

European Garden Heritage Network - Award 2013
Award ceremony at Schloss Dyck, 6th of September 2013

Laudation for category:

“Special Award of the Schloss Dyck Foundation”

By

Roswitha Arnold, Germany

Member of the jury, EGHN

REALDANIA, Copenhagen (Denmark)

When we visited Realdania for an EGHN topic two years ago we met people who are friendly, of course, service oriented, of course as well, but what really impressed, was a specific atmosphere in the building.

We could see women and men working behind glass doors, colleagues having a chat at a well-designed coffee station. A look out of the windows showed a park, just because it was in the wintertime, covered with snow. Busy, but also peace and quiet!

It was a bit of a think tank in best sense. And just the first thought was: wow, this is definitely a place to like to be!

Realdania, located in Copenhagen, Denmark, is a philanthropic association with a representative member democracy and more than 160,000 members. Everyone who owns real estate in Denmark can become a member of the association.

Their mission is to create quality of life for all through the built environment.

When Realdania say: "We focus on the life in the houses, between buildings, in the urban neighbourhood - sustainability is top of mind in everything we're doing", it sounds simple but means so much: Creating cities for people!

In this self-commitment, since 2000 Realdania has contributed a total of 1.9 billion Euro (1,9 Milliarden Euro) to more than 2.000 large and small projects within the built environment. That includes centres for music and art, hospices and hospitals, urban squares (one of them was also nominated for this year's award) and much more.

As a catalyst for change, Realdania identify essential challenges in society and initiate projects that generate knowledge and create solutions in so called "Five priority areas", which terms the essentials of its doing:

The keywords taken from their website are:

Health and sustainability
Environmental and resource sustainability
The Suburb 2.0
The potential of rural areas
Market towns

Health and sustainability

Realdania works to promote buildings and cities that make people want to move and opt for healthy choices.

Environmental and resource sustainability

The built environment plays a crucial role if we are to slow down manmade climate change.

The Suburb 2.0

With heavy industry moving away from the suburban areas, new possibilities for development and integration arise - chance for more modern and sustainable future suburbs.

The potential of rural areas

Realdania wishes to demonstrate new ways of creating positive development in these areas by cultivating local potential and building identity and confidence.

Market towns

When the municipal map changes by relocated industries and by more people moving to the cities, the smaller market towns are forced to reinvent themselves. Realdania looks for solutions.

Impressing facts for the jury, but there is a specific action that made Realdania the winner:

In 2008 Realdania started supporting the restoration and enhancement of parks and gardens around rural stately homes and castles in Denmark. High quality standards have been ensured by professional consultancy. All park and gardens that received funding (more than 20 in this first campaign) have to be opened to the public then. The outcomes were published on a website and in a book. Realdania understands this initiative also as a contribution to rural development.

Obviously this program was so successful and there is still much more to do.

Thus, in April 2013 a new call for applications was launched. The total budget for that call is about 10 Mio. Euro and there are plans to support about 10 restoration projects that also have to be agents of change in the

countryside.

48 manor houses have submitted their ideas and plans and the jury read the papers and visited the sites during the summer. The divisions will be made soon.

In the years between, Realdania has also helped to create a modern spa garden and a therapy garden at Vejle Fjord Kurpark. Park and hotel are open to all and refurbished with respect for the original buildings and the romantic garden plan from the 1900s.

Last year we had Egeskov from Denmark as a winner and we said it is a "must visit".

In combination with the gardens restored with help from Realdania, a new and sustainable destination for garden tourists is growing and helping to keep the countryside in Denmark alive.

And now we are happy to have Christian Andersen and Sara Line Bohn with us tonight, who are project managers for the garden projects at Realdania.

Congratulations!