

## LATVIA

# Fostering local development

### Location

Kaldabruņa

### Programming period

2014 – 2020

### Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

### Measure

M19 –LEADER/CLLD

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 29 954

EAFRD 18 332

National/Regional 8 627

Other 2 995

### Project duration

2016 – 2017

### Project promoter

Association “Ūdenszīmes”

### Contact

[ieva.jatniece@gmail.com](mailto:ieva.jatniece@gmail.com)

### Website

[www.udenzimes.lv/cms/](http://www.udenzimes.lv/cms/)

A cultural association in remote rural Latvia used LEADER support to foster co-creation in the local community, resulting in a museum exhibition that is unique in the Baltic States.

## Summary

The association ‘Ūdenszīmes’ operates in a small and remote village with a population of less than 200 people. The association had established the “Museum of the Meadow”, themed around the midsummer night experience with reference to ethnography, folk traditions and authentic artefacts. The museum attracts around 2 500 visitors annually and the association wanted to improve and diversify the exhibition in order to attract even more visitors.



LEADER support helped the association to create the multimedia exhibition "Midnight Meadow". The new installation consists of eight video projections with sound and text menus in four languages. The new exhibition opened to the public in the summer solstice of 20 June 2017.

## Results

A new exhibition was set up which is unique in the Baltic States;

The exhibition is available in English, Russian and Lithuanian. That gives the opportunity to tourists from neighbouring countries to visit the museum

It is expected that the number of visitors will increase by 30% in 2017 compared to about 2 500 visitors in 2016.

The increased number of visitors will generate additional income possibilities for the residents, businesses and farms of the village.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Given the administrative and financial constraints such an unconventional and ambitious project would not have been realised without support from LEADER.
- ❑ From the technical point of view the project is easily transferrable. However, it will be needed to find a unique point of attraction and content that can be filled with local context.
- ❑ The positive response of the people who were invited to join the project was unexpected. This highlights how rural people are eager to participate in genuine co-creation processes.
- ❑ The time required for such project should not be underestimated. The implementation of similar projects, would require a period of at least 6 months to collect the information for the content, and at least 4 months for assembling and renovating the premises.

### Context

The association “Ūdenszīmes” (Watermarks) is located in Kaldabruņa village with a population of less than 200 people. This village is in a remote rural area and the nearest towns or cities are more than 50 kilometers away.

The association among other activities has established the “Museum of the Meadow” which attracts around 2 500 visitors annually. The exhibition of the museum is build around the midsummer night theme with reference to ethnography, folk traditions and authentic artefacts.

“Ūdenszīmes” wanted to improve and diversify the exhibition in order to attract even more visitors and increase the benefits for the local community. Despite the fact that the Museum of Meadow is already an innovation in the region, so far there have not been used modern technologies and audio effects. Thus the association decided to launch the project “Midnight in the Meadow”.

### Objectives

The project aimed to:

- improve the installations of the Museum of Meadow with the use of multi-media.
- make Kaldabruņas an attractive place to visitors through the variety of culture events offered to visitors.
- elaborate publicity actions at national level in order to challenge the stereotype that there is limited offer of cultural activities in small villages.

### Activities

As part of the project the multimedia exhibition “Midnight Meadow” was set up. The new installation provides a completely different perspective on the folk traditions associated with meadow. It consists of eight video projections with sound and text menus in four languages. In general, these projections reflect in a condensed way some traditions and values of the Latvians associated with experiencing Midsummer.

The development of the exposition “Midnight Meadow” started with the redevelopment of the premises. The main purpose was to preserve the original wooden floor and walls that were constructed according to the traditional technique.

The creative team consisted of musicians, artists and

environmentalists who all collaborated to develop the projection content. Realising the project required a lot of volunteer work since the funding only covered only the setting up of the installation while the create of the content was voluntary contribution. Finally, the new exhibition opened to the public in the summer solstice of 20 June 2017.

### Main results

- A new exhibition was set up which is unique in the Baltic States;
- The exhibition is available in English, Russian and Lithuanian. That gives the opportunity to tourists from neighbouring countries to visit the museum. The museum is located 15 km away from the border with Lithuania.
- A 30% increase of visitors is expected in 2017 compared to about 2 500 visitors in 2016.
- The increased number of visitors is expected to generate additional income possibilities for the residents, businesses and farms of the village.

### Key lessons

- LEADER was crucial to allow the implementation of such an unconventional and very ambitious project despite existing administrative and financial constraints.
- From the technical point of view the project is easily transferrable. However, it will be needed to find a unique point of attraction and content that can be filled with local context.
- The positive response of the people who were invited to join the project was unexpected. Local people were asked to dub the text that is heard in the exhibition. This process took a very long time, as many wanted to hear their voices beforehand. Local people also actively participated in the selection of texts, discussions on content, writing and rewriting and it resulted a genuine process of co-creation.
- The described co-creation process was very lengthy. The implementation of similar projects, would require a period of at least 6 months to collect the information for the content and at least 4 months for assembling and renovating the premises.

#### Additional sources of information

[www.facebook.com/Udenszimes/](http://www.facebook.com/Udenszimes/)