

ESTONIA

Improve the quality of life in rural areas

Location
Hiiumaa

Programming period
2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority
Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure
Leader, M322

Funding (EUR)
Total RDP budget 6 238
EAFRD 4 990
National/Regional 1 248

Project duration
2016 – 2016

Project promoter
MTÜ Kärkla Kohvikutepäevad
(NGO)

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An Estonian NGO assisted in a 10th anniversary celebration of a home café event started in an island town. They organised café workshops and helped spread the concept.

Summary

Citizens of Kärkla town on Estonia's Hiiumaa island were nicknamed 'coffee pots' due to their copious coffee-drinking. An event was created in which homeowners hosted a café for one day. The concept's original developers assisted in a 10 year anniversary event including preparatory training workshops and publicity.

The Estonian NGO used EAFRD funding to organise lectures and workshops to improve the café skills of participants in the event. They also promoted the event through media and online as well as spreading the concept across Estonia



Results

10 000 visitors came to the event, which included 31 participating cafés, with 400 local people organising the cafes.

The event was extremely popular, helping to strengthen local identity and bring the community together. It has also provided a great marketing tool for the island.

The NGO gained an award for the Best Regional Project in Estonia in 2016, while 40 other similar events were held across the country.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ☐ The format of this event needs to be continually developed.
- ☐ It is important to find a different perspective each year to keep the idea fresh and keep the visitors coming.
- ☐ The quality of the event is more important than the number of participants.
- ☐ It is essential to work closely together with cafés to encourage and inspire them.





Context

Ten years ago an Estonian NGO was the first in the country to create the model of one-day cafés. The idea involves opening up homes and gardens to host cafés for just a day. The idea comes from the area's peculiar history - citizens of Kärkla on Hiiumaa island were nicknamed 'coffee pots' ('kohvilähkrid') from as early as the 19th century due to their extreme coffee-drinking habits. The initiative sought to create a special 10 year anniversary event over four days to enable the people and town of Kärkla to live up to this name and fame.

Objectives

As the cafés are for just one day and unprofessional, the initiative organised a series of workshops and lectures to improve participants' skills.

The NGO gradually decided to spread the idea over the whole island, setting up so-called pre- and after-café over a weekend to diversify the event. They introduced other areas to the concept such as more distant locations and smaller villages. They also aimed to keep visitors longer on the island.

Activities

Preparations for the four-day café festival included four workshops, with a focus on themes such as local history, good service, communication and cooking classes.

They communicated with local and national media to draw attention to Hiiumaa as a holiday destination with great quality of life, friendly locals and good food.

They created partnerships with different groups and organisations such as local municipalities, volunteers and sponsors.

They promoted the event through social media and advertisements.

They also wanted to share their 10-year-long experience with similar events in Estonia.

Main Results

10 000 visitors came to enjoy the event. There were 31 participating cafés, with 400 local people organising the cafés.

Café days gained immense popularity in Hiiumaa. They successfully created a top quality event, strengthening local identity and bringing the community together. It has also provided a great marketing tool for the whole island.

The NGO gained an award for the Best Regional Project in Estonia in 2016. There were around 40 events of one-day cafés in different places across Estonia in 2016.

Although many other places have followed suit, the NGO can proudly say the idea was founded in Hiiumaa and Kärkla, where it is deeply rooted in local history and culture, and that's what makes it truly original.

Key lessons

The format of the event needs to be constantly developed. Even with a longstanding traditional event it is important to find a slightly different perspective each year to keep it fresh and keep visitors coming. It was most important to maintain the quality of the event rather than to focus only on the numbers of participants. It was also essential to work closely together with cafés to encourage and inspire them.

Additional sources of information

www.facebook.com/kohvikutepaev