



## 2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** The initiative that is bringing Bad Grund (Harz) back to life

**Destination Name:** *(include any state, province or region)*

Bergstadt Bad Grund (Harz)

**Country:** Germany

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**Position:** Projektmanager 'Innenentwicklung der Bergstadt Bad Grund (Harz)'

**Nomination Category:** *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery
- Other

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*

# DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

## Issues faced

The mountain town of Bad Grund (Harz) is struggling with enormous structural changes. Mining, the main branch of the economy, was discontinued in 1992, and spa tourism, which collapsed in the 1990s, is not popular anymore. These structural changes have led to a downward spiral from which it was initially impossible to escape. Young people have moved away, houses have fallen empty, and culture, traditions and events have diminished. From 1973 to 2021, the population of Bergstadt Bad Grund fell from 3,800 to less than 2,300.

In autumn 2018, some Bad Grundners decided to do something about the decline of the mountain town. The initiative 'ZukunftsBergstadt' emerged from a kick-off event, intending to tackle many of the current problems. From this, a site maintenance group came into being, which, among other things, regularly takes care of the flower beds and cleanliness in the town center, has sown wildflower meadows and much more. The 'ZukunftsBergstadt' has now organized many events in which Bad Grundners can get together, exchange and develop new ideas. For example, a so-called 'Begegnungsmarkt' now takes place once a month. Similar to a weekly market, regional products can be purchased, and there are also many opportunities for conversation and eating and drinking. Another project within the 'ZukunftsBergstadt' is the 'Grundnerwohnzimmer', a living room, which is a new meeting point that is open every day. Here the Bad Grundners can meet to talk, exchange ideas, but also swap books, buy tableware, wool and many other little things. The Grundner living room is run purely by volunteers, and the 'ZukunftsBergstadt' finances the rent for the premises from the donations raised. The establishment of a cooperative is shown as the last example of the use of this initiative. From the stakeholders of 'ZukunftsBergstadt', the idea arose to found a cooperative, which wants to acquire a dilapidated vacant property in the center of Bad Grund, renovate it and bring it back into use. A new gastronomic offer with regional foods is to be created here, which is urgently needed in Bad Grund.

## Methods, steps and tools applied

The 'ZukunftsBergstadt' started with a kick-off event in autumn 2018, and the citizens of Bad Grund participated from the beginning of the project. In a moderated group, they presented what they don't like about Bad Grund, what ideas they have and where they can and want to help. Various working groups emerged from these ideas and immediately started implementing the ideas.

One year later, in autumn 2019, the 'Regionalmanager für die Innenentwicklung der Bergstadt Bad Grund' was hired in the municipality as part of the European funded LEADER project. This project should represent a link between the citizens of Bad Grund and explicitly the 'ZukunftsBergstadt' and the administration and politics and be active where the voluntary citizens reach their limits.

In 2021, the 'ZukunftsBergstadt' had gathered enough support in Bad Grund, so that it will found a non-profit association in September. At the same time, the cooperative mentioned above is to be founded. With these two organizations, Bad Grund is legally and organizationally ideally positioned to take on further challenges.



### Key success factors

*The connection between politics, administration and the citizens of Bad Grund was essential. The LEADER project manager tackles and implements ideas from the citizens that were too time-consuming for volunteers. This is a guarantee that the 'Zukunftsborgstadt' can operate successfully.*

*At the same time, it was essential that the Bad Grundners drafted the ideas themselves. They are committed to further developing their place, which is very important for their acceptance and success.*

### Lessons learned

*The greatest challenge is to achieve a change of image for the mountain town. In particular, the local citizens had to, and some still have to be convinced of how beautiful it is in and around Bad Grund and that something can also be changed in Bad Grund.*

*Another central challenge is that external investors are reluctant to invest in some urgently needed investments due to the negative population trend.*

*Due to the many planned events, the Covid-19 pandemic remains very obstructive for the initiative. Many events had to be postponed, and it is still unclear which can take place again and to what extent. Nevertheless, many plans and events are in the starting blocks again.*

*Thanks to the commitment of the "Zukunftsborgstadt", it was possible to draw attention to the fact that something is moving in the mountain city in the region and, in some cases, beyond. The place has become visually more beautiful, new meeting points and events have been created, and there are positive reports about the place. It will be important to stay tuned to the local needs, ensure that the people committed to the project stay on and that new people come on board.*

### Results, achievements and recognitions



*On the one hand, the high number of events that the 'Zukunftsborgstadt' has already organized should be emphasized. Since autumn 2019, there have already been 6 'Begegnungsmärkte', countless cleaning and tidying events, a white dinner, several Advent events, the Tschüss-2019 event, the 1-year review event and two cooperative information events. If it hadn't been for Covid-19, this list would certainly have gone much further.*

*In addition, the meanwhile countless positive newspaper articles in the local newspapers 'Harzkurier' and 'Seesener Beobachter' are to be mentioned as a sign of the positive change in the image of Bad Grund. The 'Zukunftsborgstadt' initiative has already received an award for its civic engagement, and it made it into the top 100 at startsocial in 2020. Startsocial is a Germany-wide initiative that recognizes civic commitments and is under the patronage of the Federal Chancellor. This placement at startsocial made it possible to acquire professional coaching, which was redeemed in winter 2020/21. The result of the coaching was very successful so that it was subsequently decided to create a more professional structure with the non-profit association.*

*Overall, the image of Bad Grund has started to change due to the 'Zukunftsborgstadt'. New ideas and campaigns emerge, which benefit the residents of Bad Grund in particular, but in a second step also benefit the guests of Bad Grund. The action of the 'Zukunftsborgstadt' makes Bad Grund more attractive, prettier and livelier. The negative spiral is slowly turning into a positive one. Bad Grund is alive.*

#### Additional references

<https://www.zukunftsborgstadt.de/> - Website of 'Zukunftsborgstadt'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvtRwdG3oMA> – example of the 'Begegnungsmarkt'

<https://www.harzkurier.de/suche/?q=zukunftsborgstadt&sort=neu&p=1> – newspaper report about the 'Zukunftsborgstadt'

