY & METHODS USED

Earth Day was a cyclical event which included concerts, theatre performances, fairs, and workshops **on environmental issues**. It was the first initiative of this kind in Grójec, where the residents could be involved in educational stalls and learn about the local issues. **Thanks to this experience, Fundacja Tropy Przyrody established the Grójec Free School for children**, which offers alternative learning methods. Besides, it continues organizing workshops for the local community. The project was initiated by Anna Makowska, the founder of the foundation, who owned a plot of land in Nowe Grobice. She invested her time and finances to develop the space for users and make it more friendly and available.

RESULT

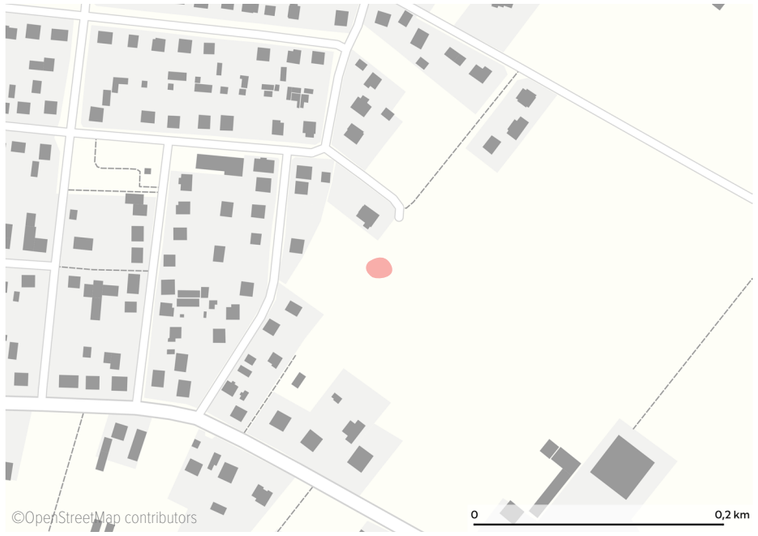
Earth Day, a bottom-up initiative of local activists, turned out to be a success. It had an interesting family-oriented programme and it was the first event of this kind to place a strong emphasis on environmental issues. The **local community became more environmentally aware**. The next step was to create the **Grójec Free School** as an alternative to the traditional school system. The children at the school learn how to take care of the environment and build their social competences; how to develop their interests and enhance their self-esteem. They **learn through experience – they spend a lot of time outdoors** rather than sitting in classrooms like in a traditional school. The forest surroundings of the town are great for organising a variety of outdoor activities, camps, workshops, expeditions, and field games. They are attended by both the town inhabitants and visitors.

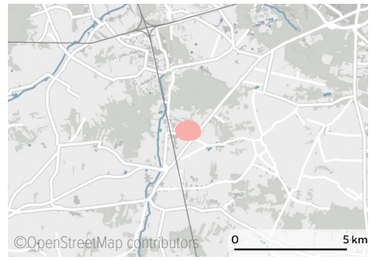
The Earth Day in Grójec
©Tropy Przyrody

Grójec Free School - clean-ing the forest
©Tropy Przyrody

Grójec Free School - Summer Camp
©Agnieszka Mocarska

Grójec Free School - outdoor learning
©Tropy Przyrody





Grójec, Mazovia, Poland

more about this project

Link to the publication:
http://www1.uirs.si/en-us/book/id/119

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