EU CAP NETWORK

QR4ALL LEADER project promotes rural tourism in Romania

New local tour guide networks and video visitor services result from LAG cooperation in rural Romania.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Northeastern Romania, Romania
Programming period: 2014-2020
Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development
Focus Area: Local development
Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD
Funding:

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EAFRD	924 072 (EUR)	
National/Regional	110 491 (EUR)	

Timeframe: 29/04/2021 – 29/08/2023
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Summary

The QR4ALL was a LEADER cooperation project implemented by nine Local Action Groups (LAGs) in northeastern Romania. The aim of the project was to increase the visibility of the partner LAG areas through new technologies, contributing to the tourism potential and identity of each area. The project produced a digital multimedia guide that is brought to life by local people as storytellers who introduce their village to tourists by sharing local tales, traditions and travellers' tips. All this was made possible through the development of an application that could be accessed via mobile phones, tablets and media channels.

Project results

> The application and guide provided a shared registry of tourism resources for the nine LAG areas, incorporating natural landscapes, historical and cultural monuments, recreation areas, mansions etc.

> 40 cycling routes are promoted in the covered area.

> People from local communities had the opportunity to meet, collaborate and (re)discover the potential of their own area.

Key lessons and recommendations

> Raising awareness and involving local people plays an important role in community empowerment. This project enabled local people to cooperate on a creative initiative and add real value to their local tourism offer.

> Successful community participation actions help build community confidence for more ambitious local development opportunities.

Context

The rural areas covered by the LAGs who initiated this project are all located in northeastern Romania. They are areas that are generally characterised by poverty and isolation. However, traditional ways of life, skills and customs have remained unaltered, meaning that many of the areas can be considered tourist attractions. As the inhabitants of big cities seek authentic experiences closer to home, rural areas rich in cultural heritage begin to attract increasing numbers of domestic tourists. The QR4ALL project created the opportunity for city dwellers to find interesting things close to home.

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QR4ALL is a LEADER cooperation project implemented by nine partner LAGs and other local stakeholders. The project was a continuation of a previous inter-territorial cooperation project from the 2007-2013 programming period with four LAGs (all which participate in QR4ALL).

Nowadays, short videos of people who tell their stories and invite viewers into their homes have proven to be the most successful method of promoting local values. So, the promotion of the tourist destinations identified within QR4ALL is done through the voice of the inhabitants of these places.

Objectives

The general objective of QR4ALL was to stimulate tourism in rural areas by identifying and capitalising on shared objectives across the territories of partner LAGs.

Activities

Project activities included:

> Identifying touristic attractions/sites and methods of promoting them. This involved organising training and workshops on marketing, film, photography, and tourism planning.

> Involving local communities in developing new tourist products. Local people can be best placed to promote their territory. The project helped them become aware of the tourist potential of their villages.

> Organising a photo and video contest to promote the area.

> Creating an online application that provides an inventory of tourist attractions, indicating 'site viewpoints' and 'selfie points'. QR codes facilitate access to digital content for different tourist attractions. Thus, scanning a QR code located in front of a tourist site or on a promotional brochure opens the presentation of the site and/or a film in the application, an interview or a person telling a local story, a clip of drone footage or a 360-degree visual tour.

> Identifying and preparing thematic routes for recreational tourism. The tourist routes are available in the software application and promoted in the tourist guide. The tourist routes can be followed by riding a horse, motorbike, ATV, a cart or by hiking.

> Creating promotional films for each territory by inviting local artists to perform on a mobile stage and with an outdoor inflatable projection screen.

> Creating promotional material. This consisted of bookmarks with the project's QR code. This was the only printed material and it invited people to download the digital tourist guide, which contains updated information.

Main results

> The digital tourist guide and the application attract those who are interested in coming to the territory to experience nature and culture, and taste traditional dishes.

> 40 cycling routes are promoted in the area covered by the nine LAGs.

> The application guides tourists to follow a proposed route on bicycles, ATVs, horseback or on foot. When visitors reach the tourist attractions by these routes, they can listen to stories, take pictures or videos and share them online.

> 46 ATVs for off-road travel and 230 mountain bikes, including electric ones, are available for tourists to follow the routes.

> Nine films presenting local traditions and tourist attraction sites were produced. These can also be watched on the large inflatable screen and the outdoor projection screen that was acquired as part of the project.

> One mobile stage is available for local artists to perform.

> Due to the project's success, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) authority contacted the project team regarding the further development of cycling routes based on the data already gathered.

> Following the project, requests have been received regarding the setting up of Local Gastronomic Points (LGP), which would help the LAGs improve their local development strategies and better respond to local needs.

> The knowledge gained from the project implementation, including lessons learnt, has been transferred to other LAGs, such as Ținutul Viei și Vinului Vrancea LAG (in the south-east, Țara Zarandului Intercommunity Association LEADER LAG (the Hunedoara region), Valea Someșului LAG (a northwestern region). All of which are, or will be, adapting the project to their own specificities.

Key lessons and recommendations

> Raising awareness and involving local people plays an important role in community empowerment and cohesion. This project enabled local people to cooperate on a creative initiative and add real value to their local tourism offer. This is an important way in which this sort of project can have a lasting impact on local economies, helping them to develop and promote businesses, encouraging diversification of activities and bringing people together around the shared goal of local development.

> Successful community participation actions help build community confidence for more ambitious community developments.

"The main objective of the project is to increase the visibility of the areas covered by LAGs through the use of new technologies, thus positively contributing to the touristic image and identity of each area and increasing the number of potential tourists".

Lulian-Emil Băsu, Executive Manager, Colinele Iașilor LAG

Additional information:

Project website:
https://ghidturistic-ne.ro/

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/LEADERQR4ALL

YouTube video 1

YouTube video 2