

Quirnbach inTakt

A LEADER project has provided support for the social fabric, community cohesion and the elderly in rural Germany.

EAFRD-funded projects

Country: Germany

Location: Quirnbach

Programming period: 2014-2020

RDP Priority: P6. Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19. LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	143 000 (EUR)
	EAFRD	65 600 (EUR)
	National/regional	41 700 (EUR)
	Private/own	35 700 (EUR)

Timeframe: 01.04.2019 - 31.03.2021

Project promoter: Ortsgemeinde Quirnbach

Email: juskoerbel@t-online.de

Summary

The Quirnbach inTakt LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) project helps the ageing population of Quirnbach to stay in their village for as long as possible. Two project office employees identify needs for support and initiate assistance - drawing on a network of volunteer residents, trained carers and regional healthcare initiatives and services. Elderly villagers are able to receive help with their daily challenges such as shopping, preparing food, housekeeping, medical appointments and administrative tasks, as well as simply providing company. The project also helped to establish a weekly market and a programme of social events in this remote village that does not even have a local store.

Project results

- Reinforced resilience of the rural social fabric and community cohesion.
- Elderly and care-dependent residents can now access support, free-of-charge, if they need help in their everyday life.
- A weekly programme of joint activities promotes fitness, memory training, play and socialising.
- The weekly market enables locals to shop for essentials, meet their friends and chat with stallholders.
- Two neighbouring villages are now hosting weekly markets based on the Quirnbach model.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Such a project relies upon a consistently well-organised framework and resource network managed by the permanent team of full-time coordinators. Any replication of the project elsewhere would also require post-project permanent funding in order to deliver lasting impact.

Context

The demographic decline of rural areas in Germany is associated with loneliness, empty properties and a lack of social care facilities. Most people want to grow old in their familiar surroundings but the organisation and financing of home care poses real problems for many of those affected and for their relatives. Local authorities are called upon to develop practical solutions that respond to these challenges.

This is the case in the municipality of Quirnbach, where almost a quarter of the approximately 500 inhabitants are over 65 years old. The limited infrastructure, along with the reduced mobility of many senior citizens, makes life in the village more difficult. There are not enough outpatient care services and facilities in the region, nor are there sufficient counselling centres to help initiate, organise and finance support services directly on site.



The initiative for the Quirnbach inTakt LEADER project came from the local mayor, who, since 2014, has been trying to address the issue of how to provide permanent support for the older citizens of Quirnbach.

Objectives

Against the background of progressive demographic decline and failing infrastructure, like-minded citizens came together to seek a collective solution to the provision of care for the elderly in the village in order to delay the need for them to move into care homes and to support them with everyday life.

Activities

The Quirnbach inTakt LEADER project was financed by the LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) Westrich-Glantal and it consists of two core components: Support in Everyday Life and Market Day.

Support in Everyday Life - The employees involved in the project (approx. 30 people) support elderly or care-dependent people (approx. 60 people) in the patient's own homes. They also provide them with company and accompany them to medical or administrative appointments, events and outings. These 'helpers' are women and men from the region who have experience in nursing and caregiving or who have completed the appropriate training. Some came to Quirnbach as refugees in 2015 and are now well integrated into community life.

The coordination team is essential for the success of the project. A project office has been established in the town hall, where two employees can be reached every day. They identify the need for support and initiate help. Since the coordination of such a service was not possible on a voluntary basis, the LEADER funding came into play here and the Westrich-Glantal LAG supported the project.

Market Day - After the last shop closed in 2017, it was clear that some form of replacement was needed, not just to provide a local point of sale for food and supplies, but also to facilitate the day-to-day socialising of village life. The Quirnbach inTakt project responded to this need by organising a market day. Taking place every Thursday, regional suppliers sell baked goods, meat and deli foods, fruit and vegetables, eggs and pasta, as well as other household products on the Market Day. Around 150 people shop there regularly - including many who had previously withdrawn from socialising.

The Market Day is a weekly highlight for the whole village. The village's community volunteers run a coffee and cake morning in one of the nearby municipal buildings and these are enriched by short lectures (on topics such as long-term care insurance, healthy nutrition, exercise, patient disposition, etc.), performances (a children's choir, a local dialect poet, a barrel organ player, etc.) and participatory activities such as physical exercise, singing, quiz games, etc.

Main results

- Resilience of the rural social fabric and community cohesion has been a key result of the project.
- In Quirnbach, elderly and care-dependent people now have access to a network of support if they need help in their everyday life. This is provided, free from bureaucratic processes, via a combination of volunteer or part-time-employed care work.
- Once a week, group care is offered with joint activities that promote fitness, memory training, play and socialising.
- Every Thursday, the Market Day enables locals to shop for essentials, meet their friends and chat with stallholders.
- There are already imitators of the project, with two neighbouring villages now hosting a weekly market based on the Quirnbach model.

Key lessons

- The project could only be implemented through a combination of dedicated local volunteers working in support of a team of paid helpers under the guidance of a well-resourced coordination team. This is where the threads converge and where all those seeking care, employment and/or volunteering opportunities can rely upon a consistently well-organised framework. The coordination team also established contacts with outpatient and inpatient care facilities, care funds, local authorities, doctors and self-help groups together with the municipality, thus establishing an effective network of resources and support.



- > The challenges of demographic decline are likely to be comparable across most of Europe. In principle, the Quirnbach inTakt approach is transferable to other LEADER regions – but it does require full-time employees with appropriate expertise who can handle the coordination and who can also be financed beyond the project period. In Germany, this model pays for itself because there is State money from the statutory long-term care insurance for the support of older people. However, only an institution recognised by the State is eligible to receive this money and the municipality of Quirnbach was able to receive that recognition on the basis of their well-presented concept and the corresponding expertise of the project coordinators (both are qualified nurses with additional knowledge in the field of quality management, nursing advice and dementia).

«This [the Market Day] is not a pensioner's afternoon - the whole village turns out as well as people come from the surrounding villages.»

Mayor of Quirnbach

Additional information:

www.quirnbach-pfalz.de/quirnbach-intakt/allgemein

<https://westrich-glantal.de/>



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