

LATVIA

Implementing Local Development Strategies

Location

Lielvārde

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 4 – LEADER

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 6 844

RDP 6 160

Private 684

Project duration

2011 – 2013

Project promoter

Birch Sap Association

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Website

<http://sula.lv/pages/eng>

A local community used discarded fruit to producing fruit juice for local consumption.

Summary

A local Association observed that many people in the community with private orchards were unable to consume all the ripe autumn fruit from their trees. Sometimes they would throw away the excess apples and pears, yet buy store-bought fruit juice for their personal consumption.



The Association purchased a fruit shredder, modern juice pressing equipment, packing box equipment and a small fruit dryer in order to develop the service for the local community. The service mobile was made mobile, so a trailer was purchased to enable the equipment to be brought directly to the customer. Information and promotion activities were also organised including workshops, a website and video ads.

Results

As a result of the development of this project turning fruits into juice instead of discarding them provided a boost to the local economy and reduced food waste.

Around 400 local community members per season use this service and the number is increasing.

The consumption of local fruits (apples, pear and berries) increased including at the local school contributing to healthier diets for the students.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ This an example on how a small project can have a big impact. The project initiated cooperation activities in the local community as the excess of juice production is donated to the local school and also helped improve links in the school between health and education.
- ❑ The high interest and activity from consumers demonstrated that in order to engage local people there is sometimes a need to start from something small and easy to understand, but something that can bring real change to daily life.

Context

Linards Liberts from the Birch Sap Association, along with his neighbours, observed that many people in his local community with private orchards were unable to consume all the ripe autumn fruit from their trees. Sometimes they would throw away the excess apples and pears, yet buy store-bought fruit juice for their personal consumption.

The Birch Sap Association promoted the principle that the highest value is achieved through appropriate use of local resources, but that the local community members, due to lack of knowledge, motivation and the required equipment for juice processing had not used those resources effectively.

Objectives

The Birch Sap Association wanted to provide inhabitants of the Ikšķile community with a new service – the production of local fruit juice. One of the additional objectives was to provide the local community with the necessary information and knowledge to produce products locally and to support the development of local economy.

Activities

The Birch Sap Association designed the process adopting and following the principles of the Slow Food organisation, to process different kinds of juices from fruits, vegetables and plants from within the local area. The Association purchased a fruit shredder, modern juice pressing equipment for apple, pear, berry and other fruit, packing box equipment and a small fruit dryer in order to develop the service for the local community. There was also an aspiration to make the service mobile, so a trailer was purchased to enable the equipment to be brought directly to the customer.

Public workshops were arranged on the seasonality of juices (in spring – birch sap, autumn – other juices), and on the various and improved methods of production, processing, storage and consumption.

A website and video adverts were created to promote the service. The service was developed so that locals don't need to rent the equipment to use it. In the morning, on their commute to work, customers can bring their fruits

to the Birch Sap Association and in the evening, on their return journey, they can take home freshly produced juice in boxes or bottles.

Main Results

As a result of the development of this project the equipment and service are now available for the local and neighbouring communities.

Around 400 local community members per season have used this service and the number is increasing to the extent that the Birch Sap Association no longer needs to advertise the service. Initially the idea was to provide this service solely to the local community, but as information was placed on the website created for the service and word spread out with the local community, interest from other communities raised demand, and led to the equipment becoming fully utilised during the harvesting season.

The consumption of local fruits (apples, pear and berries) has increased. This includes the local school contributing to healthier diets for the students.

Key lessons

A small project can create a large effect – this was a good start for cooperation activities in the local community as in addition to creating cooperation through supply to the local school, there was also the potential to improve links in the school between health and education, achieved through juice donations.

The project was based on a real and demonstrated need from the local community. The high interest and activity from consumers was unexpected. This proved to the project participants that in order to engage local people there is sometimes a need to start from something small and easy to understand, but something that can bring real change to daily life.



Additional sources of information

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