

Promoting environmental education and sustainable practices at the Daibe Sustainability Centre

LEADER funds promote the circular economy and raise awareness about waste management in Latvia.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Daibe, Stalbe parish, Latvia

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD

Funding: Total budget 7 718 (EUR)

EAFRD 4 723 (EUR)

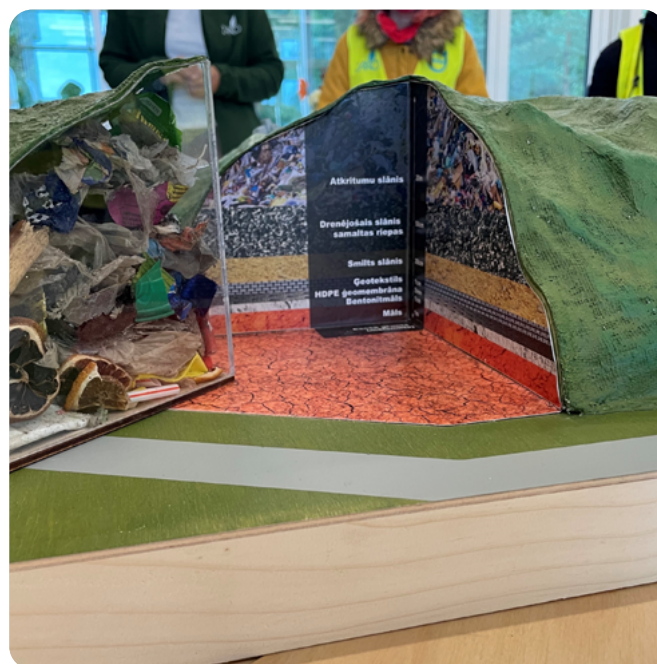
National/Regional 2 223 (EUR)

Private/own 772 (EUR)

Timeframe: 05/21 - 12/21

Project promoter: Daibe sustainability centre

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Summary

The Daibe Sustainability Centre in northeast Latvia launched a project to enhance environmental education and promote sustainable practices. By creating interactive tools such as a mobile mock-up of a landfill, equipping a landfill excursion bus and setting up a mobile fireplace, the centre aimed to educate various target groups about waste management and resource efficiency. This LEADER project sought to foster a deeper understanding of environmental issues and encourage sustainable behaviours among the public.

Project results

- The project introduced new services for on-site and mobile educational activities, enhancing the centre's ability to reach and engage various audiences.
- The enhanced infrastructure enabled the centre to conduct various activities that inform the public about environmental issues and encourage behavioural change.

Key lessons and recommendations

- One key to this project's success is the multifunctional capacity of each of the activities and tools it developed. This enables the Daibe Sustainability Centre to target different audience groups and sustain its work in the long term.
- Educational activities, especially those that are interactive, have successfully changed mindsets. The involvement of passionate educators and strategic partnerships, such as with a leading waste management company, has been critical to the project's success.

Context

The Daibe Sustainability Centre is an NGO established in July 2016 in northeast Latvia. It operates as a hub for environmental education and sustainability initiatives. The centre's mission is to enhance public awareness of environmental conservation by offering quality educational services adapted to the needs of different target groups. Its actions promote sustainable environmental management in the Vidzeme region.



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The centre organises campaigns and educational events targeting different audience groups, ranging from preschool children to adults and seniors. The centre has several educational and interactive environmental games, posters, billboards, a canopy and an outdoor classroom with a specially designed nature trail. The lessons take place both in person in the 'URDA' Nature and Technology Park, where the centre is based, and outside it. The centre collaborates closely with 'ZAAO', a leading waste management company in Vidzeme, whose leaders have always understood the importance of behavioural change in promoting better environmental practices.

The centre's team includes two board members who generate ideas and approximately ten educators, along with volunteers and external experts. Annually, the centre attracts nearly 6 000 school pupils and over 1 300 adults, in addition to reaching thousands more through campaigns in schools and city festivals.

The project addressed the growing need for environmental education and aimed to inspire a long-term commitment to sustainable living practices.

Objectives

A key goal was to encourage changes in daily habits that contribute to sustainable development and environmental preservation. The project aimed to raise awareness about the efficient use of resources, contributing to a long-term understanding of environmental issues and a change in daily behaviour.

Using easy-to-understand visual aids and interactive equipment, the Daibe Sustainability Centre sought to educate various target groups - including children, young people and adults - about environmental issues through a programme of activities including classes, events, excursions and training.

Activities

Innovative activities funded by LEADER included:

- Creating a mobile mock-up of a landfill. This interactive model was developed to explain waste landfills' necessity, operational principles and environmental impact. The mock-up serves as a hands-on educational tool, engaging audiences through gameplay.
- Equipping the landfill excursion bus. To enhance the educational experience, the bus was fitted with a screen and high-quality audiovisual equipment. This allows visitors to better understand the waste 'path' - starting from the point where it is thrown into the container - and addresses the growing threat of pollution if society does not change its habits.
- Establishing a mobile fireplace. This feature allows visitors to boil tea or soup during outdoor picnics. It serves as a practical tool to teach visitors how to organise waste-free picnics, applying theoretical knowledge from landfill tours to real-life scenarios.

A combination of other LEADER projects, those funded via the Latvian Environmental Protection Fund, and co-financing from the municipality and the waste management company have enriched the educational offer and facilitated its delivery. This includes 3D glasses and augmented reality material and the creation of an access pathway for people with disabilities, baby strollers, etc.

Main results

- The project introduced new services for on-site and mobile educational activities, enhancing the centre's ability to reach and engage various audiences. Key additions included the purchase of a mobile landfill mock-up, an upgraded excursion bus and a mobile fireplace.
- Additional equipment allows more targeted work with a range of stakeholders, such as municipal building managers, farmers, producers, teachers, public relations experts and different types of businesses.
- The newly acquired equipment is expected to be used for at least five years, with plans to continually develop new educational content.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Key to the success of this project is the multifunctional capacity of each of the activities and tools it developed. This enables the Daibe Sustainability Centre to target different audience groups and sustain their work in the long term, all of which reflect the centre's philosophy of maximising the longevity and impact of its resources. For example, the fireplace and sound devices purchased in the LEADER project are used in almost every site visit the centre welcomes and in the travelling education activities to schools, companies, city festivals, etc.
- The centre's unique location, spanning 120 hectares of natural landscape with a 20-hectare fenced area for educational activities, adds to its appeal and effectiveness.
- Strategic partnerships (such as the collaboration with the waste firm ZAAO) have been critical to the project's success. In the future, the centre plans to train more educators so that more people can benefit from environmental learning services and activities.
- This project inspired a new proposal for LEADER support to create more learning opportunities for socially isolated groups, including residents of social homes.

Quote

“LEADER projects implemented by the association Daibe Sustainability Centre provide educational activities that cater to different target groups - children, young people and adults. These initiatives have significantly expanded the understanding of environmental issues among entrepreneurs, residents, and our LAG members, motivating society to actively participate in promoting positive changes in their daily lives, which is even of higher importance as part of LAG lies in the area of Gauja National Park. The project focus on the circular economy, such as waste management and the use of renewable resources, contributes to the regional goal of establishing a bioregion, setting an example for other territories.

Zanda Krūmiņa from LAG Rural Partnership Brasla

Additional information:

Website:

www.urda.lv/en

YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@dabasuntehnologijuparksurd7461/videos

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/urda_dtp/

Facebook:

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