

GERMANY

Local development

Location

Kall

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 238 250

RDP 154 862.50

Private/own 83 387.5

Project duration

2016 – 2022

Project promoter

Geno Eifel eG – Die Generationengenossenschaft

Contact

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Website

www.genoeifel.de

Setting up an inter-generational cooperative, bringing generations together to help each other and share their knowledge and skills.

Summary

The Eifel region is a low mountain range in western Germany and eastern Belgium. The area is rural and suffers from depopulation and limited basic services (shopping, transport, healthcare, etc.). This creates particular challenges for the elderly and makes the area less attractive for young families.



LEADER support was used to set up an inter-generational cooperative where citizens of the Eifel, both young and old, joined forces to solve common problems. Surrogate grandparents offer childcare before and after kindergarten hours, and young people babysit, while older people are offered transport and shopping services, help in their home and basic domestic support.

Results

Two jobs (one full-time and one part-time) have been created, which will continue to exist after the end of the LEADER funding period.

The cooperative already has 460 members and more than 1 000 are expected by 2022.

In 2020, a total of 1 200 hours of help were provided. This brings the number of hours of help given since the start of the project to around 3 000.

Integration in the region has been strengthened with the inhabitants pulling together again and creating a vibrant community.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The project is considered an example of good practice, particularly with respect to the development of its financially stable and sustainable structure. The cooperative will continue to operate even after the end of the LEADER funding, which was a precondition of the support to get GenoEifel eG up and running. At the end of the support, the cooperative will have sufficient members and through their contributions and the income per hour worked, it will be able to self-finance its operations.

Context

The Eifel region is a low mountain range in western Germany and eastern Belgium. The area is rural and suffers from depopulation. As the overall population is decreasing, the proportion of people over 65 in the regions' villages is expected to increase significantly in the coming years.

The rural context of limited services and facilities creates particular challenges for the elderly and those with restricted mobility. The lack of shops and medical care in the villages, and a minimal or non-existent public transport service complicates living conditions. The lack of intergenerational family support, due to the departure of younger generations, is a growing problem. Without such assistance, independent daily life, self-care and household maintenance become more difficult with age. This often means that moving into a professional care facility is the only option for many elderly residents.

By building a network and a brokerage service which connects people who seek help and those who offer help, a dignified and self-sufficient life can be made possible, even in old age. Furthermore, the provision of small services can also increase the attractiveness of rural life for young families and single parents, and even enable them to integrate into village life more successfully.

Objectives

The main objective of this project was to improve the quality of life and promote social inclusion in a rural area affected by depopulation. More specifically, it aimed to improve support for seniors; enabling them to live at home independently for as long as possible.

Activities

The project helped set up the GenoEifel eG, a local cooperative, which brings younger and older generations together, enabling them to help each other and to share their knowledge and skills. The original intention was to establish a retirement cooperative, however, even at the project design stage, the younger generation expressed a need for new solutions to the challenges of balancing work and family needs. Therefore, the senior citizens' cooperative became an intergenerational cooperative and Eifel citizens, young and old are joining forces to solve common problems. Surrogate grandparents offer childcare before and after kindergarten hours and young people babysit. Older people are offered transport and shopping services, help in the household, and even small tasks like changing light bulbs.

In 2014, the initiators of GenoEifel eG, Malte Duisberg from Stiftung Evangelisches Alten- und Pflegeheim Gemünd (Foundation Evangelical Retirement and Nursing Home Gemünd) and Wolfgang Merten from VR-Bank Nordeifel eG, set out to visit civil and senior citizens' cooperatives in southern Germany and bring their experience to the Eifel region.

Activities carried out during **Phase 1 (2016/2017)**, were:

- content and conceptual preparatory work for the foundation;
- establishing and registration of the cooperative;
- structuring of the internal and external organisation;
- recruitment of one full-time and one part-time office worker; and
- advertising for membership.

Activities during **Phase 2 (2017)**:

- a kick-off event was held at Gemünd;
- the cooperative's operations began in the municipalities of Schleiden, Blankenheim, Dahlem, Hellenthal, Kall, Nettersheim and Mechernich.

Activities during **Phase 3 (approximately 2019)**:

- extension of the cooperative to the entire Kreis (district) of Euskirchen.

Phase 4 (approximately 2021) activities:

- extension of the cooperative to cover the entire Eifel LEADER region.

In Phase 5 (approximately 2022) the cooperative is expected to achieve full economic autonomy.

Examples of the range of services offered by the cooperative include:

- minor technical/manual assistance and repairs (e.g. changing light bulbs, help with computers);
- help with shopping and errands;
- help in the household (e.g. hanging curtains);
- driving services, accompanying people to visit the doctors and authorities;
- social visits, readings and walks;
- information and advice;
- pet care;
- writing help (filling out forms, etc.);
- help with gardening;
- providing company;
- assistance in case of short term illnesses at home;
- preparing food;
- looking after homes during periods of absence.

Those who participate in the cooperative buy a one-off share for € 50 and pay an annual membership fee of € 40. Members then pay € 9 for each hour of help, of which the helpers receive € 6, and the rest is used for the running costs of the cooperative.

Thanks to LEADER funding, a full-time and a part-time position were created to oversee the network's administration. Help is requested from them centrally and they connect that request with those who can carry out the service and provide the help that is required.

GenoEifel eG has helped the elderly in particular to feel reconnected in the region and able to make new contacts. Helping someone and being needed is a great feeling, whether young or old.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the recipients and suppliers of help with a new situation. To adequately address this, 250 helper hours were offered free of charge during the first lockdown – even for non-members. This action was repeated during the somewhat less restricted second lockdown since the beginning of November 2020.

The LEADER funds are mainly used for paying the staff. However, they also cover the costs of information events, flyers, press activity and the website. Funding through LEADER is available until 2022.

Main results

Two jobs (one full-time, one part-time) have been created, which will continue to exist after the end of the funding period through LEADER.

The cooperative already has 400 members, and more than 1 000 are expected by 2022.

In 2020, a total of 1 200 hours of help were provided. This brings the number of hours of help given since the start of the project to around 3 000.

Coexistence in the region has been strengthened, with the inhabitants pulling together again and are creating a vibrant community.

Thanks to the network, the Eifel region can look to the future with greater strength. The activities of the cooperative have now been extended to the entire area of LAG Eifel.

Key lessons

The project is considered as a good practice example, particularly with regard to the development of its financially stable and sustainable structure. The cooperative will continue to operate even after the end of the LEADER funding, which was a precondition of the support when setting up the the GenoEifel eG cooperative. When the funding comes to an end, the cooperative will have sufficient members; to self-finance its operations through their contributions and the income generated from the hourly work.

Additional sources of information

n/a