

LATVIA

Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location

Ulbroka, Stopiņi

Programming period

2007-2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Measure

413 - Quality of life/diversification

Funding

Total budget 7 650 EUR
RDP support 7 650 EUR

Project duration

Sep 2014 – Feb 2015

Project promoter

Association 'Socintegra'

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A Latvian association that promotes the social integration of the visually impaired received EAFRD support for their initiative to purchase 3D printing equipment to produce signs, maps and educational material for people with special needs.

Summary

The project enabled a Latvian association 'Socintegra', which offers services to visually impaired people, to purchase 3D printing equipment in order to improve its activities. This process resulted in the purchase of a portable computer, a tablet, the 3Ds Max software and a 3D printer.



The use of the new equipment enabled to create tactile 3D objects made from plastic. These objects were designed for use in the educational activities of the association and for services that are provided to other organisations that want to improve the accessibility of their facilities to visually impaired people. The 3D printer is used to produce tactile images of the village Ulbroka near Riga, in order to create a 3D map of buildings for inhabitants.

Results

Visually impaired people can go online using the purchased computer tablet and work with the association and other visually impaired people.

Given the increasing popularity of 3D printing, the service was made available for local people and is now allowing them to benefit from its everyday applications. 3D printing services are widely available, especially to the benefit of the local population of the village of Ulbroka, and other neighbouring villages who can make orders online.

Socintegra is able to make an assessment of the accessibility of an environment mainly thanks to tablet. Images of the area around the village are processed using Photoshop in order to give a picture of how the area could be improved and what adjustments could be made.

The purchased equipment is also helping to organise and implement a variety of life-long learning activities that engage people with special needs in the social integration projects of the association.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The offering of 3D printing services highlights the issue of public access for visually impaired people.
- ❑ Common areas can be created where people can work and spend their free time despite their eyesight quality or other special needs.
- ❑ Publicity resulting from initiatives such as the introduction of 3D printing can foster cooperation on activities aimed at the integration of visually impaired people. For example, in cooperation with Riga Technical University, Socintegra is developing audio-visual tourist maps that could be useful not only for visitors but also for local inhabitants.