

Biodiverse from field to baker

Developing educational resources for school pupils and a thematic cycling route in order to help bridge the gap between citizens and sustainable agriculture through experiential learning.

EAFRD-funded projects

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Summary

The project 'Biodiverse from field to baker' aimed to raise awareness among school children and citizens about arable farming and biodiversity through a varied w high-quality educational offer. The project developed an educational package for children and a thematic cycling route for the general public, in which experience and learning reinforce each other.

Project results

An experiential learning offer is available to school students, which their teachers can use in a variety of ways, according to their students' needs and interests. With its special combination of experiential learning activities, it is anticipated that the cycling route will have a positive influence on people's behaviour. **405 students** took part in the field activities and over **2 200 cyclists** have explored the route.

26 temporary jobs were created during the project's implementation. In addition, this cycling route hopes to drive visits and generate income at the host venues along the route.

Lessons & Recommendations

Raising awareness about biodiversity and short supply chains encourages a more conscious approach to climate issues. It is important that training and information are tailored to the needs of the consumer and increase support for short supply chains.

This experiential learning activity can be easily implemented in other European cities and municipalities and the field trip itineraries can be used to inform similar events.

Context

In recent decades there has been a radical change in the way children understand and experience nature. Nowadays, many children are aware of global environmental problems, however, they have limited physical contact with nature and consequently with agriculture and horticulture. In this context, it is important to enable them to rediscover nature and understand how agriculture and biodiversity are connected. In addition, it is important to show young people that they too can play a role in developing sustainable agriculture and maintaining biodiversity by choosing local products.



Objectives

This LEADER funded educational project aimed to reduce the gap between children and agriculture and develop a thematic cycling tour for the general public, in which participants can learn through experience.

Activities

The LEADER project 'Biodiverse from Akker tot Bakker' was developed through collaboration between the Central National Guilds of the Boerenbond, the Regional Landscape of Haspengouw en Voeren and the city of Sint-Truiden.

The main project activities were:

- the development of a teaching pack on arable farming and biodiversity resources in support of selfdirected experiential learning for 3rd year students
- a thematic cycling route for the general public.

Everything is based around six themes which are the Hesbaye landscape features; arable farming; biodiversity; agriculture and nature; the process from grain to bread; how young people can contribute to sustainable agriculture; and the importance of local products.

The teaching pack provides content for classroom teaching and discussion and an itinerary of recommended activities for an excursion day. A digibook 'Biodiverse from field to baker' was developed dealing with the themes of biodiversity in the field, on the roadside, in the soil and in the orchard with a focus on the skylark. It also covers the cultivation of grain and the management agreements between farmers and the government that are intended to help restore biodiversity.

To guide people around the cycle route, a booklet was prepared and six information wayfinding markers placed along the route. Each marker post holds a QR code which links to a short film exploring one of the six key themes, such as grain cultivation and biodiversity during the seasons, or giving a behind-the-scenes tour of a bakery, etc.

Additional experience elements have been placed at the Kerkom Brewery. Cyclists can stop there for a drink or snack and play a specially created game that helps them learn about the survival needs of farmland birds. The brewery's menu shares recipes and tips for using up stale bread.

Several farmers were involved in the above activities, as well as the kick-off event of the thematic cycling route, which took place on Saturday 19 June 2021.

Main results

The teacher's pack is used according to the needs and interests of the students concerned. With its special combination of experiential learning activities, it is envisaged that the cycling route will have a positive influence on people's behaviour. 405 students took part in the field activities and at the time of writing 2 252 cyclists have explored the route.

The offer and its accompanying resources will be included in the documentation centre of the Provincial Nature Centre.

26 temporary jobs were created during the project's implementation. In addition, it is anticipated that the cycling route will drive visits and generate income at the host venues along the route and for the bicycle rental companies and local shops and producers that are highlighted in the cycling route booklet.

Key lessons

Raising awareness about biodiversity and short supply chains encourages a more conscious approach to climate issues. It is important that training and information are tailored to the needs of the consumer and increase support for short supply chains. This experiential learning activity can be easily implemented in other European cities and municipalities. The field trip itineraries can be used to inform other municipalities to organise similar events.

"Respect for nature is important. I am proud to contribute. And as a reward the skylarks sing above my head." - Jos Piffet, farmer

Additional information:

www.rlhv.be/van-akker-tot-bakker



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