

Rural arts development project 'Mullistaja'

LEADER funds a Finnish arts partnership to create new rural development opportunities.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Seinäjoki, Finland

Programming period: 2014–2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

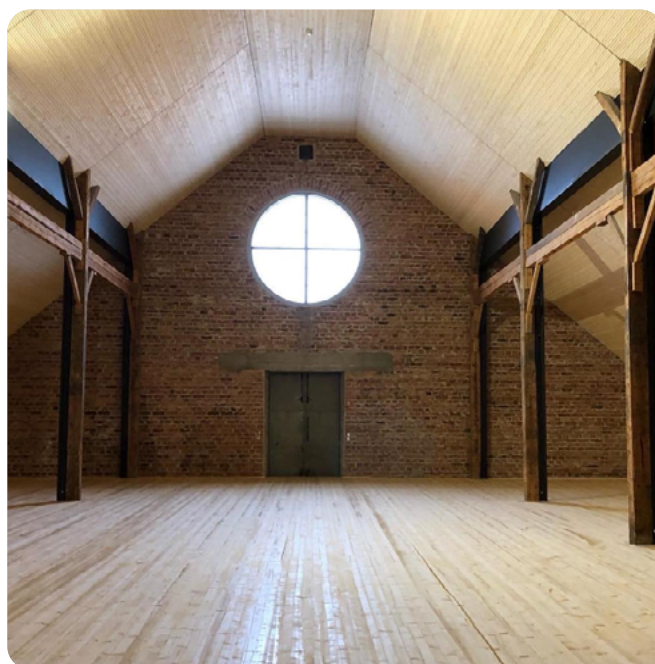
Measures: M19 – LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	123 737 (EUR)
	EAFRD	88 953 (EUR)
	National/Regional	22 238 (EUR)
	Private/own	12 546 (EUR)

Timeframe: 02/06/2017 – 30/04/2019

Project promoter: Seinäjoki Art Hall

Email: pii.anttila@seinajoki.fi



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Summary

This project improved work opportunities in rural areas by linking art with different fields of business. The CAP funding helped to raise awareness among businesses, farms and researchers about using more art, as well as what rural cooperation or networking models could work together better. Actions included innovative networking such as 'Eat Art for Breakfast' initiatives aimed at reducing waste food and facilitating contacts between food chain developers. Another project event was an 'Art Feeds the Future' seminar designed to help food researchers and artists cooperate in Seinäjoki. It has given professional artists interesting contexts to work with to develop rural areas and gain more work themselves. Organic farming objectives and insect protein production helped inform and inspire the project's creativity, which tested different outdoor art project actions, including work designed to test long-term regional effects. A social facility and horse farm were project locations.

Project results

- An 'Art Feeds the Future' local campaign and seminar involved collaboration with academic and industry food researchers.

- A similar 'Eat Art for Breakfast' concept promoted food waste loss (FLW) goals among food chain developers.
- Greater understanding of the requirements for an international art residence programme in a local community building.
- An International Artists Networking Day showcased local and international professional artists' work and services.
- Creating environmental artworks.
- A social sculpture and public lectures e.g. about bio art and the Nordic landscape.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Innovative community partnerships were forged and reinforced, providing new capacity and building confidence for synergies between multi-disciplined stakeholders.
- The project approach can be transferred to other areas to help create better networks and job opportunities for rural artists.
- This can be achieved by territorial approaches to community art models that benefit an entire area's cultural life.





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Context

Seinäjoki is the centre of South Ostrobothnia and one of the fastest growing urban areas in Finland. It also has about 10 000 rural residents and the city is surrounded by small rural districts such as Ilmajoki and Kurikka.

Seinäjoki is widely known for its versatile music and theatre events, but it has only two art galleries. Improving the potential of visual arts was an intervention logic that drove the development of a LEADER-funded rural arts development project called Mullistaja.

Objectives

Guiding questions driving the LEADER innovation in this project were:

- What kind of working studios and communities attract artists to the Seinäjoki region and make it a rewarding environment?
- How to strengthen positive perceptions about artist employment opportunities in rural areas?
- How can artists enrich local communities?
- What kind of art residency programme could add value to the internationalisation of the local art community?
- What kind of other working methods will encourage supply and demand for art reflecting rural life?
- How could co-working opportunities be better fostered between artists, rural communities and businesses?

Activities

Artist-developers, guided by experts from different fields, created and tested new working methods. The focus was on the rural environment and its infrastructure. Work method experiments examined new ways artists can create profit in rural areas.

Collaborative workshops facilitated discussion of the social and structural effects of agricultural activities and artistic work. Rural locations were seen from innovative, frontier-defying perspectives. The workshop content was selected from various themes, such as forestry, bioeconomics, architecture, country landscapes, local culture, etc.

The project tested different outdoor art projects, including actions designed to test long-term regional effects. A social facility and horse farm were project locations. Fact-finding visits to an organic milk farm, insect farm and kick bike factory showed different commercial opportunities for arts partnerships.

Main results

This development project tested innovative rural arts approaches by creating a lively regional and international network for rural artists. Key results included:

- Forging and reinforcing innovative rural community development partnerships that provided new capacity and built confidence for potential synergies between multi-disciplined stakeholders.
- An 'Art Feeds the Future' local campaign and seminar launched in collaboration with academic and industry food researchers.
- A similar 'Eat Art for Breakfast' concept promoted FLW goals among food chain developers.
- Understanding the requirements for an international art residence program in a local community building.
- An International Artists Networking Day showcasing local and international professional artists' work and services.
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Additional information:

Project website:

www.mullistaja.wordpress.com

Seinäjoki arts hall website:

www.seinajoki.fi/kulttuurijaliikunta/kulttuuripalvelut/seinajoentaidehalli.html

