

Encouragement to Smart Local Development -inspirational Smart Village examples

Transnational cooperation
project Smart Villages Leader
Network



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

Content

Introduction.....	2
Participants in Smart Villages Leader Network.....	3
Smart Villages concept in EU.....	5
All began in Scotland.....	6
FINLAND	
A Village of art and experience.....	9
Modern facilities for traditional activities.....	10
Sustainable, interesting forms of village living.....	11
On the way to a service-oriented innovative village.....	12
Actions for a cleaner future.....	13
Designing pathways to a sustainable future.....	14
GREECE	
Bringing history to life through Digital Applications.....	15
Revitalizing old traditional trails on Island of Kythera.....	16
Unassisted access to beach and sea for people with mobility issues on Island of Poros.....	17
LATVIA	
Digital trail "Baldones military heritage".....	18
Ikšķile community "Kiparu nams".....	19
Krapes Manor - A place full of attractions.....	20
Dzilnuciems, Marupe Municipality.....	21
Tiraine, Marupe Municipality.....	22
Jaunolaine, Olaine Municipality.....	23
Community of Vieda Carnikava.....	24
Sailing school "Zēģele" brings community together.....	25
Adazi Municipality Neighbourhood Association.....	26





Introduction

This booklet was produced within the transnational cooperation project between seven European LAG-partners to encourage the respective regions to share and exchange good practices related with Smart Villages and smart local development.

The cooperation project was running between 2019 and 2022. The aim of the project was to plan and implement new local projects, and enhance local development in the context and methodology of Smart Villages.

- Identify ways to generate added value for the rural territories based on their existing strengths and assets
- Implement best practice learned from study visits into our network of rural digital hubs
- Encourage businesses already using digital technology to champion it to their peers, providing real world examples of the benefits

A tangible outcome of the project is a joint publication of best practices from each of the partner regions. The following Best Practice cases are our effort to bring some inspiring examples of smart village actions to light, such as exchange good innovative projects that contribute to implementing environmental and climate measures together with social and economic sustainability and explore initiatives around revitalizing rural services e.g. health, social services, education, energy, transport and retail through digital and social innovation.

Within the project four study trips were carried out and several workshops were held along with presentations and most importantly visits to smart villages. Almost all the cases portrayed in the booklet have been part of our transnational cooperation project. We hope that the examples chosen to highlight the smart village actions will be an inspiration for all of you who want to be part of the smart village development.

Participants in Smart Villages Leader Network





Smart Villages concept in EU

The Smart villages measure is a tool for strategic development, and it can be related to all of the sustainable development themes and their innovations. Projects can plan long-term implementation and also meet the objectives of the EU's long-term vision for rural areas.

On the other hand, the type of project is slightly similar to that of the EIP projects during the current period, i.e. targeted solutions seeking solutions to locally identified challenges with suitable experts. In other words, what is necessary, possible and appropriate to take forward depends on the regions. One might think that the Smart villages/countryside projects would function as innovation programmes. The implementation period by theme could be up to 5 years. These could also involve inter-territorial cooperation.

Village-level strategies and development measures are certainly at the centre, but different themes may include plans for larger areas. Strong renewal and digitalisation based on needs.

Smart village is one concept that can be adapted to plans and strategies. How can we manage, support and resource an entity that derives from grassroots needs, take account of wider regional characteristics while identifying cross-cutting drivers and megatrends of national/EU/international?

Smart Village project is not just a strategy paper but a concrete thing/challenge to be resolved or promoted. A concrete implementation plan is drawn up and the measures directly linked to its implementation may be included in the project. The Smart village main project includes the set short-term and long-term goals and a plan on how to achieve them.

Possible scale / themes of Smart Villages projects

- Economic innovations, investments and measures to support emerging value chains and local economic clusters (both agriculture and non-agriculture) (development of business activities) based on local goods and (potential) areas of relative benefit (bioeconomy, smart tourist destinations, etc.). Intelligent transport and logistics solutions, smart local services and service chains, smart food chains, digitalisation and cooperation between companies, smart statements on farms. And broadband connections and different models for companies (including social entrepreneurship), multi-locality, opportunities for location-independent work. Smart adaptation.
- Social innovations to enable sustainable and high-quality services and sustainable operation. E.g. ensuring social and cultural services. Investments in future skills. Connections between urban and rural areas. Sustainable wellbeing: avoiding segregation and inequality between people, improving the integration, Community, living conditions, culture and safety of immigrants and other newcomers. Knowledge, information – including silent knowledge – in activities. Multi-service centres, distance learning centers
- Environmental innovations to improve resource efficiency, create local energy communities, reduce the carbon footprint, increase biodiversity and protect environmental resources. Municipal authorities, representatives of the business sector, local residents, research institutes and experts work together to develop and tailor new cost-effective solutions for reducing emissions, especially in connection with transport, housing and food. Low-carbon villages: circular economy, sustainable food production and local food

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A few important things to remember in the Smart villages measure

- Cooperation projects are only eligible when there's at least two actors.
- Basic rule of smart planning: You can't do it by yourself!
- Partners may be from the village or municipality nearby, from other part of country or from another country, partner may also be some research institute or educational institution or other specialist organization or association.
- It is important to have peer to peer learning and brave use of different kind of specialists.
- It is a tool for working together towards the big picture.



All began in Scotland

Within the framework of transnational cooperation, the first study trip was held in Scotland in November 2019. Below is abridgment of Päivi Loukamo's story about the trip originally published in local newspaper Sydän-Hämeen lehti in Finland.

Scotland is beautiful and educational

Some whiskey and just one kilt but lots of sheep, activity and vitality. A few dozen people travelled to Scotland for a meeting of an international cooperation project on Smart Villages. All started in a beautiful Gartmore House.

Gartmore House is amid-18th century built manor in the middle of rolling countryside on the border between the Highlands and the Lowlands. Nowadays, the house serves as a hotel and a conference center. The feeling was downright luxurious when we gathered in the drawing room in the evenings by the large open fireplace.

The first day was full of presentations and all the English-related Babylonian languages were represented during the day - some of them completely incomprehensible like highland Scots or Welsh. On the second day, we were able to go on trips to interesting places in the area, which the local Leader group Forth Valley and Lomond had organized for us.



Villages in the middle of a national park

Scotland is vast and sparsely populated. Gartmore and over 30 other villages are part of the Stirling Borough. In Stirling, all the villages have their own councils with their own operating budgets. The area is part of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and the park brings a lot of tourists to the villages, especially hikers and cyclists. About half of the companies are located in rural areas. Local communities, companies and voluntary organizations have developed services and innovations that maintain vitality in villages that otherwise would sleep.

Two things seem to be particularly well in Scotland: the use of financial instruments and the appreciation of volunteer work. By combining these, it has been possible to create interesting projects that benefit the countryside and keep it inhabited. By the end of 2019, 93 percent of households will be covered by broadband, and this strongly supports the increasingly popular remote work.

We visited the small Gartmore village with population of 400 and a lively main street with bakeries, cafes, pubs and shops. The villagers bought the village store and post office in 1998 when the owners retired. They also received the village's second church as a donation to turn it as Village Hall. It has now undergone a major refurbishment and provides space for a wide variety of community and private activities such as weddings, hobbies and conferences for local residents and visitors.

Most recently, the locals in Gartmore bought the village pub, which is now being renovated for fire safety and other issues. In Aberfoyle, the only gas station was in danger of closing its doors, and since the next gas station is a very far, the villagers bought the property and began renovating the station to meet today's requirements. They received a large grant and did a huge renovation, starting with tanks, pipes and pumps. All was made by the volunteers, and this way not only important services but also the distinctive spirit of the village have been preserved.



In the village of Callander in the mountains, the villagers built a power plant in a small river, which produces green electricity that heats and lights the whole village and which sells so much energy that the village receives 60,000 pounds every year, e.g. for the development of the school and other services.



The activity of volunteers is a great asset. Perhaps it is somehow related to the fact that the Scots are a proud and self-conscious people. It is important for them to be self-sufficient and independent.

Lots of talk about Hub's

Aberfoyle is a beautiful village of 1 000 inhabitants in the middle of the Trossachs and Loch Lomond National Park. At the end of the main road rises the snow-capped Ben Lomond. Every house has some kind of shop: cafes, bakery, pubs, shops, tourist information and the Wool Center selling fine woollen products - and even a petrol station owned by the villagers. The Business Hub organized by the village community has been a complete success, which has raised the entire village from its dormant state to new activity in a short time. The HUB began to act as a catalyst that brought new energy to the entire village. Because of this, you will no longer see empty storefronts on the main street.



Would you rather drive three hours a day to work in the city or work at the HUB in your own village? And on the other hand, when you come on vacation, to a vacation home or to hike in the countryside, do you rush back to the city in the Sunday rush hour or do you stay to work for a couple of days in a quiet village?

The HUB concept has been a success. The atmosphere is immediate, you can exchange opinions with other hubbies, occasionally stop by Maggie's bakery for a coffee and continue refreshed. The space is open 24/7 and suitable for early birds as well as the night owls – even those whose connections to the other side of the globe require odd working hours. Users range from sole proprietors to local employees of large companies. Working from home is not a long-term solution. You have to meet others, exchange opinions, brainstorm ideas and get peace of mind from children and barking dogs. The best way to make people understand each other is to make them work together.

Environmental awareness provides a strong argument for close working. It is ecological to work nearby. Long drives between cities are so last season, old fashioned. People already know how to value not only the time and effort they spend, but also the environmental impact of their actions.

Schools are valued

As stated at the beginning, Scotland is a sparsely populated country and the valleys are separated by mountains, certainly in ancient times really isolated from each other. Speaking of school matters: Callander, which has its own small hydroelectric power plant, is the largest school district in the country: 600 children from remote villages arrive to school every day. The Gartmore school has 14 pupils and no one plans to close it. About 200 children attend the Aberfoyle school, whose parents bring them to school in the morning on their way to work and pick them up in the afternoon. There is a competition between Gartmore and Aberfoyle for pupils and it will be won by the school that serves the better breakfast.

A Village of art and experience

Nuutajärvi Glass Village is the most significant art glass center and oldest glass village in Finland, where glass has been continuously blown for almost 230 years. The village's oldest buildings date from the 1850s, and the entire milieu is a Nationally Significant Built Cultural Environment as defined by the Finnish Museum Agency.



Today's glass village is a workplace for dozens of professionals and students, after the industrial glassmaking ended in 2014. Most of them work with glass, but there are also experts in other materials, for example ceramics, metal and textiles.

The village has offices, shops, exhibitions and galleries, cafes, a restaurant and a village hotel open to visitors. The Design Museum in Nuutajärvi allows you to learn about the history of glass and the village, and the Tavastia Vocational School trains new glass experts in the village. Also numerous events are organized in Lasikylä during the year.

The most valuable things in Nuutajärvi are its know-how and buildings. These are promoted and supported by two parties: the Nuutajärvi Glass Village Cultural Foundation and Nuutajärven Pruuki Company. The foundation focuses mainly on intangible assets (education, internationality, craftsmanship, tradition) and the company on the tangible (renovation of buildings and diversification of activities). Both parties aim to develop Nuutajärvi into a creative village that's a great place for artists, craftsmen, professionals and students to work. The aim is also to open up the village to a wider international and domestic audience.



Nuutajärvi Village, Urjala

- The Nuutajärvi glass factory was founded in 1793
- The village has formed around the glass factory and is not a traditional living area but a place that combines culture and business



Modern facilities for traditional activities

Finland
LAG Pirkan
Helmi

Hunting is very common hobby and important form of social activity in Finnish countryside. Saarioispuoli Hunting Association has been operating since 1931. The Association has a place in Valkeakoski, where they have a building for meetings and parties, a cottage and a sauna, and also the meat processing and multiuse building, which is currently being completed.

The Meat processing and multiuse building will provide appropriate and ergonomic facilities for meat processing, and the practical hunting season can be extended with the cold facilities. With the new facility, know-how about meat processing can be transferred from one hunter to another and it is also possible to get young people involved in hunting. The space can also be used by other operators in the area, for example the village association.

The budget for the multiuse building is about 143 700€ (including materials and machine work). Construction work is done by members of the hunting association. LAG Pirkan Helmi has financed the project with 36 000€.

Hunting Association operates also a Children's Nature Club, which meets once a month. The club teaches all kinds of field skills related to fishing, hunting, picking berries, as well as general field skills, from starting a campfire to first aid skills. The club usually meets outdoors in the countryside. At the end of the club, kids will fry sausages and eat lunch by the campfire.



Saarioispuoli Hunting Association, Valkeakoski

- 133 members of all ages
- 5000 hectares of hunting area
- 2 properties for rent
- 2 shooting ranges

Sustainable, interesting forms of village living

Finland
LAG Pirkan
Helmi

Luopioinen region is a domain of various housing concepts. A variety of people is the source of vitality in the village. The ideas emerge among villagers and are implemented by villagers, and their collaboration partners.

Coop Pöllökartano - Better life together

Pöllökartano is a co-housing cooperative, that renovated an old mental hospital into seven apartments and shared spaces. Pöllökartano is a good example of the modern community housing. Residents have their own area and their own home, but they also get to enjoy the benefits of shared facilities.

Small houses of ViherKostiala

Ecological housing with healthy construction and heated by solar energy. The residential area is located near the service center, nature and outdoor recreation opportunities.



Tiny Ecovillas

Ecovillas are recycled houses with reasonable rent. They are tiny, but perfect houses with a little courtyard close to nature living and village services.



New from old in Torppakylä

Reusing old log frames for a modern house. Sustainable construction solutions; pillar foundation and plastic-free foundation and frost protection. Torppakylä was chosen as The Best Leader Village Project in Finland in 2022.



Latest initiatives

Zero carbon housing area on the island of Vohlisaari is currently under construction. There's going to be eight innovative one-family houses with green energy, water sources and waste treatment.

There's also going to be an apartment house for retired (third age) people in the center of the village. It's planned for community living with own space and freedom.

Luopioinen Village, Pälkäne

- ca. 700 inhabitants, very active community that has had several Leader-projects
- The center of former municipality of Luopioinen
- Competitor in Smartest Village-competition organized by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

On the way to a service-oriented innovative village

Finland
LAG Kantri



It's all about the development of village's old school building into a community centre. But a lot more has been done during the past decade. Water co-operative was founded by the villagers to meet the water legislation requirements and optical fibre network was built by a common village co-operative.

When school was shut down by the municipality in 2019 the idea of new multi-service center was brought up to discussion. Opinions and ideas from the villagers were gathered, inspiration was sought from other villages' solutions and a plan was developed together with partner companies. Raudanmaa Village Co-operative was set up at the end of 2020 to purchase and renovate the old school building. An immeasurable amount of voluntary work has made the dreams come true in Raudanmaa – the village is active and a pleasant place to live.

Turning the old school building into a smart village hall, a multi-service centre for various operators and user groups that would serve as the main hub for activities and services to both residents and visitors is currently the key project. Sustaining the services in the village is not in municipality's concern. Besides a common venue where meet and get to know each other, village hall is also a "platform" for services. Wide range of local services includes a gym hall with additional hobby spaces, cafeteria, remote working spaces, and meeting spaces among other things. Also, the Children's Farm Pikkupiha has opened next to the village house.



Raudanmaa Village, Kangasala

One of the main initiatives is to create a well-functioning smart village!

- ca. 600 inhabitants
- Consist of several small villages
- Top-5 in Finland's Smartest Village-competition organized by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Part of European Commission's Smart Rural 21-project

Actions for a cleaner future

Finland
LAG Kantri



A hundred-year-old school building turned into a village house in early seventies had a money consuming old oil heating system. What could be done to save money for other activities and solve the heating of the building more sustainable and ecological way?

Geothermal heating was chosen to solve the problem. Geothermal energy is produced by the sun and restored in ground, rock, or water. Along with ecological it's also an investment in a clean future. New heating system was installed in 2020 and one third of the investment cost was covered by Leader-funding. Voluntary work was made by villagers as much as possible – removing the old oil heating system, excavating and electrical work were made voluntarily by the professionals living in Kuohenmaa village.

The goal of reducing heating costs was achieved. Originally all calculations were made with 2019 oil prices but since then the price has at least doubled, the saving in yearly heating cost is thousands of euros and the investment payback time has dropped to four years. Also, carbon footprint has decreased dramatically.

Kuohenmaa village association has developed a smart way to earn money to maintain their village house and organize activities. Since 2016 Kuohenmaa Summer theater has had a new play every summer with a dozen of sold-out shows. With a playwright and all roles played by the villagers it has become a popular summer activity for near by residents as well as local summer residents.

Kuohenmaa Village, Kangasala

- ca. 200 inhabitants
- Building is owned by the municipality, village association is long-term tenant
- 150-200 events organized in the village house annually
- Village of the year in Pirkanmaa region in 2015



Designing pathways to a sustainable future

Finland
LAG Kantri

Social and environmental resilience is now perhaps more relevant than ever when we are facing the diverse effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and the disadvantages of linear economy. Rural communities have more tools to solve many of the problems caused by those effects. Kurki ecovillage is a biodynamic farm that offers a community living for about ten households.



All people living in Kurki ecovillage pursuit economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable life in various ways. The villagers work towards common goals. Being part of the community increases the sense of belonging and improves well-being and serves as a valuable place to share knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Several sustainable choices have been made when building the village - village's heating is arranged by common wood chip heating, dry toilets are in use, as well as soil treatment system of grey water. The heart of village is the Common house, place where people can gather, celebrate, and hold meetings. In summer, communal lunch is also served there.

Permaculture is one of the topics Kurki is actively developing. In summer 2022 the Nordic Permaculture festival was held in ecovillage where the garden around the Common house has been transformed into diverse and pollinator-friendly area that promotes culturally significant perennials blooming from early spring to late autumn.



Kurki Ecovillage, Vesilahti

- Located in old Kurki estate that has history from 13th century onwards
- Construction began in 2012
- Consist of 8 newly built houses and 4 other residential buildings
- Aim is to keep the countryside alive

Bringing history to life through Digital Applications

Greece
LAG Attica
Islands

Virtual reality applications for the battle of Salamis

The Foundation of the Hellenic World and the Municipality of Salamina have created the project, "Virtual reality applications for the battle of Salamis", funded from the Local Program CLLD/ LEADER 2014 – 2020 «Culture and Environment "On Board"», of the L.A.G. of Attica's Islands. The project is about creating a Small local digital museum about the naval battle of Salamis and it has three main parts.

- The virtual reality production about the storyline of the battle,
- The interactive educational applications,
- Designing the interior of the building that the Municipality of Salamina has provided.



Getting to know the ancient Aegina harbour-city complex using state of the art technology

The project is funded from the Local Program CLLD/ LEADER 2014 – 2020 «Culture and Environment "On Board"», of the L.A.G. of Attica's Islands and its purpose is to highlight the cultural heritage of Aegina and specifically the sunken ancient port facilities with digital interaction applications. Through these applications the visitors and the residents of Aegina Island, will be able to get to know the history and the current position of the ancient harbors.

The systematic survey of the port facilities of Aegina "Aegina Harbor City Project" started in 2019, in a cooperation program of the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities and the French School of Archaeology, with the participation of Aix-Marseille University, under the aegis of UNESCO, which is supported by the Municipality of Aegina and the Municipal's Port Fund. The project team will develop a digital application for smart devices (mobiles, tablets) in global stores (IOS and ANDROID), which will be able to be "downloaded" by users, tourist agencies, visitors of the island, tourists, tour guides etc. The application will contain historical and archaeological data, views and representations of the ancient harbors installations, representation of the port landscape over the centuries, old photographs, photogrammetric prints, photos and videos.



Revitalizing old traditional trails on Island of Kythera

Kythera Trails is a programme for sustainable tourism on Kythera Island, Greece, with the vision to enhance the island's natural and cultural heritage, while helping the local community thrive. Tourism represents Kythera's most important economic sector with a slight but steady growth. Until recently, the tourism sector of the island has been developing rather conventionally, following the 3S model (sea, sun, sand), which results in acute spatial and temporal concentration in specific areas over the summer. Consequently, the island's resources, especially water, have been depleting due to overexploitation and climate change.

Following the strategy for Kythera's sustainable tourism development, old traditional trails have been restored and revitalized, forming a network of 11 thematic routes of 100 km in total. The trails network has been enriched with the first via ferrata on a small Greek island, seven canyons for canyoning and 182 km of mountain biking routes. 26 traditional stone micro-dams have been rebuilt to support biodiversity, farming and aquifer recharge along a trail. An ethnographic study provided material for storytelling via the website and smartphone app, based on local knowledge. As a result of this innovative work, visitor flows have been increasing in shoulder seasons, while being better diffused spatially. The whole process has been a catalyst in championing a more integrated and collaborative model of tourism development on Kythera and can be upscaled elsewhere. In May 2022, Kythera Trails received the Platinum Award in the whole section of Sustainability at the Greek Tourism Awards 2022.



The programme is supported and implemented by the Kytherian Foundation for Culture and Development (KIPA) in collaboration with the Municipality of Kythera, Kythera's Domestic Estate Management Committee (Enchorios) and the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA).

Part of the Kythera Trail project has been funded by CLLD/Leader and the LAG is promoting the concept to all its members and already 3 more islands are planning to implement it in the coming years.

Unassisted access to beach and sea for people with mobility issues on Island of Poros

Greece
LAG Attica
Islands

Municipality of Poros has adopted an action plan to become friendly to people that face mobility issues (e.g. elderly or people with disabilities) and not only assist its citizens but also attract tourists that belong to these communities.

A cornerstone of this plan is the installation of innovative technology SEATRAC that give people with mobility issues the opportunity to enjoy swimming, completely unassisted.



The system consists of the solar powered conveyance track that is totally controlled by the user. The system provides a fixed track chair that can be moved into and out of the water if someone chooses to take a swim or just get them to the water's edge. The system also provides a series of services -like signage options, a changing room and storage shed- that allow its users to enjoy a day at the beach.

The use of this system allows caretakers and families of people with disabilities to enjoy beach going without physical hassles. It gives people the freedom and flexibility to do things on their own, increasing their independence.

Poros, with the use of SEATRAC, has come one big step closer to a community that promotes autonomy and encourage integration and inclusion.

The practice is now adopted by other municipalities in the area of LAG Attica Islands.



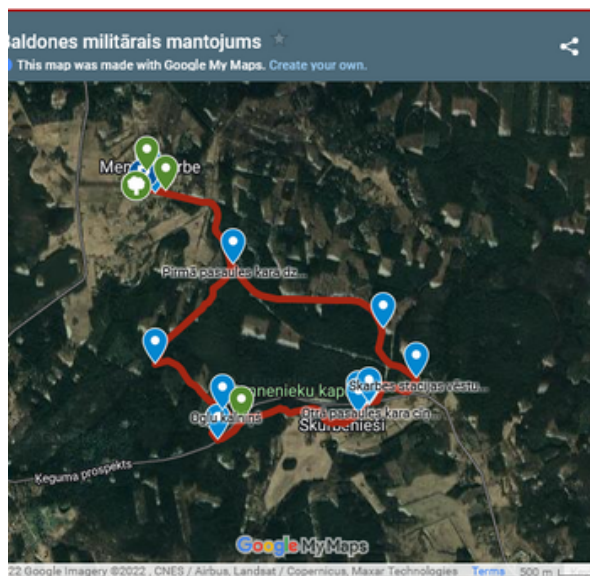
Digital trail es military heritage”

This digital route was created as an additional option for the local tourism product started in 2019 and launched in 2020 - Baldone Story Trail. There are two hiking routes around Baldone - 7 and 15 km, with 20 information points with visual and audio guides in several languages. Several local regional researchers also volunteered to collect and compile the information for these stands. After the opening of the Story Trail, which immediately gained a lot of recognition, local researchers decided to create another route that directly connects to the Story Trail - the 20th century military heritage in the Baldone area.

A brief background

Evidence of the military history of the last century has been preserved in the vicinity of Baldone - both WW I German railway lines, trenches, and graves, and WW II - places of the battles of September and October 1944 - trenches and battlefields. Based on the knowledge collected by local researchers, a 10 km long Baldone military heritage route was created in 2021, which includes 13 stops with an audio guide about the location. The trail also includes a natural object - a karst drop and a hill, which was formed during the mining process of coal and tar (coal was used in metalworking, tar - as a waterproofing material) in previous centuries.

The trail is intended for hikers who want to independently explore the historical evidence hidden in the Baldones forests. It is designed as a circle with the start and finish at Mercendarbe Manor, which is included in the map of the military heritage of Latvia and Estonia.



In May 2021, the trail was created and recorded digitally, marking each important location. Next, information based on historical sources was prepared for the audio guide and written material.

An information board was placed at the starting point of the route with pictures and information about historical events and a map of the route. QR codes are placed on the stand to listen to the audio guide and open the route on smart devices. Also, the route can be downloaded from Google maps. The route was opened on November 19, 2021.



Ikšķile community "Kiparu nams"

Latvia
LAG Zied
Zeme

The purpose of the community is to create an educational and creative place for children (including those with special needs), families, employees of educational institutions, as well as other interested persons. To develop the sustainable improvement of the territory, using local and attracted economic resources.

In October 2021, a multifunctional outdoor stage "Vasaraudži" was opened, a LEADER project with the aim of improving the quality of various events and the availability of services by developing the infrastructure of the territory using local and other economic resources. To promote the diversity of education, including ecology, culture, sports and social events, as well as to diversify leisure opportunities in Ogre region, to develop a multi-functional park "Vasaraudži". The head of the association, S.Reikmane, will promote the creation and strengthening of an integral community.



Together with cooperation partners, musicians, athletes, environmental activists, etc. For several years, various events for children, families and the local community have been organized in this area: concerts (e.g. Maija Sējane, Didzis Rijnieks), Latvian traditional holidays (e.g. Līgo, Mārtiņi, Meteņi), performances, sports activities (e.g. Bicycle Day, "Sports with Dad", Olympic Day), environmental education activities (e.g. Global Action Day).

From 2021, the educational resource platform "Skolotājim ZELT" (<https://mans.skolotajiemzelt.lv/>) was created, it is a community initiative, an open platform, the content of which is made up of more than 3 organizations and active individuals, working together to create a place where to exchange knowledge, opinions, ideas and methods in a free, relaxed atmosphere. Everyone has the opportunity to apply and organize their own activity. We will encourage teachers to grow to create a humane and thriving learning environment together.



Participation in the recognition of the "Smart Village" initiative.

From 2015 "Kiparu nams" has become a support center of the STOP 4-7 program, in cooperation with the Parresor coordination center, psychologists of the University of Warsaw and Ogre municipality.

Krapes Manor - A place full of attractions

Reflecting a unique model of community cooperation, the neighbors created a common brand: "Krapes Manor". Krapes manor is a small settlement in the parish of Krapes and Lādmanes, which has experienced growth in the field of tourism and community cooperation in recent years.



Neighboring businessmen are representatives of the tourism industry who realize that more can be done by working together. When a new resident "appears" in the Krapes manor, the owners and hostesses of the local houses invite him to get to know him, and so at one get-to-know-you party, the neighbors agreed that they should cooperate, creating a single local tourism destination "Krapes manor".

Neighboring tourist attractions are combined in one place: wine and cider factory "Lauskis", where you can see the wine production plant located in the cellars of the old manor gardener's house and various varieties - blackcurrants, raspberries, quinces, etc. c. – wine and cider tasting; association "Skaņumāja", in the museum of which a rich collection of folk musical instruments has been collected over time, most of which are made by Latvian masters. Krapes manor watermill, where you can taste herbal elixirs, buy various products made from plants, smoked African catfish and soy wax candles decorated with plants. Raspberry park, where you can pick delicious and juicy autumn berries yourself during the season, and of course the manor park, where the main building of the Krape manor complex was once located - 1909-1910.



The castle built in The community leaders admit that the biggest challenge was the creation of the Krapes estates website and the development of the local map. Even though they are all representatives of the same industry, it was not easy to agree on the best solution – visual and content-wise. Everyone had their own vision of "what would be better", however, as a result of long and successful negotiations, an agreement was reached and, in order to further popularize this community, the first Krape manor festival. All neighbors are involved in their organization.

Dzilnuciems, Marupe Municipality

The community is an active group of citizens, where a culture of cooperation has been developing over several years. Community residents mainly meet in an external environment, e.g. during walks with dogs or jogging. Another important meeting place is the pastor's manor. The community is rich in important skills and opportunities to share knowledge.



Dzilnuciems residents care about the orderliness of their place, the history, the accessibility of public transport. The current issue for the villagers is to learn about the history of their place and to make the most important historical facts available and known to both villagers and visitors. The key issue to villagers work on: How to improve communication and belonging to Dzilnuciems.

The community implemented an educational seminar with history lectures about Dzilnuciems and improved the children's playground.

Together with a communication specialist, the residents developed a business card for Dzilnuciems, including both the visual identity of the area and the village slogan, developed a communication plan including activities for the organization of the Dzilnuciems festival, as well as the development of a village code of ethics and branding.

The community is committed to improving the public transport stops, which would be both noteworthy environmental objects and provide information about the history of Dzilnuciems. Also the residents create a village brand that could be presented to the residents during the Dzilnuciems celebrations. The brand would serve as a sign of belonging and would also be an expression of common values.



“The history and roots of a place are not just events of the past! Heritage is a great driving force for the future and will always be an important contributor to the identity of a place.”

Tiraine, Marupe Municipality

The Tiraine gardens were historically small gardens, once managed by peat workers. The allotments have been abandoned, creating a degraded area.

The local community started the construction of a sports and leisure park on the 2.72 ha leased by the municipality with LEADER funding. A flower bed was planted along the 80 m long fourth straight of the BMX track. The sportsman's parents take care of it during the summer and the impressive flowerbed is one of the pride of the recreation park during the annual competitions. Several community clean-ups were organized last year in the part of the derelict allotment area next to the sports park, removing several dozen cubic metres of rubbish. The municipality came to the rescue with equipment and the former allotment area was cleaned up.



A community garden was created as a physical and spiritual meeting place. The community continues to maintain the recreational park and plans to extend the Community Garden, thus strengthening and improving communication between residents.



The best tool for community cohesion and communication is good work done together, but non-standard solutions can unravel a dilemma in the most brilliant way.



Jaunolaine, Olaine Municipality

Latvia
LAG Pierigas
partnerība

"The interest and response shown by the citizens has once again confirmed that the creation of the association was the right decision. The members of Society Jaunolaines Attistibai (Eng: For Development of Jaunolaine) will continue with enthusiasm to carry out new works!"

The core of the community is now made up of young families, whose activities are focused on community participation and building an inclusive environment.

The community organizes various events for citizens: local product markets at least once per two month, created a game for families "Know, Sort, Help" on the Actionbound App, combining knowledge about waste sorting and active recreation, organizes educational seminars and workshops involving both young people and seniors. In cooperation with the Olaine History and Art Museum, cultural and historical excursions are organized for the villagers, raising patriotism in belonging to Jaunolaine.

The community has implemented various infrastructure improvement projects in cooperation with the municipality, such as the development of the Forest Lake, one of the most popular places in the village, which started with a public consultation and an online survey. After collecting the ideas, a solution workshop was held with the participation of an urban planner. A walking trail has been improved with the help of the municipality and LEADER funding.



A truly happy childhood is only possible in a place to which you are emotionally connected and which you have helped to grow up.

Community of Vieda Carnikava

Fellowship "Vieda Carnikava" is a community of local people, who live in Carnikava village. It was founded at the end of year 2021, with the aim of representing the interests of the population in state and municipal institutions, as well as to inform the public about what is happening in the village of Carnikava. To implement one of the goals, the website viedacarnikava.lv has been created, where you can find information about public activities, service providers in the village territory, as well as other information necessary for residents.

Another task performed by the fellowship is the formation of local patriotism of the population. The fellowship follows various activities and honorable works of the residents, as a result of which the fellowship has nominated several residents for the "Gada novadnieks" award. To ensure the preservation of cultural and historical traditions in the village, the fellowship in cooperation with the municipality, looked for solutions to this year's geopolitical crisis situation to ensure the preservation of the village's cultural and historical festival "Nēģu svetki", which also succeeded.



Residents' meetings are held regularly to discuss current events in the village. If the problem situations are detected, tasks are being set for their elimination. At the moment, the fellowship has been operating for less than one year, but it has already set a number of different tasks for the future: organize neighborhood festivals, implement several projects for the development of the village and improving the quality of life of the residents, participate in the municipal residents' council.

With each meeting, the community becomes bigger and stronger in order to jointly solve the issues of village development.

Sailing school "Zēģele" brings community together

Latvia
LAG Juras
Zeme



In the spring of 2021, the "Zvejniekciema Youth Water Sports Club" association was founded and our main task was to unite the children, young people and their parents of local residents living on the coast and to establish the Sailing School "Zēģele" in Zvejniekciema and to involve them in various activities related to the sea. Historically, children and young people living on the coast have spent their free time by the sea and sailing in the sea, therefore there was a need to restore these activities to coastal residents, creating awareness about the sea and related activities - life by the sea and preserving a clean sea. We have access to the sea, excellent conditions for sailing and long traditions in this sport that we want to restore and continue.

This is a new experience for us, a huge responsibility, motivation and opportunity to develop the sailing sport in our region, both for leisure and professional sports activities. We see talented and interested children and young people who want to connect their everyday life with sailing. We see the positive changes in their attitude after our trainings and competitions, the desire to learn the skills to sail well, and this motivates us to continue and set higher goals.



In the training program, we have also included general fitness training, improving swimming skills in the pool and lessons on safety on and near the water. In the autumn and winter period, we learn theory training, learn competition rules, review and analyze training videos and discuss what our goals for the next season will be.

Our success story is made up of our coaches, wonderful students and their parents. Apart from sailing, we also go on joint educational hikes, together with scientists we learn about the consequences of marine polluting waste on marine and coastal ecosystems, and we organize the collection of marine polluting waste on beaches ourselves. To diversify our training program, we have also jointly participated in an outdoor percussion event.



Adazi Municipality Neighbourhood Association



Adazi Municipality Neighbourhood Association is one of the communities of active residents in Adazi district. The proximity of Riga to the county is both very beneficial, as many residents of the county associate their everyday life with the opportunities provided by the capital, but it also poses serious challenges, as the sea coast, forests, meadows and lakes only a few kilometers from the big city encourage a large number of vacationers, which in turn creates the load on the infrastructure and in cases of ruthless handling also threatens the natural ecosystem in some places.

The founders of the association are 12 residents of Adazi County, who represent different neighborhoods (villages) in Carnikava and Adazi parishes. Being socially active and carrying out various activities for the improvement of their surroundings over several years, the associates realized that the legal status – an association – would open up new opportunities in community work. Therefore, in August 2021 an association was registered. The association considers its mission to promote the co-responsibility of the inhabitants of villages and neighborhoods in various processes, to represent the interests of the inhabitants in cooperation with the municipality and communal services, to update the problem situations of nature protection, as well as to implement private and public partnership projects with the aim of improving the quality of life of the inhabitants.

The most relevant "big" initiatives of the last two years in the association's work were, for example, the identification of significant waste management problems and the search for their solution in cooperation with the Adazi municipality and also the waste management company CleanR. The residents of the community were not satisfied with the provision of waste sorting facilities, delays in the construction of sorted waste collection areas and other issues.



The members of the association held citizen surveys, participated in municipal meetings, expressed complaints to the waste manager, and this work is still ongoing. The community also opposes excessive deforestation near residential areas and nature reserves, stressing that the creation of clearings in the immediate vicinity of a large city increases the ecological burden on the remaining natural resources. The association has also highlighted the problems of streets, roads and recreational nature trails in various villages, and in cooperation with the municipality identifies the most critical places. In addition to these large-scale projects, community members regularly organize and participate in various environmental clean-ups, collect funds and equipment for Ukrainian refugees, play sports, and just have a good time in a group of like-minded people.

