



Methodological Resource

REBRANDING SELONIA



Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds

partnerība

KĀMINI



Ieva Jātniece,

the leader of the society "Watermarks":

"The story of the brand of Selonia is a story about the value – the symbol, the tradition, the human. It is about the value that gives the necessary extension to living in periods when numerical indicators demonstrate reduction. During these five years, by carefully and passionately polishing the hidden riches of Selonia, we have built a bridge to the Smart region – harmonious, diverse, inhabited by future intentions."



Daina Alužāne,

the chairperson of the board of the association "Community Cooperation Network "The Islands of Selonia", during the 10th Congress of Selonia in Viesīte:

"Selonia is a blanket that is woven in a fine, evenly spaced pattern, it does not have a single central pattern around which lower, complementary pattern elements dance. Similarly, community network "The Islands of Selonia" is built like a fishing net, not a spider web. Every nod in it is equally important to us. Thinking about big things, Selonia must not forget its living blood – the people who are living here now, who are maintaining the land now. Exactly this is the identity of Selonia that must be cultivated and highlighted among other historical regions.

The meaning of the countryside communities in creating identity of Selonia is simple and easy to say – countryside communities is this identity of Selonia."



Anita Sejicka,

executive director of the association "Rural Forum of Latvia", national expert of "Rural Pact", a member of the team which started the work in finding the first 17 "islands" of Selonia.

"During this period, we have strengthened a habit not only to use the limited resources available to us and to mobilize ourselves to achieve common goals but also to realize ourselves as a part of something special and valuable, therefore being able to invest our time to continue improving our own environment and daily life. Even without national and regional support for development of infrastructure, services, and growth, Selonians have been able to stimulate development of Selonia at incredible speed. Previously forgotten border communities, working together, have revitalized the entire region, serving as a unique example of the power of citizen participation not only in Latvia, but also on a European scale", says Anita in 2024.

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INTRODUCTION

The methodological resource “The Brand of Selonia Land / Rebranding Selonia” includes a unique experience which has been implemented in an underdeveloped and underpopulated rural region of Latvia – the historical land of Selonia.

This resource includes methods, materials, principles, and examples of good practice. Set of actions has been carried out during five years by civil society completely changing the image of the region in the context of Latvia and, mainly, in view of its inhabitants.

This example is unique not only in the context of Latvia but also of Europe. This is the first case when an image of a wider region and social life taking place in it has been transformed so significantly by initiative and resources of civil society.

At the same time this experience also changes the view on searches of identity of a separate settlement and branding overall, demonstrating it as a long lasting, profound, and very personal process where the process drivers work inside the region together with identity carriers – people living in the specific place.

It shows how a precise, deep local identity transforms in development processes, generates new values, and resources, and creates innovations, because it is impossible to live otherwise. A sense of identity creates cooperative energy, joy, and pride for one’s land because it is impossible to live without it.

This material, with its set of original methods and principles, will be a help and a source of inspiration for developers of rural areas of all levels. At a time when the buzzwords in this field are “smart shrinkage” and “depopulation”, with visions of development focused on the concept of “revitalization”, perhaps the real answers are to be found in the brand story of Selonia. If it can be done here, it can be done anywhere.

The appendix of the methodology contains an offer for an experience exchange and training course in the historical land of Selonia, which provides opportunities to experience a rural area reborn, to meet amazingly strong people and to learn in practice the methods successfully applied here.

“Selonia today is like a well-restored door of an old building. The creators of its identity have been careful to remove dust and peeling paint, layer by layer, revealing the value of authenticity. Truthfulness, not a hasty replacement. It has appealed to people, and the regional cooperation network with more than 40 communities is important not only on a national, but also on an international scale,” in April 2024 says Ženija Krūzmētra (Dr. geogr., assoc. prof., Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Social Development, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU)).

In 2018, Asnate Ziemele, the chairman of the board of the rural tourism association “Countryside Traveler”, answering a question about tourism opportunities in Selonia, laughed out loud: “What tourism, what tourism! I don’t know, maybe you can attract someone from the nearest towns, I doubt Riga. I will not even talk about abroad. Nothing is known and understood here. Something has been heard about the Dviete floodplain, but where is it? It seems that in Bebrene. And where is Bebrene? It’s funny.”

However, as of 2021, *atbūda* – the fifth season of Selonia (a wide flood in the Dviete floodplain) – causes an influx of tourists, which forces the local community to limit visiting hours, create additional services, provide parking lots and more intensive waste management. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia in spring.

In 2020, in response to a request to mention three words that describe Aknīste – the small town of Selonia – a young businessman writes: “Where. Is. It.”

In 2024, a journalist of the prestigious magazine “IR” in Latvia writes in an invitation to an interview: “I would like to include your story in the article describing experiences of cooperation in local society and community building. Selonia is an important topic right now, so it will be valuable to write and read about how things are done in your region.”

Branding and communication expert Lolita Ozoliņa, reasoning about the changes in Selonia in recent years, says: "Selonia and the Selonians have grown in pride, visibility and have emerged into exploring their cultural heritage. The local communities of Selonia make other historical regions of Latvia to roll up their sleeves as well, in awareness of their identity - this is a difference and an advantage that has changed. I have the feeling that the Selonians have stepped into an accelerated movie and - watch and do not stop wondering how they manage to get everything ready. Smart, united, and powerful!".

TERRITORY – BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND STATISTICS

GEOGRAPHY

Selonia is a cultural-historical region of the south-eastern part of Latvia, bordering Lithuania in the south and Belarus in the east. The whole of Selonia is characterized by a sparse population, there are no large cities in the region, but the small towns - Aknīste, Subate, Viesīte, Ilūkste and Jaunjelgava - are more villages than cities in the understanding of European residents.

The Daugava, the longest and water-richest river in Latvia, which originates from the Valdai Highlands in Russia and flows into Latvia through Belarus in the Krāslava district, separates Selonia from Latgale and Vidzeme, forming a natural border. In the territory of Selonia, you can cross the Daugava only by five bridges (in Daugavpils, near Svente, in Krāslava, Jēkabpils and Aizkraukle (Pļaviņas HPP)), but in summer it is also possible to use a quite exotic vehicle - a small river ferry from Līvāni in Latgale to Vandāni (in Dignāja).



Fig.1: Selonia on the map of Latvia

After the last regional reform in Latvia in 2021, Selonia includes the parishes of four Latvian municipalities (Krāslava, Augšdaugava, Jēkabpils and Aizkraukle counties), which are located on the left bank of the Daugava. The region is geographically “extended”, it has poor road infrastructure, few asphalted roads, so traffic is quite difficult during the cold, rainy months of the year, it also happens that public transport traffic is closed for several weeks and not once a year.

The rebranding process of Selonia started in 2017, before the last regional reform, and was aimed at residents of rural areas, realizing that the same methods cannot be applied to regional development centers and small rural villages, small towns with a population of 500 inhabitants or even a group of a few messuages.

WHY ISLANDS?

In some ways, the landscape and relief of Selonia shape the population pattern of the region. After the retreat of the last ice age glacier, the land collapsed into small hills, where high marshes, small lakes, and small rivers remained in the lowest places. Fertile and easily cultivated lands are not widespread. Such a natural relief has not contributed to the formation of large agricultural areas and has protected Selonia from the landscape of agricultural industrialization, which is characteristic of Zemgale here in Latvia, the large “agricultural factories” of Poland or Denmark with a continuous area of 1000-2000 ha.

Therefore, groups of messuages, which are not even real villages, have historically formed in Selonia, and they have been given the name of islands here. The island of people in the middle of nature – it is the typical, almost sacred landscape of Selonia.

Selonia is rich in protected natural areas. There are two protected landscape areas - Augšzeme and Augšdaugava - as well as seven nature parks - Daugava valleys, Daugava circles, Dviete floodplains, Medumi, Sauka, Silene and Svente lake areas. Out of 261 nature reserves in Latvia, 39 nature reserves are in Selonia.



Fig.2. Landscape of Selonia

INHABITANTS

The population density and the total number in Selonia is the lowest in Latvia, because, as already mentioned above, there are no cities here. The total number of inhabitants in the small towns and parishes of Selonia according to the official statistical data available in 2023 is 33,813 people.

As elsewhere in Europe, the ageing population is also topical in Selonia, the average age of the population is 45 years. There is currently no higher education institution in Selonia, and this lack is also reflected in the number of residents with higher education. On average, only 16.6% of the inhabitants of the rural areas of the Selonia region have higher education. Eastern part parishes still have a large proportion of non-citizens, mainly Russians and Belarussians, who do not use the Latvian language daily and have poorly integrated into Latvian society.



Fig.3. Small towns and villages of Selonia

The inhabitants of Selonia belong to different nationalities and faiths. Latvians make up most of the population in the west and center of Selonia, but to the east from Ilūkste there is a distinctly multi-ethnic population. A large community of Russian Old Believers has lived here since the 17th century. Several parishes have a large percentage of Polish residents. Lithuanians also live along the Latvian-Lithuanian border.

THE HISTORICAL LAND

In 2021, the Saeima adopted the “Law on Latvian Historical Lands”, which for the first time in the history of Latvia defined the specific physical boundaries of the historical land of Selonia, delineating the cultural space of Selonia in a tangible and understandable framework for everyone.

“Every community belonging to Latvian historical land and every cultural space has not only the right, but also the duty to nurture and develop its cultural-historical environment and common identity to preserve it and pass it on to future generations. The state and municipalities must promote favorable socio-economic conditions for the existence and growth of local communities because local communities maintain the identity and cultural-historical environment of historical lands and cultural spaces of Latvia daily. The historical lands of Latvia have lines of contact marked by the ownership of local communities, which are considered in state affairs”, says the “Law on Latvian Historical Lands”.

In September 2023, Selonia also had its coat of arms approved, and in January 2024, the president of the country approved the flag of Selonia.



Fig.4. The coat of arms and the flag of the historical land of Selonia.

Due to the administratively complicated division, Selonia still falls within the borders of two planning regions of Latvia - Zemgale and Latgale. Although civil society's demand for its own planning region - Selonia - is currently in the air, such a reorganization process may be too complicated for the existing municipalities, therefore local and national political will may not be enough for the creation of the Selonia planning region in the coming years.

A HRONICLE OF TRANSFORMATION

2017–2019

The end of 2017 can be considered the very beginning of the transformation process of the territory, when the inter-territorial cooperation project “The Islands of Selonia - thematic tourism in small rural areas” of the rural partnership “Selonia”, the partnership of Aizkraukle district, as well as the rural partnership of Daugavpils and Ilūkstes counties “Neighbors” was launched in populated areas as a promoter of economic and social growth in Selonia.

The “Islands of Selonia” project was implemented under the Latvian Rural Development Program 2014-2020 in sub-event 19.3. “Interterritorial and Transnational Cooperation”.

Project goals: to promote balanced economic and social development in the territory of Selonia by activating the small settlements – “islands”; to promote the development of entrepreneurship and the labor market at the regional level, as well as the general recognition of the region at the national and international level; to improve the economic potential of the “islands” to develop competitive tourism products and common marketing based on traditional values and a unified concept.

The project activities took place in small rural settlements throughout the territory of Selonia, in total 17 “islands”: Dviete, Eglaine, Subate, Asare, Gārsene, Zasa, Dignāja, Kaldabruņa, Birži, Sēlpils, Elkšņi, Sauka, Rite, Mazzalve, Pilskalne, Staburags and Sece.



Fig.5. The gala conference of the project “The Islands of Selonia” in October 2019 in Zasa.

Approved financing of the project: EUR 79,600.00.

Activities: seminars/workshops/discussions during which "islands" created their thematic tourism products; presentation events of newly created tourism products in 17 "islands"; development and publication of a unified tourism booklet for the entire territory of Selonia, as well as development of strategic planning documents; consultations of tourism professionals; assessment of the situation and preparation of teaching materials. The project was successfully presented at the tourism exhibition "Balttour – 2019". Eight thematic tourism routes have been developed.

The biggest benefit of the project is that initiative groups of local, small communities have been identified and their cooperation has been achieved for the development of the common territory.

Project duration – 2 years. During this time, communities visited each other, events were held, and for the first time in Selonia, a common positive informational space was started. The performance of local people in maintaining the vibrancy of their place was highlighted and honored, publications about the "islands" were created, a small grant (2000.00 EUR) was awarded for the implementation of the presentation event for each "island". In many parts of Selonia, for the first time, people within communities were motivated to cooperate with each other in the name of the good name of their "island" and received recognition for doing so.

At the end of the project, it is evident that the "island" movement must continue, because the newly created network of 17 communities opens a huge potential for a hitherto unprecedented movement, which can become a basic resource for the positive transformation of the territory.

2020

The Community Integration Fund in the "NGO Fund" program approves the "Community Growth Catalyst" project of the association "Watermarks". The project design and implementation working group, human resources are the same who worked together in 2017-2019.

The project budget is EUR 7000.00.

The "Community Development Catalyst" project is implemented in Selonia region, involving six rural communities. During the project, at the request of the Bebrene community, the seventh community is also involved.

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the formation of communities with socially responsible, competent inhabitants in remote areas of Selonia; to increase the level of knowledge, cooperation, and communication skills, as well as to increase the influence of community representatives in decision-making processes in municipalities.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

A community viability and development indicator map has been created by grouping indicators into several categories.

Training and discussion groups are organized in seven communities, each involving at least 15 residents representing the NGO sector, business, young people, young families, seniors, socially vulnerable population groups. The events cover the following topics: basic principles of spatial planning and community building; state and municipality functions; ways to reach our municipality and state; ways to articulate our needs and make them understandable. Communities receive homework: to prepare a community development vision. The survey for the indicator map is organized.

An interest group for community support is created in the social networking website Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/katalizators>. Its priority members are the direct target group of the project – community representatives and local government employees. The main task of the group is inter-community information exchange and improvement of communication.

To promote community cooperation and to increase motivation for future work, as well as to attract other communities to this movement, the community cooperation event "Visionaries' Plein Air" is organized. During the event communities present their homework – development visions, the concepts for the discussion game "Community development catalyst" are being supplemented and tested. In the atmosphere of informal communication several other activities take place: searching for "development catalysts", the creative workshop "The Symbol of my Community", the activity "A View from the Outside", as well as evening talks, music, and mutual inspiration.



Fig.6. A shot from the project "Community Development Catalyst" event "Visionaries' Plein Air"

An original discussion game "Community Development Catalyst" is being developed and produced, which is later named "Pussy's (Itchy's) watermill" (Latvian: *Ka(š)ķīša dzirnavas*). The game is developed as a practical, innovative tool for group discussions. The main aim is to make discussions between different groups of society (in this case between community and representatives of local government) more open, with a greater participation of all involved parties; to demonstrate diverse ideas of the involved groups about the needs of the communities and the ways to meet them. During the game, a common understanding of both the needs and the ways to meet them should be achieved and the most important drivers of development – catalysts – should be identified.

Three discussion forums have been organized in the municipalities, the community resource map is presented, emphasizing the communities in each municipality, as well as instruction on how to use the map; presentation of the discussion game and practical simulation with representatives takes place.

The biggest benefit of the project in the long term is a chance to illuminate and define the problem issues. A great benefit is also the two new tools – the game, which is widely used not only in the Selonia region, but also elsewhere in Latvia for creating scenarios of various processes and for communication, and the indicator mapping method. Later, the Facebook group also gained great popularity, serving as a platform for community activists' current affairs already on a national scale.

The project helped to highlight the areas in which community activist groups lack competences and what exactly these missing competences are; what are the weak points of communication and what areas of misunderstanding have arisen between residents and municipalities.

All the communities involved in the project have difficulties in creating a clear vision for the future, and the biggest problem is the lack of internal, unified positioning. It has been decided that the main theme of the next project of the transformation process is "Identity".

In 2020, the 1st Selonia Tourism Market was held in Zasa.

The Community Integration Fund in the “NGO Fund” program approves the project “Community Growth Catalyst. Identity” of the association “Watermarks”. The project design and implementation group, human resources are the same who worked together in 2017–2020.

The project budget is EUR 30,000.00.

The overall goal of the project is to develop and strengthen the cooperation network of civically active communities in the Selonia region ensuring meaningful participation of these communities identity formation of the historical land of Selonia, their influence in decision-making processes at the municipal level and in the activity of the “Law on Latvian Historical Lands” at the national level.

Residents of 26 remote rural communities are involved in the project. Community initiative groups are defined as the direct target group of the project, an average of five people from one community, a total of 130 people.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECTS

A document is being developed, which contains recommendations for strengthening the cooperation of civil society with regional municipalities and for the protection of interests after the administrative-territorial reform.

A digital map of NGOs and communities of Selonia is being developed and published.

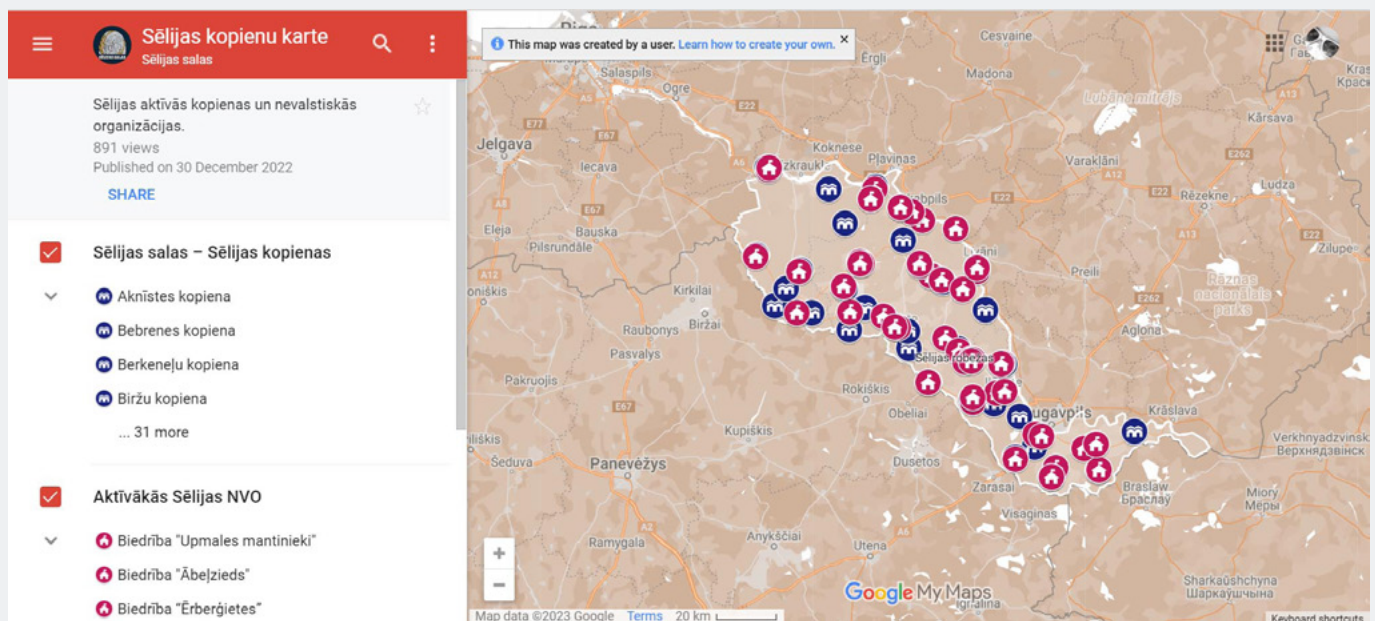


Fig.7. A map of communities of Selonia on the website selija.com

To popularize the activities of the communities and the NGO sector, and to clearly demonstrate their contribution to the development of the region, as well as to create a convincing idea for the members of the community about the social and geographical breadth of the cooperation network, a publication is created for each community involved in the project. It includes photo materials, a description of current activity of the community and its core, and other information that reflects their uniqueness and identity.

With the methodology already developed and tested during the “Community Growth Catalyst” project, new communities are attracted to the Selonia NGO and community network, including communities from the eastern part of Selonia - a community with a large proportion of Slavic nationalities.

A community cooperation event is organized - the search for community identity. As a result of the event, visual, textual, and informative material is obtained for the development of identity signs and identity palettes of 26 communities.

For each community involved in the project, a recommendation document or identity palette and a graphic community sign is developed. Community signs are made in a tangible form, a "Selonia's Community Album" is also made for each community. It includes the identity palettes of all communities and publications made during the project.

The 1st NGO forum of Selonia has been organized together with the representatives of the three new municipalities and planning regions. The participants of the forum worked in mixed work and discussion groups, identifying challenges related to the identity and development of Selonia as a historical land, looking for solutions, outlining paths based on public and municipal cooperation for better representation of the interests of civil society at the regional and national level.

The biggest benefit of the project is the broad, multi-layered acceptance of civil society, the demand for meaningful changes in the Selonia region and participation in their implementation. A stable circle of cooperating people is created. Selonian communities begin to realize themselves as a single force with a single identity, applying their strengths and potential for common future development. The coordinating group of the community cooperation network regularly receives requests from more and more communities with the desire to join the common movement.

During the project, it becomes clear that by directing such horizontal cooperation in the right direction, it is possible to transform the region of Selonia historical land, in an unusual way - in an absolute direction from the bottom up, based on a change in the way of thinking.

It has been decided that the main theme of the next project of the transformation process is "Empathy".

In April 2021, the association "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" is established to attract project funding for the activities of the community cooperation network, as well as to broadcast the message "We are united, with one common goal and framework" to the public. Literally a couple of days after the foundation, the new association submits the first project applications and obtains funding.

In the first year of activity, "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" implements two projects: "Living Islands in Jēkabpils Region", within the framework of which four videos are created about the active communities of Jēkabpils region, promoting their achievements in creating a good image of the territory. The project budget is 1000.00 EUR.

In the action project competition of the Active Citizens' Fund (AIF), the association obtains funding for the project "The Coat of Arms of the Historical Land of Selonia", which results in broad involvement in the process of developing the coat of arms of Selonia. Both a summary of the results of these focus groups and a research paper - justification for the choice of the symbol of the coat of arms dominant in the society - have been submitted to the State Heraldry Commission. Within the project, eight opinion and informative articles have been published, their authors are specialists and opinion leaders in various fields.

The project budget is 10,000.00 EUR.



Fig.8. Publicity pictures from an opinion article of the project "The Coat of Arms of the Historical Land of Selonia".

In 2021, three communities of Selonia - Gārsene, Kaldabruņa and Bebrene - received the recognition mark "Smart Village".

On July 16, 2021, the "Law on Latvian Historical Lands" was adopted, in which Selonia was marked for the first time as a separate historical land with certain geographical boundaries.

In September 2021, the 10th Congress of Selonia takes place in Viesīte. The Congress emphasizes the identity of the historic land of Selonia. Civic organizations present community identity symbols on a national scale, there are a lot of talks about current processes and the fact that "Selonia is in fashion".

In 2021, the 2nd Selonia Tourism Market and the 1st Selonia Tourism Conference took place in Zasa, and for the first year the campaign "Home Café Days" was organized, in which 21 home cafés participated, with venues covering the entire territory evenly.

2022

The Community Integration Fund in the "NGO Fund" program approves the project "Community Growth Catalyst. Empathy." by the association "Watermarks". The project design and implementation group, human resources are the same who worked together in 2017-2021.

Project goals: to develop and expand the cooperation network of civically active communities in the historical land of Selonia, with particular emphasis on the components of tolerance and empathy in the following aspects: civil society - state administration, city - countryside, person - person; to stabilize cooperation with the NGO sector of Jēkabpils city; to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the applicant organization to operate in a changing social and economic situation.

Residents of 32 remote rural communities are involved in the project activities.

The project budget is EUR 33,000.00.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Five civic participation discussions take place - four "Political Kitchens" - a cycle of discussions with politicians held in a different community each time, covering a wide range of issues relevant to the Selonia region, as well as one "To Give and to Take" - discussion with entrepreneurs and the municipality.



Fig.9. Political Kitchen "Tourism" in Viesīte with participation of Saeima deputies, representatives of local communities and decision-making power of Selonia municipalities.

With the methodology developed and tested during the projects “Community Growth Catalyst” and “Community Growth Catalyst. Identity”, eight new communities are attracted to the Selonia NGO and community network, and eight identity palettes and publications are developed for them, as well as the graphic identity of each community - the community sign.

There are two “Understanding Visits” city - countryside (two experience exchange trips).

For the first time the public recognition competition “The Silver of Selonia” has been organized, receiving a wide response from the public. Special prizes - precious noble metal silver brooches - are made for the participants and laureates of the competition.

The community cooperation event “Empathy” takes place. Its program includes the following topics: language culture and interpretation of concepts, the importance of empathy in building a strong community in the past and today, the language of music in building mutual understanding, visual language of understanding, training respect and understanding.

The 2nd Selonia NGO Forum takes place together with representatives of municipalities and Planning regions. The main issues discussed at the forum include challenges of civic awareness and state involvement, their possible solutions, and the need for cooperation at the economic, social and cultural, as well as local and state policy levels.

The “Minority Nationalities and Community Cohesion Program” funded by the Latvia state budget approves the project “A Covenant with Own Land” by the association “Watermarks”. The project design and implementation working group, human resources are the same who worked together in 2017-2022.

The aim of the project is to promote the ethnic cohesion of the society in the rural areas of the historical land of Selonia, with special emphasis on the integration of the eastern part of Selonia and the border communities in the activities of a unified civil society.

The project directly involves four communities on the eastern side of Selonia with a significant proportion of Slavic nationality.

The project budget is 10,000.00 EUR.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

With the methodology developed and tested in the previous years, four new, so far poorly integrated communities are attracted to the network of NGOs and communities in Selonia, a community identity palette and a community identity sign have been developed for each of them. A video story about these four communities has been created and released.



Fig.10. Event “November Covenant” of the project “A Covenant with Own Land” in Kaldabruņa

Community cooperation events “November Covenant” and “Light of the Year in the East” have been implemented to promote closer cooperation and ethnic integration of communities in the eastern and western parts of Selonia.

The Society Integration Fund in the program “NGO Fund” approves the project by the association “Islands of Selonia” – “Islands of Selonia – a network of information and allies”. It organizes a community camp, a community tourism experience exchange trip to Kurzeme, a monthly informational electronic newsletter “The News of the Islands of Selonia” is issued, a contact exchange with entrepreneurs, municipality of the Augšdaugava and the planning region of Latgale is organized, the definition of Community tourism and its operating rules are developed.

The project budget is 10,000.00 EUR.

The association also receives a small (~2000.00 EUR) financial support in a small NGO project competition of Jēkabpils region and receives a regional grant. These funds were used to expand the informational space and to improve the website www.selija.com.

In 2022, one community of Selonia – Ancene – receives the recognition mark “Smart village”.

In 2022, with the informational support of the community cooperation network “Islands of Selonia” and the association “Watermarks”, the regional television “Vidusdaugavas televīzija” implements the project “Coming from the Milky Way. Selonia – Identity” supported by the Latvian Media Foundation. Within the framework of this project programs about 12 communities of Selonia are created. Programs are broadcast in winter of 2022-2023 on Wednesdays on the RE.TV media portal. The people of Selonia truly appreciate these programs and they cause a wide resonance throughout Selonia.

The project budget is ~10,000.00 EUR.



Fig.11. The opening shots of the video film “Coming from the Milky Way. Selonia – Identity”

The biggest benefit of the year: the obvious integrality of the historic land of Selonia, which has already been settled and is functioning in the interconnections of people and communities. A network of active people that evenly “covers” the entire map of Selonia.

In 2022, it becomes clear that the time has come to define strategic goals of Selonia, as people are ready for it.

The activities for the next years have been decided: to create the strategy of the smart region of Selonia, taking into account the processes happening at the horizontal level.

In 2022, the 3rd Selonia Tourism Market, the 2nd Selonia Tourism Conference, as well as the “Home Café Days” are held in Viesīte. 30 home cafés participate, with venues covering the entire territory evenly.

The Community Integration Fund in the “NGO Fund” program approves the project “Connection. Smart Region Strategy for the Historic Land of Selonia” by the association “Watermarks”. The project design and implementation working group, human resources are the same who worked together in 2017-2022. The project is implemented over two years: 2023 and 2024.

The project budget is EUR 66,000.00.

The goals of the project are to strengthen a united, active and competent civil society in the historical land of Selonia by carrying out educational and unifying activities; to create and strengthen a well-founded vision of the development of the historical land of Selonia as a Smart Region by developing a Smart Region strategy based on the needs of society as well as economic and social realities; to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the applicant organization; to promote the growth of local-level NGOs.

In the first year of the project, a manual addressed to the communities of the historical land of Selonia was issued with the title “Connection. A Guide of Passionate Developers”.

A historical land area research document (SVOT) is being prepared, including the cities of Jēkabpils and Daugavpils as well. In the study of the territory, a separate analysis of the statistical data of this region is carried out, reflecting the social and economic situation directly in the historical land of Selonia.

Six project co-writing workshops are held on site in rural communities - from idea to the project submission. The workshops are held in three communities in the territory of Augšdaugava, Jēkabpils and Aizkraukle counties, thus ensuring geographical balance. Two workshops are held at each of the venues.

Two Selonia NGO forums take place in spring and autumn together with representatives of municipalities and Planning regions. In the forums, the common strategic goals of the historical land of Selonia, challenges related to the issues of civic awareness and state involvement of the historical land of Selonia are discussed, seeking solutions, the need for cooperation is emphasized both at the level of economic, social, and cultural, as well as local and national politics.

Continuing the tradition started in 2022, the public recognition competition “The Silver of Selonia” is held, which once again gains a great response from the public.



Fig.12. Award ceremony of the competition “Silver of Selonia” in October 2023 in Medumi

Basically, in the first year of project implementation, most of the basic material for the preparation of the Selonia Smart Region strategy has been provided, while continuing to maintain community cooperation and improving the competences of residents, NGOs, and activist groups.

The European Minority Representation Grant Program approves the project "Our Voices" by the association "Community Cooperation Network "Islands of Selonia".

Four border communities with a large proportion of non-citizens - Nereta, Rite, Demene and Subate - are directly involved in the project.

The project budget is EUR 15,000.00.

The aim of the project is to promote community cohesion in the rural areas of the historic land of Selonia, paying special attention to the integration of multinational border communities in civil society activities.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

In every community involved in the project, an extensive cycle of training courses on the importance, opportunities, and tools of civic participation at the local and national level has been implemented, with special emphasis on the importance of the integration of Slavic communities.

Civic participation guide "Which side is your passport on? Belonging Border and Border Belonging" has been created, as well as short videos that draw attention to issues of civic participation.

The Community Integration Fund in the "NGO Fund" program approves the project "Community Competences - for a Strong Cooperation Network" by the association "Community Cooperation Network "Islands of Selonia".

The goals of the project are to promote the civic activity and participation of the inhabitants of the historic land of Selonia, using the community cooperation network as a support mechanism in their local community; to improve the skills and knowledge of rural residents in the field of non-governmental organizations and civil initiatives; to strengthen the self-confidence and identity of the local people using community tourism as a tool; to ensure regular information circulation in the community cooperation network.

The budget of the project is EUR 10,000.00.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Regular informational support is provided for strengthening the capacity of the tourism network of communities - creating news about current affairs of the industry in Selonia, Latvia and Europe on all informational channels.

Training cycle (four days) with three-hour lessons once a month online. Lectures on social media, digital etiquette, and visualization, implementing business speech, text, and quality civic engagement activities in practice.

Face-to-face training cycle "Winter Camp" - a two-day learning and networking camp for the communities of Selonia.



Fig.13. During the 2nd winter camp of communities of Selonia in Skrudaliena parish Ilgas manor

Civic participation contact exchange: two-day events for increasing the competences of members of the community tourism network, promoting the exchange of experience in community tourism issues, and strengthening democratic values.

In 2023, for the first time in the history of Latvia, the cultural program of Selonia is announced. The program is carried out in the entire territory of Selonia, as defined in the "Latvian Historical Lands Law". The consortium of two civil organizations of Selonia – "Partnership Neighbors" and the association "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" wins the national competition for the implementation of the program.

79 projects from all over Selonia are submitted for a total amount of 248,456.18 EUR. The request exceeds three times the available budget, which in 2023 is EUR 91,000.00. The projects are evaluated by a jury consisting of six people – three representatives of the historic land of Selonia, two representatives of the State Cultural Capital Fund and one representative of the Latvian National Cultural Center.

For the total sum of EUR 91,000.00, 40 projects are supported, which geographically cover the whole of Selonia. One project has been implemented in Krāslava county, 12 projects in Augšdaugava county, 14 projects in Jēkabpils county, 8 projects in Aizkraukle County, while 5 projects cover broader plans on the scale of historical land of Selonia. The geographical distribution of the projects corresponds proportionally to the number of inhabitants in municipalities of Selonia.

The association "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" in cooperation with local communities implements the cycle of three small municipal grant projects "Selonian flags in the sky of communities". In Asare, Nereta and Kaplava, flagpoles are set up, large-format community signs are made, historical readings are held and the flag of Selonia is ceremonially raised.

The events are well received and well attended, community involvement in organizational work and feedback is very satisfying. Communities are proud. The amount of small grants for this cycle is ~ 2400.00 EUR.

In 2023, the 4th Selonia Tourism Market, the 3rd Selonia Tourism Conference is held in Bebrene, and for the third year the campaign "Home Café Days" is being implemented, in which 28 home cafés participate, with venues covering the entire territory evenly.



Fig.14 "Home Café Days" in September 2023, in Sunākste

In 2023, one community of Selonia - Dviete - receives the recognition mark "Smart Village". There are already five smart villages in Selonia, concentrated in a relatively small area.

On September 28, 2023, the coat of arms of the historic land of Selonia is approved: a reversed silver stag walking on a red field.

2024

On January 10, 2024, the State President approves the flag of the historical land of Selonia, its colors are crimson red, white and moss green, the ratio of horizontal stripes is 2:1:2.

The association "Watermarks" continues to implement the project "Connection. Smart Region Strategy for the Historic Land of Selonia".

The following activities take place in the second year of the project.

Seven resident focus groups in Selonia discuss possible solutions to the challenges defined in the previous year and summarize the inhabitants' vision of an ideal Selonia.

A group of experts is preparing a strategy for the smart region of Selonia.

Two Selonia NGO forums take place in spring and autumn together with representatives of municipalities and planning regions.

Continuing the tradition of previous years, the public recognition competition "The Silver of Selonia" is held.

The Community Integration Fund in the "NGO Fund" program approves the project of the association "Partnership Neighbors" "Land Brand. The Power of Civil Society in Shaping the Image of the Territory".

The aim of the project is to strengthen the role of civil society in the field image and long-term development of rural areas, systematizing and disseminating best practices, expanding the circle of cooperation partners, and increasing the influence of regional communities during municipal and national political processes.

The project budget is EUR 36,000.00.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

A methodology has been developed to create the identity and long-term development of rural communities.

A complex demonstration of offers for experience exchange programs addressed to both Latvian and foreign organizations has been developed for the rebranding process of the territory carried out with the methods of civil society.

A test of the developed offer was ensured, as well as cooperation with the communities of the border region of Lithuania is strengthened by organizing a presentation event of the rebranding process.

Increased influence of the rural communities of the region at the municipal and national policy level by organizing three policy discussion groups.

In 2024, the cultural program of Selonia is announced for the second time. The program is implemented in the entire territory of the historical land of Selonia, as defined in the "Latvian Historical Lands Law". The consortium of two civil organizations of Selonia - "Partnership Neighbors" and "Community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonia"" wins the national competition the program implementation.

70 project applications are submitted from all over Selonia for the total requested amount of EUR 256,695.00. The request exceeds three times the available budget, which in 2024 is EUR 84,000.00. The projects are evaluated by a jury consisting of six people - three representatives of the historic land of Selonia, two representatives of the State Cultural Capital Fund and one representative of the Latvian National Cultural Center.

For the total sum of EUR 91,000.00, 40 projects are supported, which geographically cover the whole of Selonia.

In the LEADER program, the association "Community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonia"" implements the project "Roads of Selonia", in which a ~45-minute long, meditative video film is created, highlighting the beauty of the small, picturesque roads of Selonia in different seasons, including the waterways - the Daugava and the Dienvidsusēja. Technical equipment has been purchased so that the video can also be shown at outdoor events.

The project budget is 12,000.00 EUR.

The four civic organizations of Selonia: "Stender's Association", association "Watermarks", "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" and "Association of Selonia" decide to join their resources and to organize the 11th Congress of Selonia in Viesīte with the motto: "Connecting the ideal with the real!"

The State program "Cohesion Program of Minorities and Community" approves the project of "Community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia"" "Searching for Islands of Belonging".



Fig.15. The project game "Searching for the Islands of Belonging".

The goals of the project are to strengthen the cooperation of the communities of Selonia by involving its eastern communities in a single cultural and informative space of Selonia; to promote the use of the Latvian language in the eastern communities of Selonia and to introduce the western communities of Selonia to the ethnic diversity, involving young people and their families.

The direct target group of the project is 30 children, young people, and their family members from the geographically opposite communities of Selonia - Saliēna and Ērberģe.

The project budget is EUR 7330.00.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Video interviews of four families are being created, in which two families from the Latvian-speaking environment in the west of Selonia and two families from the ethnically mixed east of Selonia participate. Families present life in their community, with a sense of belonging to their parish and to Latvia, thereby both confirming the cohesion of society and informing the public about less noticed inhabited places.

150 questionnaires on media literacy are prepared, distributed among the young people of Selonia and their families, and the results are summarized. With the help of questionnaires the availability of information about developments in Selonia is clarified.

Two experience exchange events take place for the target group of young people and children: in cooperation with Saliēna Secondary school of the Augšdaugava region and Ērberģe Elementary school of the Aizkraukle Region, young people are selected, and their family members are invited to experience exchange trip. The participants are selected based on the recommendations of the school staff and in accordance with the principle of ethnic diversity, as well as the need for the application of Latvian language skills. In both Ērberģe and Saliēna, the game "Searching for the Islands of Belonging" is played. Together with the project manager, the young people lead a game during which the participants must find the hidden signs of identity of the communities of Selonia. At the end of the game, the signs are "deciphered" and each community's place in Selonia and special recognition elements are discussed.

The Community Integration Fund in the “NGO Fund” program approves the project “Participation Points – Libraries” of the association “Community Cooperation Network “The Islands of Selonia””.

The goals of the project are to create competent civil participation support points in Selonia, which geographically cover the entire historical land of Selonia and could become the basis for the creation of residents’ councils in the future; to ensure a regular flow of information between the rural and small-town communities of Selonia; to develop local libraries as support points and transfer skills and knowledge in the activities of residents’ councils, in the field of non-governmental organizations and civic initiatives, as well as in democratic processes and dialogue with the municipality.

The project budget is 11,000.00 EUR.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

The newsletter “The News of the Islands of Selonia” is being issued and a regular positive information space is maintained.

Training cycle of online classes “Participation points – libraries”. Once a month, online classes are held to increase the competences of rural librarians in matters of civic activation. The lessons will include the topicality of the field in participation processes and the representation of democratic values through the NGO sector and communities, participation in local government and project management, with an emphasis on promoting awareness of inhabitants’ councils.

Face-to-face training cycle “Winter Training Camp of the Islands 2024” – a two-day in-person training cycle for increasing the competences of members of the community tourism network in matters of civic activation and developing community tourism. Civic activation classes include topical areas in participatory processes and the representation of democratic values through civic and political participation, the NGO sector and communities, project management and library sector development.



Fig.16. The participants of the 3rd Winter Camp of Communities of Selonia in March 2024, in Gārsene Manor.

“Participation Points in the Islands of Selonia” – a one-day event for the promotion of civic participation in rural libraries, increasing the competences of community network members, promoting the exchange of experiences in matters of civic participation, and strengthening democratic values.

In May 2024, the 6th Selonia Tourism Market, the 5th Selonia Tourism Conference is held in Ērberģe, and in September, for the fourth year, the campaign “Home Cafe Days” will be held, with 34 home cafe applications received, with venues covering the entire territory evenly.

METHODS

To demonstrate the profound nature and the long-term impact of the process of identity formation, the application of the used methods is structured by reflecting activities over a five-year period:

- analysis and training.
- identity building.
- identity maintenance and expansion.
- identity transformation.

ANALYSIS AND TRAINING

A specialized tool “An Algorithm of Social Inclusion” has been developed for a profound research of community resources.

Within the framework of the tool, a map of community viability and development indicators is created, grouping the indicators into the following categories:

- infrastructure and availability of services.
- human resources and creativity.
- cooperation and awareness.
- the uniqueness of the place and the possibilities of creating prestige (unused resources).
- economic activity and well-being.
- communication and advocacy processes.

At least 10 indicators are defined in each category, each of which is assigned a mathematical value. The value of the indicator can be positive or negative, depending on the situation in each community. During the mapping process, the data of each community is entered into the map algorithm, and as a result, the interaction of indicators is represented graphically on the development map.

Community data is entered into the indicator map during training and discussion groups. The questionnaire is structured and complex, community representatives cannot fill in it completely independently. The resource exploration process goes hand in hand with community training.

The content of the training for first-time communities includes the following topics:

- Basic principles of spatial planning and of community formation.
- Municipality and state functions. How to reach your municipality and state.
- Working group “How to formulate your needs and make them understandable?”
- Summary of discussions and indicators for a community resource map.
- Independent task (homework).

The results are then sequentially analyzed and summarized and are used to prepare an analytical summary.

The analytical summary of the resource map reflects the resources of the communities, identifies their most important needs, and provides recommendations for development.

Samples of materials are included in the attachments, selecting the Dviete community for the demonstration:

- community resource research questionnaire.
- analytical summary.

PROCESS/DISCUSSION GAME “KA(Š)ĶĪŠA DZIRNAVĪNAS”*

The game is designed to implement the following goals:

- to achieve a common understanding of both the needs and the process of solving them.
- to deepen the understanding of the other players’ resources, interests, problems, and ways of solving them, to make one fit in the role of the “opposite party” (community/municipality).
- to consolidate theoretical knowledge in practice, using the game as a demonstration model.

The game is applied:

- as an innovative tool for discussion groups.
- as a tool that makes discussions between different groups of society – in this case between community and local government representatives – more open, with a greater participation of all involved parties.
- as a tool that clearly demonstrates the different ideas of the involved groups about the needs of communities and ways of solving them.

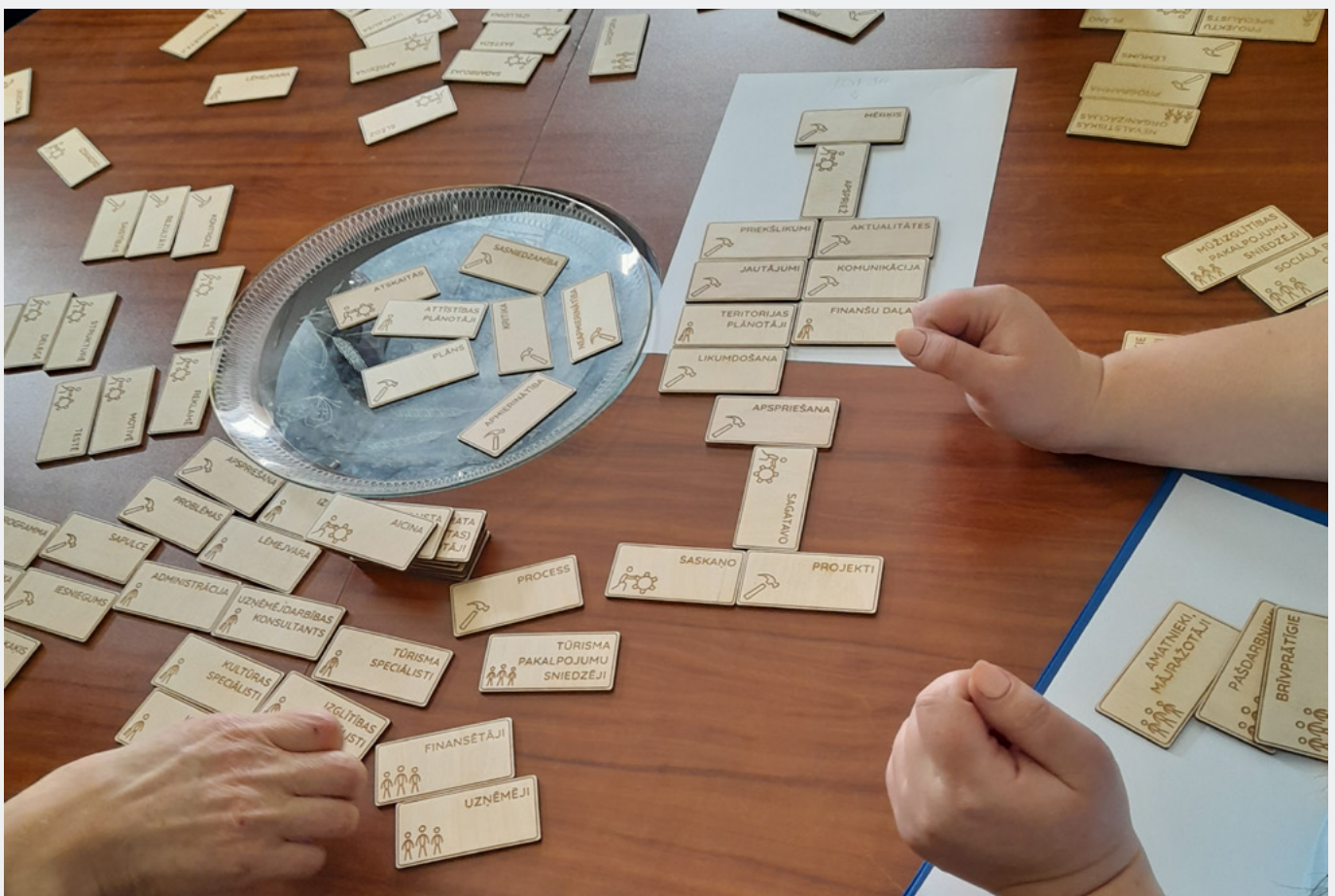


Fig.17. The game “Ka(š)ķīša dzirnavas” in action.

The game consists of domino-like game pieces that represent processes, persons, and actions. One game involves two identical sets of dice.

In addition, the game contains two special “expert” dice, which are used in the final stage of the game – analyzing the processes displayed during the game.

* a reference to a famous fairy tale of a Latvian writer Kārlis Skalbe about the white cat (good) who owned a mindmill but was forced to mortgage it to the black cat (evil). The story leads through a journey which has a happy ending with the moral that the good always wins. In this case the title of the game cannot be translated directly (translator’s remark).

The game pieces are divided in these categories:

Municipality	The Public	Actions	Tools
Administration	Craftsmen, homemade product sellers	Invite	Current events
Development planners	The unemployed	Calculate	Satisfaction
Libraries	Volunteers	Discuss	Discussion(2 pieces)
Financial part	Diaspora	Support	Answers
Educational specialists	Financiers(2 dice)	Report	Development
Executive	Initiators	Delegate	Appreciation
Youth and sports specialists	Young people	Involve	Finance
Communal part	Community activists	Inform	Functions
Culture specialists	Community leaders	Initiate	Information
Decisiveness(2 dice)	Farmers	Distribute	Innovations
Parish administrations	Inactive population	Explain	Questions
Public Relations specialist	Lifelong learning service providers	Announce	Communication
Project specialist	Disgruntled residents	Decide	Control
Social department	Informal interest groups	Motivate	Summary
Territory planners	Non-governmental organizations	Reject	Criticism
Tourism specialists	The self-employed	Evaluate	Legislation
Business consultant	Consumers	Organize	Participation
	Household service providers	Plan	Aim
	Seniors	Predict	Dissatisfaction
	Social risk groups	Attract	Events
	Working people	Advertise	Gratitude
	Travel service providers	Solve	Proposals
	Entrepreneurs	Hold a contest	Problems
	Rural partnership	Cooperate	Plan
	All residents of the village(city)	Structure	Contract(2 pieces)
		Match(2 pieces)	Process
		Switch(2 pieces)	Program
		Prepare	Projects
		Compose	Results
		Test	Bonus
		Listen	Obligations
		Undertake	Meeting
			Reachability
			Scenarios
			Explanations
			Statistics
			Submission(2 pieces)
			Decision(2 pieces)
The black cat	The white cat		

Description (rules of the game)

Game hosts: two people.

Game participants: all participants of the seminar or meeting.

First, all the participants of the game agree on a current issue, important to the majority, to be solved. The nature of the question depends on the purpose of the seminar or meeting and the proportion of interests of the participants.

The game takes place on two tables, with group members standing (sitting) around them. The participants of the game are divided into two groups, each group is given one set of playing dice (except for Black and White cats). Group 1 – “The Public”, Group 2 – “Municipality”.

Both groups, using the dice, make a process which they think would give a solution to the question at hand. It should be noted that each group sets out the process according to the role of its group, that is, the “The Public” group starts, generates, and ends the process as they see it, and the “Municipality” group – as it should happen from the point of view of the municipality and according to its powers.

Each group chooses the form of generating the process which is most convenient for them – in the form of bars, growing branches or circles.

Game hosts monitor the progress of the generation process, fixing major errors or providing brief explanations when needed.

The process takes 30 – 40 minutes to generate, with both groups playing at the same time. Game hosts keep track of the time and announce when the time is up.

Each group chooses one representative, who presents the process to the rest of the audience.

In the final phase of the game, “external experts” are invited.

The role of “external experts” is played by two special dice – the Black cat and the White cat.

The Black and the White cats together analyze the processes created during the game – the Black cat expresses criticism, while the White cat softens it by asking clarifying questions to the participants, pointing out the positive features and results. The analysis can be done either by two people, each taking on the role of one cat, or by one person, taking turns in the role of the Black and the White Cat.

Cat figures are chosen for the role of “external experts” for the following reasons:

- 1) They add attractiveness to the game and make criticism less personal and easier to perceive.
- 2) The image of a cat brings simple qualities easy to understand and perceive.
 - connection with folk traditions: “A cat is the first to be let into a new house.” The cat is the first to test a new process and its result – it determines the most comfortable and less comfortable places.
 - Cats are lovers of comfort and beauty. They will never sleep in an uncomfortable or ugly place; they will always choose the most comfortable and beautiful place. The process and, of course, its result should be beautiful and comfortable.
 - Cats are picky. They will never eat hot, spoiled, or poisoned food. The process should be neither rushed nor unduly delayed. Certainly not “poisonous” either, i.e. harmful to a social group or an individual.
 - Cats are lazy. They will not make unnecessary movements. If it is possible to simplify the process, the cat will do it.
 - Cats have their own position. They are very reluctant to accept forced action. The process must be perceived favorably by all parties involved.

In the end, the “external experts” agree whether the present process is pleasant for them (i.e. the process is well generated and leads to the result), or they feel uncomfortable in the process (i.e. too many unclear steps which do not lead to the result).

At the end of the game, the groups among themselves evaluate the differences in the processes and their risks from the point of view of both the public and the municipality.

This game is recommended in the following events:

- 1) Inhabitant meetings, meetings with representatives of local governments, where teams are divided organically - local government and the public.
- 2) In municipality development planning groups, with part of the municipal employees playing the role of the public.
- 3) In public consultations, forming mixed groups of players.
- 4) At community and NGO meetings to develop and formulate a request, their need, to be submitted to the municipality/state institution. In this case, too, two groups should be formed to reveal as clearly as possible the point of view of the municipality/state institution on this problem and possible solutions.
- 5) In the processes of creating development plans and strategies of communities, NGOs, local governments, to visualize the opinions and interests of all involved groups.
- 6) At meetings where debatable, unpopular issues are discussed thus conflict situations may occur. Physical cooperation and the involvement of most meeting participants in the process significantly reduces the risk of unproductive conflict situations.

CREATING IDENTITY

After studying the initial resources and completing the training cycle, it is possible to start the process of building the identity of the communities. Thus, it will be possible to focus attention on this goal, the communities will be aware of their resources, processes, and opportunities. In the identity formation process, it is recommended to include several communities of the same region at the same time, ensuring their mutual synergy and a unified view of the overall image of the region. In the case of Selonia, in the first cycle 26 communities had their identity developed, eight in the next cycle, four communities in the audience expansion cycle.

The identity formation cycle consists of the following stages:

1. **Discussion in each community, conversation about the basic elements of identity formation, filling in the identity creator's questionnaire, and an interview.**

The identity creator's questionnaire has been specially developed for this purpose, it emphasizes people's feelings, traditions, attitudes, stimulates imaginative and associative thinking. In case this methodology is applied, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the questionnaire was created specifically for the rural territory of Latvia. Appropriate adjustments must be made when using it in a different region. The conditions to be met in the identity creator's questionnaire are:

- Do not ask direct questions.
- Do not offer a specific symbol in the first place.
- Do not just focus on the visuals. It is not the only expression of identity.

Community identity creator's QUESTIONNAIRE

Name, surname:	Represented place / community:			
Contacts:				
1. Which cardinal point do you look at most often? Both geographically and in terms of ideas and cooperation? (tick)	<input type="checkbox"/>	East	<input type="checkbox"/>	West
	<input type="checkbox"/>	North	<input type="checkbox"/>	South
2. What time is the most talked about in your community? Prioritize! (mark with 1, 2, 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Past		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Present		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Future		

3. What group of people in your community are most talked about? Prioritize! (mark with 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)		Children		Entrepreneurs
		Young people		Farmers
		Working age population		Teachers
		Pensioners		The unemployed, socially excluded groups
		Families		Other
4. Imagine that your community/village is a reservoir . And you dip your hand in it. What is the temperature of the water?(tick)		Freezing		Very warming
		Cool		Hot
		Could go for a swim		Boiling
		Warm		I can't dip my hand, there is ice!
4.1. What is the movement of water?(tick)		Water doesn't move		Water flows slowly
		Water ripples easily		Water flows fast
		Water ripples violently		Water spins like a maelstrom
5. Which lines are most appropriate for your community (tick next to the appropriate number) If possible, justify:				
	1.	2.	3.	4.
6. My community is (write the answer)	A flower, a tree, a plant (which?)			
	An animal (which?)			
	An object (which?)			
7. My community colors are (tick up to 3 colors):		White		Purple
		Black		Orange
		Grey		Sea-green
		Red		Brown
		Blue		Light green
		Yellow		Silver
		Green		Gold, bronze

8. The defender of my community is (tick):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pērkons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dēkla
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lauma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jumis
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laima	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ūsiņš
	* Gods in Latvian mythology, cannot be translated in English (translator's remark)			
9. What suits the most to my community? (tick):	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Moon
10. Write down the natural phenomenon that most describes your daily mood!	Most often I am like...			
Write down the natural phenomenon that most describes your closest neighbor's mood!	My neighbor is...			
11. What season of the year prevails most in your community? (tick)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Winter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Summer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Autumn
12. Imagine that your community is one person . What will give this person the feeling of happiness and celebration the most (tick only one option)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lights
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food
	<input type="checkbox"/>	People	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gifts
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Colors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weather
13. One character trait or behavior that would make your community willing to exclude someone from their midst (write in):	My community will not tolerate...			
14. My community is characterized by... (tick not more than 2)!	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peace	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madness
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faith
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Passion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work ethics
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarrels	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spontaneity
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gossip
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compassion
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Materialism

2. Preparing a publication about each community.

As a result of the meeting and discussion, a publication about the community has been developed. The publication is focused on today's life, cultural and historical data is included in the context of their impact on today's life. In the field of cultural and historical heritage, phenomena that influence the life of the community can be identified, as well as values that are currently passive, but could be an important catalyst in the future development of an inhabited place.

The focus should be on people, their opinions, ideas about their village, everyday life, which also includes a description of the social and economic environment.

The publication should be engaging both in terms of content and literature, it should not avoid paradoxes, humor, vivid descriptions. Its purpose is to elicit strong feedback from the described community, as well as a response from as wide an audience as possible.

Implementing the publication cycle 2021/2022, there were regular cases when Latvian tourism agencies, rural development professionals, higher education institutions, researchers became interested in the village exactly after the publication. They were republished on national level news portals and print media.

The described communities, on the other hand, regularly received an assessment: "We saw ourselves in a new light, we almost didn't recognize ourselves. Our village is so remarkable and special!" In response to a sharp assessment of the situation, criticism or regret was expressed in some cases, but even this was already directed at plans to improve the situation.

3. An event for identity creators.

The community cooperation event is organized to include community identities in a wider context, to receive external evaluation. Communities of one region give an opinion about each other and receive feedback from the professionals who host the event.

In this process a fresh and professional perspective on the identity of communities, as well as the synergy of personal and professional ideas are important.

The program of the event includes lectures on social and geographical, as well as visual and cultural-historical aspects of collective identity.

But the most important is the practical part. During this part, the audience plays and formulates the three expressions of identity - verbal, graphic and color.

The practical part.

- Three working groups are created, led by professionals in their field - Master of Words, Master of Lines and Master of Colors.
- Each master receives his own set of tools - pens for words, pencils for lines, a set of at least 48 tones of high-quality oil pastels for colors.
- The audience is divided into groups, considering their interests and/or professional competences.
- There are A1 sheets in the room with the names of all the communities taking part in the event. The room should be large enough; in the case of a larger number of communities, several rooms are needed so that the groups do not disturb each other.
- Names, Lines and Colors groups, under the guidance of the masters, note the manifestations characteristic of each community. They can be both very personal, and those that first come to mind, and those that are known from publicly available information. The task of the masters is to ensure that the group uses only the means of expression allocated to it - word, line, color - and also to prevent unproductive expressions. In visual groups, it is recommended to avoid drawing specific objects and characters as much as possible. One should try to use generalized, abstract forms of expression - lines, their rhythm and dynamics, colors, and their combinations.

As a result of this activity, visual, textual, and informative material is obtained for the development of community identity signs and identity palettes..



Fig.18. At the event of identity creation - reflection and summary of the day.

4. Developing identity palette.

The identity palette is the final document of this stage, which is handed to each community.

The individual identity palette includes:

- publication about the community.
- a collection of historical and/or interesting facts about the specific place, excerpts from periodicals.
- a summary of colors, lines and names of the community obtained from the survey.
- concept, description, and sketch of community identity sign.
- descriptions of community development catalysts, resources and potential.
- recommendations for community development.

Pielikumā – Sunākstes kopienas identitātes palete.

5. Developing identity mark.

Based on the collected information, a graphic identity mark of the community is developed. A description for the sign is created, justifying the elements used in its creation and the color code.



Fig. 19. The beginnings of the signs created during a brainstorm in "Visionaries' Plein Air".

Signs for all communities of Selonia are created using a single graphic style, as well as a single basic tone - the blue of the sky, the color of the archaeological woolen shawl.

A set of all developed identity signs, as well as examples of their application, are included in the conclusion of the methodological material.

IDENTITY MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION

The development of the identity of the region does not end with the presentation of identity palettes and graphic signs to all participating communities. It needs a continuous maintenance process to really work. The maintenance process can be divided into regular activities and qualitative improvement activities.

REGULAR WORK

- Handing graphic files of identity signs to communities, motivating them to use them in event advertising, environmental advertising, souvenirs.
- Regular use of identity marks in community networking events and publications.
- Consulting communities on the most successful ways of using signs, their promotion.
- Regular training seminars, discussion groups, events, tourism promotions.
- Consultations in the development of projects, organization of events, preparation of applications for competitions, etc.

ACTIVITIES FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Expansion

In this step, the identity of four communities in the eastern part of Selonia, in which most of the population represents minorities and communicates in Russian daily, is being developed. Such a step is only possible when the identity of a significant part of the core nation's communities has been developed and strengthened. It has created an attractive space for natural integration and inclusion in the civil society of the historical land of Selonia.

This aspect should be considered when involving communities with other types of problems – passive, ignorant, immigrant communities in a particularly poor socio-economic situation. An attractive base for inclusion is necessary, first. If there is none, efforts to activate and include problematic communities will not be productive - there is no inclusive space.

Also, an important step is building understanding and empathy with the civil society of the nearest big cities, entrepreneurs, and municipalities. It should be emphasized that Selonia is a distinctly rural area and the largest cities Jēkabpils and Daugavpils, despite their geographical proximity, are distinctly different in terms of mentality, rhythm of life and even value systems. So far, there have been few points of contact outside of direct economic ties. Discussion groups, experience exchange trips and events were organized to form synergy between rural and urban societies. Thus, the exchange of resources, mutual understanding, and the sphere of influence of the rural area have increased.



Fig.20. Visiting Jēkabpils NGO



Fig.21. Understanding visit "City - countryside" in Bebrene

The phenomenon faced in the process of expansion is the desire of active communities from other regions to join the cooperation network of Selonia communities, as well as calls to develop individual identities for them. An equal inclusion of the communities outside Selonia is not possible, the geographical expansion could be logical only in the direction of Lithuania, covering the entire territory inhabited by the ancient Selonia. However, in appreciation of the interest in joining the cooperation network, we have introduced a special term "floating islands" for communities outside Selonia.

Developing identities for communities outside of Selonia can be a consulting service. But the main work must be done by the people of the given region, using the preceding experience and methods. To make it possible, this material has been created, which covers the full cycle of identity development.

Attracting New Audience

Attracting new audiences and human resources to communities is crucial for the maintenance and development of identity. The circle of people involved cannot remain constant for long, even if it is relatively wide. A static circle of audience can lead to stagnation of the whole process even within a couple of years.

To prevent it, the community cooperation network works purposefully with the attraction of new audiences. Such audiences are, for example:

- librarians who are addressed a training cycle on civic participation and who are involved in the community cooperation events in 2024.
- students for whom an orientation game has been developed using community identity symbols. Students from geographically distant schools in Selonia are involved in the game, paying attention to the differences in the national composition of students.



Fig.22. Saliena, Eglaine, Pašuliene and Kaplava have just received their community palette and identity signs - they have been included in the cooperation network.

A new audience that got involved in the activities of the cooperation network without any special additional actions are municipal employees. Initially, they were employees at the parish level, but at the end of 2023, the representatives of the decision-making power of municipalities started to participate actively.

The situation is related to the administrative-territorial reform that took place in 2021, which led to a centralization of local governments - the concentration of power in the center, in cities. At the beginning of the reform, the reduction of their influence and responsibility was painfully felt by parish level employees, who found that it is possible to achieve more with the methods of a strong civil society organization than with the powers of a municipal employee. On the other hand, the involvement of representatives of the decision-making power is justified both by the prolonged ignorance of the state administration in solving regional development issues, and by the fact that the historical land of Selonia as a single whole is represented on a larger scale by the non-governmental organization "Community Cooperation Network "The Islands of Selonia"". None of the local governments of the region covers the entire territory of Selonia, their representation rights and interests are limited.

IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION

The identity of the community and even of the entire region is not an end in itself, a graphic sign or a collective image of the population. Identity is the basic value for the development of the territory - sustainable, coherent, and smart development with this identity.

Signs of this direction appeared already in 2021, when the focus group participants said: "We don't just come here to talk anymore. We come to talk about development of Selonia. Our land needs its own development strategy."

Traditionally, development strategies are developed by municipalities, on a larger scale by planning regions. However, in the case of Selonia, its territory is divided into four municipalities and two planning regions. Local strategies for the implementation of the LEADER program are developed by Local Action Groups (LAGs), and four such groups operate in the territory of Selonia. Therefore, there is no single legal entity - the developer and implementer of a unified strategy of Selonia.

The activity of building the identity of the region has strengthened the self-confidence of civil society, undoubtedly influencing the drivers of the process as well. Seeing the demand of society and the objective necessity, the development of the strategy has been started in 2023.

The document is precisely focused, appreciating the demand for it, as well as accepting the unavailability of predetermined financial resources.

In the "Smart Region Strategy for the Historical Land of Selonia" the following priority areas have been highlighted:

- Solutions for the fair investments of state joint-stock companies and capital companies in the territory of the historical land of Selonia, stopping its depopulation and life quality lowering.
- Solutions for the internal security of the territory, as well as for the security of the EU's external border. Already at the initial level, a cooperation model is to be created with the structures of the Selonia military training area.
- Increasing the prestige of education in the population's value system, availability of quality education in the region, including lifelong learning. Raising the level of qualifications and general knowledge of municipal specialists.
- Involvement of research institutions, high-level professionals, and higher education institutions in the development of studies and publications about the historical land of Selonia, as well as in creating of a high-value material and non-material cultural environment.
- Harmonization and possible approximation of cooperation models of public administration structures and the civil society of the historic land of Selonia, respecting the traditional forms of cooperation, which effectively function on a horizontal, equal level, but create insufficient contact with the vertical structures of public administration.

RESOURCES

EGO

The world of motivators, inspirers and enablers is beautiful. An inspirer appears in a run-down place, makes everyone imagine how it could look like if everything was done right, conjures a beautiful mirage, agrees with the audience that “You can, we can, everyone can!”, rolls up the presentation and rushes to improve the world further fully confident that a good work has been done, because people have become happier! Meadows bloom in the motivator’s footsteps, a rainbow blossoms up in the sky and birds start to sing – that’s what the motivator thinks, because he doesn’t look back, he has a lot to do, the next decaying place is waiting for him...

An empowered community goes to bed optimistic and uplifted but wakes up the next morning a little more unhappy because now it knows that everything is possible, but somehow nothing has changed overnight. And nothing changes for all the mornings to come. “Hmm...” the community thinks, “Probably it was all just a hoax. We cannot.”

If we really want to bring about change, we must take responsibility. **It is not enough to show the right path - this path must be walked together.** Every community wants to live better, but a group of people can live better only if, in the name of the common good, some good is taken away from the individual and put into the common pot. Time, energy, money, voluntary work, emotions, knowledge... It will take a year, two or even three to enjoy the delicious brew together. Someone must take care of the fire, look after the pot, and follow the recipe, as well to do the work of explaining why every member of the community will have to suffer for a while and what exactly the long-term benefit will be.

You must constantly look back, be aware of weak points and react to them. If we know how it could be, we must know how to get there and be willing to do all the daily work together. Every day, always! Because they are “ours”, with whom we build our living here, on the spot.

“I cannot fail because I feel that they expect something from me”. Of course you can! People are constantly disappointed in other people, there are many more unfulfilled expectations and promises than fulfilled ones, and the world does not burn in blue flames because of it. It is your Ego that makes you stick to what you started and take responsibility. **Feed your Ego with responsibility, not self-indulgence. Don’t inspire people if you’re not ready to turn that inspiration into tangible change with them!** A properly fed and directed Ego is a resource, even if it sounds strange.



Fig.23. Communities explore the Zasa Manor Park during the 1st Selonia Tourism Market.

But it only sounds strange if the territory is thought of in abstract dimensions or statistical numbers. If each small "island" consists of specific people with whom you have brainstormed about possible development of this place, sat through their project submission, Smart Village application, event planning, survived stressful situations together, rejoiced at success, grieved at failure - everything changes. You are already in charge!

The network of Selonia communities is not a scheme drawn on paper, it is held together by knots created by the work of specific people. Someone must make sure that the knots are strong enough, feel the weak spots. There is not always money for this coordination work, on the contrary - there is almost never money for this daily work. However, there is Ego, ambition, passion, and the understanding that untying knots must not be allowed in any way.

MONEY

"It all comes down to money" - this is a popular saying that is partly true, but not always.

It is impossible to calculate how much financial resources have been invested in the rebranding process of Selonia in general, because it consists of many small components. However, it is possible to say approximately what financial resources have been invested in the targeted and coordinated activities of this process.

In the chapter "Transformation Chronicle", which examines the projects directed by the civil society aimed at the revitalization of the territory in general, in the period from 2017 to the first half of 2024, when this document was written, the leading NGOs of Selonia have attracted 525,330.00 EUR for targeted rebranding activities of the territory. "Half a million in 6-7 years for an entire historical land - that's nothing!" - an optimistic, professional, and well-fed regional marketing specialist would exclaim.

However, it should be noted that this amount does not include the enormous amount of voluntary work that the coordination group of 4-5 people has done for the sake of community cooperation throughout these 6-7 years. The remuneration within projects covers only the hours worked on each project, and even then, not always. These people who keep the community moving as one are at work all the time. On holidays, at the weekends, on vacation and outside working hours.

According to the most modest estimates, the amount of voluntary work invested in the revitalization of the territory by the members of the coordination group alone is worth at least half a million euros.

Also, it is not possible to calculate the contribution value of each community's local activities, either in terms of project financial attraction or voluntary work. It is also not possible to distinguish, for example, the contribution of SVVA strategies implemented by local action groups (Rural Partnerships), as well as the impact of local government budgets - what percentage of each performed activity has made an indirect contribution directly to the rebranding processes of Selonia and how much has been directed towards the achievement of some other goal.

Therefore, we can currently mention only the financial resources attracted and invested in the development of the territory, aiming directly at positive changes, which in this context we call rebranding. Such an amount, objectively assessed, can be attracted to any passionate region that wants to change or make life a little more colorful.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The peculiarities of the public infrastructure of the territory of Selonia promote the creative thinking of the inhabitants and provide a good tone for the planning processes of public life.

At an international conference taking place in Europe, the delegate of the association "Community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonia"" had a hard time explaining the situation that the association, which coordinates the activities of a network of more than 40 rural communities, does not have its own separate office space. "Don't you have office buildings in populated areas? Do you each like to work from your home?" Logical questions if you don't know the reality of Selonia countryside. And the reality is that small villages with 200-500 inhabitants really don't have office buildings. Half of "The Islands of Selonia" management team lives in messuages, the other half - in small towns. With good road infrastructure,

going to a common office 30-60 km away would be a nice while to clear one's mind and get in the mood for work, but on the existing roads we choose to travel further only when forced by extreme necessity.

The biggest pain of the territory remains the road infrastructure, so – traffic in general. Improvements happen very slowly, and unfortunately, the opportunities for us – the citizens – to influence the construction of national roads are quite limited. That's why we adapt! We do most of our routine work from home, use online tools and often meet at events where we try to give and get the most out of it.



Fig.24. Community forum "November covenant" in the former school of Kaldabruņa



Fig.25. Fellowship of Pilskalne and Ērberģe communities in Gricgale (Medņu) pub

The decrease in the population in rural Latvia and the ageing population, not very successful administrative and territorial reforms, as well as larger processes taking place in society have vacated many rural school buildings, also cultural centers have become fully accessible for any civil society events. Undeniably, we'd be much happier if these spaces were busy with their real functions. However, both communities and associations use schools and cultural centers for seminars, training, and workshops, rent premises for economic activities and for organizing larger events. Many of the associations, with the support of the LEADER program, adapt, rebuild, restore, and equip even large buildings that previously served other purposes – schools, manors.

The bad news: the premises and structures must be maintained throughout the year. Heating, electricity, daily repairs, and cleaning are big daily costs for associations and communities, which cannot be covered by members' money, but within projects, such costs are most often ineligible, moreover, projects have an unpleasant feature – they all come to an end.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Many of rural associations of Selonia are engaged in economic activities, thus obtaining funds to be further invested in community activities that do not have access to other financial sources. Economic activity is also almost the only possibility for the association to ensure the rent and maintenance of the necessary premises.

The types of economic activity are various: associations make souvenirs, objects of applied art, handicrafts, organize various master classes and workshops, tastings and hikes, receive tourists and guide tours, give lectures, organize seminars and exchange trips, develop documents, carry out design work, rents equipment, "export" their specialists in the projects of other associations or municipalities - everything depends on the competences, experience and field of activity of the human resources available to the associations.



Fig.26. Rēzekne County LAG visiting Gārsene community - Valdis Kalnietis' private collection of antiques.



Fig.27. Participants of Ukrainian refugees' "Camp of Life Stories" visiting Vadims Timahovs' log house manufacturing company in Ancene.

In describing community tourism, we have provided both the definition of community tourism and the description of its features. Community tourism will not make communities rich by any means, and it is unlikely that a community can be prosperous from community tourism income alone. However, community tourism is a complex tool that positively affects many areas at the same time and contributes to the overall image and vitality of the territory. It promotes cooperation and leads to development on several levels - within the community, in the cooperation network and on a national scale. Communities also welcome foreign visitors and exchange groups, thus bringing new experiences and ideas into the community and raising quality. Most often, the driving force behind community tourism is the local associations, because, on the one hand, this is one of the possible types of economic activity of the associations, and, on the other hand, the associations are a group of active people in the community, who give the greatest added value to the place and are most interested in its growth.

PEOPLE

The biggest, most important, but also the most fragile and sensitive resource of any process is people. Although “no one is irreplaceable”, a team whose synergy has formed a vision, those few people whose motivation does not depend on salary, but on the right direction of Ego, will be almost irreplaceable. Therefore, it is important for passionate landscapers to create a group of creative free thinkers who share values, priorities, and a sense of humor from the very beginning, and who are multi-functional enough to “catch” each other when needed. Formal, bureaucratic and strictly subordinate relationships in such a team will kill the creative spirit, so try to build a core team of people with whom it is easy to think together, who you want to support, who understand you without words, who are able to react quickly, reorganize and learn quickly, who have a high resistance to stress, with whom you can laugh at yourself and feel comfortable.



Fig.28. The founders and the team of “The Islands of Selonia”. From the left: Santa Šmite, Jānis Dzimtais, Daina Alužāne, Inga Krekele and Ieva Jātniece.

The core of the Selonia rebranding team consists of highly functional specialists in five different fields. Everyone in the team is also a project manager in addition to various other jobs. We write our own texts and publications, create strategies, develop tourist itineraries, create graphic design, manage accounting and record keeping, manage camps, set up coffee breaks, wash floors, stack firewood, develop project budgets, study legislation – we do absolutely everything that needs to be done every day. “I don’t want”, “I can’t”, “I don’t understand” are so rarely used among us that they are already being forgotten. Build a team of people who say “Yes” to you and to whom you want to say “Yes”.

At the next – community – level people are very diverse, with different work abilities, well or poorly motivated, of different ages, different nationalities and with different levels of competence. But the main thing is that they are there! And territory changers need to know each of these people personally. Because they are the ones who transform their place. We need to know how much we can demand from the local community, considering if it is a group or seniors or a group of entrepreneurs. Each community will have its own opportunities, different from others. More than 40 communities cannot be expected to have the same pace.

As to the number of people involved in the rebranding process, on average there are three activists in each community who are in close contact with the coordinating group and act as mediators, spreading information to the members of their community. Thus, the total team for rebranding Selonia is currently around 130 people.

Meet those people who ensure that your beautiful ideas for a better future are brought into everyday life of each community! Speak in a language they understand, accept that their intensity, speed, capabilities, competences, and motivation may be quite different. Be their friend and support, listen, be genuinely interested, and take care of these people - they are the biggest, the most important and, unfortunately, the most fragile resource of your territory! Say thank you in person, express appreciation publicly, ensure regular cross-community meetings, bring together people with similar interests, maintain and regularly update a full contact base of community activists. Follow their social media pages. Have your finger on the pulse.

INFORMATION

Information is a huge resource for successful change. A constant flow of positive information not only improves mood, but also changes thinking, and in the long term - physically changes the environment. Good news also spreads quickly, and it not only shows what is happening in the area, but also creates a healthy spirit of competition. Tell the others about everything good and beautiful! It's all around - there's no place on Earth where something good isn't happening.

Gradually but persistently cut complaining and negation from people's minds. Talk about it whenever you can. Information should be verified, positive and useful, not provocative. The information space of your area is a resource where people find solutions and joy, find people who hold the same views, instead of exchanging gossip and negation. Information created by communities involved in the cooperation network and their behavior habits is also part of the information. It is the responsibility of every community, its contribution to the common good. Monitor how communities communicate, advise, consult, help if necessary.

"Everything is happening!", "Selonia is on top right now!", "We really have something to be proud of!", "I'm following you, so much interesting news!" - the information space that provides such feedback is a real bowl of energy from which everyone can take a spoonful for themselves.

During the rebranding process of Selonia, several thematic social network groups/communities have been created: "Events in Selonia", where every member of the community can inform other communities about upcoming events of any scale; A "Community Growth Catalyst" aimed at activists; "Markets in Selonia" is a relevant group in warm seasons when various markets are held. Selonia has created a calendar of events so that communities can plan their events based on what is happening around them, as well as schedule dates to visit friends in other communities. The Facebook page of "The Islands of Selonia" informs about the current affairs that are important for every resident of Selonia, as well as about the good news in the communities and the common events, projects and events of the cooperation network. WhatsApp group The News of Islands of Selonia is used for quick updates, ASAP news. Every month, an informative publication in form of a small newspaper "The News of the Islands of Selonia" is published, which summarizes the monthly news of the communities of the area. The website selija.com summarizes tourism opportunities in Selonia, as well as information on current projects and press releases of larger events.

A common information space brings people together, especially when everything written is close and familiar. Everyone can be up to date, aware, participating, current and worthy of good news.

NATURE AND LANDSCAPE

In Selonia, as in any place where the earth is underfoot, natural resources are available – dolomite, wood, gravel, water, peat, sand. But for the people of Selonia, nature is a completely different kind of resource. Nature is a source of inspiration, faith, and life force. “Sacred landscape of Selonia...” said literary scholar, linguist, publicist, writer, and politician Janīna Kursīte.



Fig.29. Spring flood of winter – spring of 2023 in the floodplain of the Dienvidsusēja with messages visible. Living together with nature.

The Selonia landscape is unspoiled by the elements of industrialization and large-scale agriculture. The big pain – the poor road infrastructure – that hinders economic development has also brought its benefits. We don't have straight roads, highways, overpasses, barriers anywhere. People move naturally – like water, like blood, like the flow of air between hills and groves. It is the priceless richness of human-nature synergy that most people in Selonia are truly aware of. Yes, we drive slowly, in bad weather we often don't drive at all. However, each section of the road is picturesque, varied, and interesting.

“Clusters of single houses, small villages are nestled between the roundness of the Selonia hillock, next to small, winding rivers with amber-brown water filtered by sphagnum. Marshes, forests, meadows, and wildlife are as important as people in Selonia, where nature is still treated with awe and deep respect. No foreign faith has really taken root in Selonia. People tend to go to church, but the real temple, where you can spend time with yourself and think about the order of things, is always a forest, a swamp, a meadow, a lake.

In autumn, the forests are full of boletus, the swamps are red with cranberries, coniferous forests are full of loganberries, blueberries... Eat them fresh so that juice flows or store them in the cellar – salted, pickled. Boil some yellow potatoes, cook a plate of pancakes, and you have safety given to you by your own land, your own garden, your own work. “Hunger, you won't get me!” – that's what old people say in autumn, when the last basket of potatoes is poured into the cellar.

Don't be afraid of little white paths that connect our “islands”! They are the most beautiful, picturesque roads in Latvia. Go through them from owner to owner, looking at the love with which the great glacier, retreating to the north, has patted the land of Selonia in gentle hillocks, – this is how we invite visitors to the Home Café Days every year on the second weekend of September.

The people of Selonia treat nature with devotion and respect; it is not a consumer attitude, but a partner attitude: a huge resource of mental health and territory attractiveness, which can also be used in tourism and business, but mainly as a source of strength, identity, lifestyle, and harmony.

Once in a seminar, a lecturer from the capital city, touching upon deep philosophical topics, asked the audience a "provocative" question: "Well, when was the last time you looked at the sky?" Asking this, he wanted to emphasize the fact that people too rarely think about big things. The burst of laughter in the audience was the best illustration of the lifestyle of people in Selonia. The sky is the first thing we look at when we wake up and the last thing we explore before going to bed.

When making changes in the territory, one must study the relationship of people with nature - they speak a lot about the identity of places, the values inherited through generations and the possible vectors of change. Nature, landscape, relief, and climate are factors that greatly influence people's character and way of life, and especially when we talk about rural areas.

NETWORK ENERGY

How do thoughts, ideas, wills, emotions, plans arise? It only happens when little sparks jump from one neuron to another. The better trained neural connections, the better, faster, and more creative we think. The more experiences we relate to, the faster we analyze risks and find solutions. We need to train these links, keep them in tone, form new micro-connections and feed them.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of community cooperation in identity creation and in rebranding process, it generates enormous energy. Every meeting in person or even online creates something new. Friendships are formed, plans for events are made, supporting shoulders are found for weak areas in communities, competences are borrowed, human resources are exported and imported.

On the other hand, this network gives invaluable feedback to the coordinating group - both about what has already been done and in the search for further development opportunities. It doesn't let us be into complacency thinking that we are doing everything right when we don't, and the network weakens in some places.

At the 10th Selonia Congress, the association "Community Cooperation Network "The Islands of Selonia"" said:

"Selonia is a blanket that is woven in a fine, evenly spaced pattern, it does not have a single central pattern around which lower, complementary pattern elements dance. Similarly, community network "The Islands of Selonia" is built like a fishing net, not a spider web. Every nod in it is equally important to us. Thinking about big things, Selonia must not forget its living blood - the people who are living here now, who are maintaining the land now. Exactly this is the identity of Selonia that must be cultivated and highlighted among other historical regions.

The meaning of the countryside communities in creating identity of Selonia is simple and easy to say - countryside communities is this identity of Selonia."

The energy generated by horizontal cooperation is a huge resource in every territory, if we can maintain it for a long time and constantly - long enough for cooperation to become a habit. Then the earth will be alive, vibrating, full of thoughts, safe and familiar.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

IDENTITY DWELLS IN PEOPLE. TALK TO THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE/ *GENIUS LOCI*

A viable, society-transforming identity is not outsourced. It is an inner resource that needs to be recognized, articulated, and activated.

Identity resides in people, places in history and today's movements. And only those who live in their community today, breathe its air every day, experience the changes of the seasons and political-economic systems, can make the substance for creating their identity.

The principle means acceptance and observance of this situation.

The spirit of the place speaks through people - through their traditions, habits, movements, way of dressing and greeting neighbors, family recipes, grandmother's mittens, curtains, garden arrangement, notion about what is good and valuable.



Fig.30. Women of Berķenele and Kalkūni have met in the culture place "Augustplatz". From the left: Inese Baravika (Berķenele) and Svetlana Smirnova (Kalkūni).



Fig.31. The brand of Kalkūni community - chimney cakes of the culture place "Augustplatz".

The spirit of the place speaks through the direction of the wind, the relief of the landscape, the roads, and the flow of the waters in all seasons. And only after that it speaks from historical archives, studies, and periodical news. This voice is only significant if it resonates in today's life.

Within this principle, the identity builder team cannot operate outside of the community. It fits into the process, becoming its own. Creates new processes to verify the veracity of perceptions. The process is long-term, it involves observing, getting to know, and asking, it includes checking and analyzing the answers, matching with the people and the spirit of the place. It is continuous. Identity is not frozen, extremely fixed. It needs to be maintained and polished.

Community identity is not a logo. Although the identity also includes the visual mark, it cannot automatically include cultural and historical symbols, characteristic buildings, or ornaments. Elements of cultural and historical heritage work in community identity only if they influence today's life. A monument to a great person, a birthplace or even a museum can be a completely passive element in the life of a community.

The task of identity builders is to notice the important aspects, because in rare cases they will be the most visible on the outside. We hide our jewels, the essential and the most valuable are not displayed on top of the chest. It is a sign of the common identity of the society of Latvia, and especially of the historical land of Selonia.

PRACTICE

Special identity palettes are developed for formulating community identities. In 2021 - 2023 they were created for 38 communities in Selonia.

The contents of the palettes include:

- an article about the community – a publication based on interviews with community representatives, reflecting the current activity of the community and its challenges, providing a description of the community initiative group and other information related to the uniqueness of the community.
- a collection of historical and/or interesting facts about the specific place, excerpts from periodicals.
- summary of colors, lines and names of the community obtained from the survey.
- community identity sign concept, description, and sketch.
- community development catalyst, description of resources and potential.
- recommendations for community development.

PALETTE EXAMPLES OF TWO COMMUNITIES

Gārsene Community

In the center of Gārsene village is the neo-Gothic Gārsene Manor which defines the visual image of the village and is the focus of various events of the community. The creative residence "Heaven" has been arranged in the old granary of the manor complex by the municipality of Aknīste region, attracting funding from the LEADER program. "Heaven" has managed to preserve the aura of an ancient granary; it really is a kingdom of light and space.

An important contribution to Gārsene as a tourist destination is also made by the popular Gārsene nature trails, which are maintained by the joint-stock company "Latvia's State Forests".

The essence of resources:

- In June 2021, Gārsene received the recognition mark "the Smart village".
- A strong, historically cohesive community with private and public sectors.
- A well-known tourist object in Latvia – the center of the community.
- Rich natural resources, already developed traditions of their use.

Initially, the most noticeable visual symbol of the community is the silhouette of Gārsene Manor. But it is not identical to the life of the community today.

The main elements of the Gārsene community sign are:

- The Blue Lady (the famous ghost of the Manor), the characteristic notched wall and the meanders of the river in nature trails.
- The meanders of the river remind us of the Blue Lady's open hair.
- The silhouette of the notched wall of the Manor is used in the decoration of the Blue Lady's dress hem.
- The overall composition is associated with mills (watermills, now the small HES), which are also often mentioned as typical and noticeable for Gārsene.

Kaplava Community

Kaplava is the only parish of Selonia located in Krāslava county. There is great religious diversity here - there are Orthodox, Old Believer, and Lutheran churches. Most of the population speaks Russian daily. An important cultural landmark in Kaplava is the house where the writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš lived for 2 years, inhabitants' memories of this period, as well as collected materials. The building is private property, and it is currently unclear how the new owners will develop it; therefore, the historical materials are being stored in Kaplava library. The population is apparently ageing but it is impossible to buy property in Kaplava - the houses are preserved, the number and composition of inhabitants changes significantly in summer, younger generation has a strong connection with birthplace. There are no registered non-governmental organizations in the village, nor are any initiative groups identified. However, the people of Kaplava can be described as mutually supportive, helpful, and interested.

The essence of resources:

- Beautiful landscape, rich natural resources - Daugava circles.
- Relatively developed tourism business.
- Cooperation of inhabitants, helpful and supportive environment.
- A strong feeling of belonging to Kaplava, which manifests itself as both a clean environment and cultural traditions.
- Willingness to do something, without waiting for large investments from the municipality or state.
- The borderland situation with its advantages and disadvantages.

Description of Kaplava community sign:

The central figure of the sign is a horse, a toy horse without a rider. The horse farm "Klajumi" is one of the most important places in Kaplava. The toy horse is the inhabitants' hope and greatest wish for children to return home. In the background - the winding Daugava. The border is a gilded line, on the other side - a field of forget-me-nots (the national flowers of Belarus), in the foreground bright marigolds - the flowers of coziness, warmth and brightness, the love of the place grown and cared for by Kaplavians themselves.

IDENTITY WORKS IN SYMBOLS. SHOW THEIR POWER!

An important part of identity expressions are symbols - graphic, textual, color codes. People must understand the importance of symbols in social life to be willing to participate in the formulation of the identity of their community and development of regional or national symbols.

One must be able to distinguish the concepts and images based on tradition from the ideas created by superficial pop culture. A symbol must be appreciated as an essential part of life. Superficial polls and offers to vote for a limited selection of symbols, as is often practiced when designing city and regional logos, should be avoided.

If the identity is based on the perceptions of the population, these perceptions must include competences. These competences need to be heard, developed, and given weight of value. They are more relevant than the offer of advertising agencies.

Identity builders need to be able to ask deeper questions that get to the heart of people, places, and traditions, and to separate the layering of ephemeral symbols.

There is no need to save time for discussions, explanations, conversations and creating their summaries, emphasizing the essential.

PRACTICE

In 2021, with the adoption of the law "On Latvian Historical Lands", Selonia acquires precisely defined geographical boundaries. And it needs its own national symbols - a coat of arms and a flag - like other historical regions of Latvia.

Proposals for the symbols of coat of arms are submitted to the State Heraldic Commission, but they are superficial, the wider society is not involved in their development. Representatives of local governments consider it insignificant: "What is there to worry about? The coat of arms is so rarely used – anything that is approved will do." They also may perceive making recommendations as a right inherent only to the public administration: "We, the municipalities, have already submitted suggestions, there is nothing more for anyone to do."

Community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonija" develops the project "The Coat of Arms of the Historic Land of Selonija" and receives support for organizing wide discussions, preparing opinion articles, and collecting research materials about the symbols of the region.

The summary of the discussions reveals the deep inhabitants' interest in creating the main national symbol of their historical land. This is reflected in the quotes from community representatives:

"In the coat of arms of the historical land of Selonija, we want to see a natural element that is present but not visible in everyday life, for instance, a small eagle, sacred stones, a lynx. We know it is present, and it creates a sense of mystery, importance, just like a symbol of a coat of arms – we don't use it every day, but we have it. Natural phenomena, animals, insects, plants, which are often found, are as if less significant. The symbol of the coat of arms needs this sense of invisible presence, importance."

"We have an important connection with Lithuania. Let the coat of arms contain a message, signs that are important and characteristic of Augštaitija as well. Let the symbol be based in ancient history. Let the symbol be focused on the future, development, energy. Selonian symbols should be sought in the period up to the 13th century, not later. It is the period of creation and prosperity of our historical land."

"The symbol of the coat of arms must be from nature. Food is eaten – and it is gone. A building collapses – and it is gone. A political system changes – and its symbols and attributes are no longer relevant. Nature is eternal, the same as a historical land. The symbol should be strong, bright – like the golden mountains of dandelions in the spring. That gold that cannot be destroyed in any way."

"The coat of arms should be something that the Selonians understand and naturally accept. The wolf symbol is accepted and understood immediately. Young people take it as their own. It suits both – men and women, close to everyone, close to the character of the Selonians – we cooperate in communities, we are not ready to follow one leader. We have a strong sense of community. My pack. My closest ones."



Fig.32. The symbol of a wolf which was recognized as appropriate by most Selonians. In the picture it is designed in noble metal in the pins of the winners of "The Silver of Selonija".

“Silver highlights but does not stand out by itself. It is cleansing. Corresponding to the mentality of the Selonians. We don’t have any lion-type leaders. A leader is not authoritative, but one that can be followed. It is a group of people, the shared energy that creates a desire to be inspired, to follow, to act together. They are community leaders, not authoritarians.

Academician Jānis Stradiņš as a silver ring in Selonia’s hand. We are all those fingers, those hands. We need that silver glitter, those rings on our fingers!”

“The coat of arms should be like a talisman. You put it in your pocket, and it protects you. You start to do well, and you succeed. If so, it is the right symbol, such a coat of arms has weight and meaning.”veikties, un viss izdodas. Tad tas ir īstais simbols, tad tādām ģerbonim ir svars un nozīme.”

“The silver wolf is the real one. The wolf echoes both the character and history of the Selonians. It is based in the oldest layers of our folklore and life experience. Everyone can find their wolf. Your place in the crowd. A pack goes behind the wolf. The silver color is both shimmering and greyish, just like the nature and people of Selonia. Dark blue - archaeological outfit, the Daugava, forests, night, twilight. **We can identify with this symbol. It suits our shirts; it suits our souls.”**



Fig.33. Daina Alužane and Ieva Jātniece with the wolves of Jaunjelgava

Discussions about the symbol of the coat of arms have awakened not only interest, but also determination to build the historic land of Selonia. The power of the symbol has become visible in practice.

The State Heraldry Commission approves the coat of arms of Selonia, which includes a silver stag on a red field. The motto: “With head held high”. Despite the popularity of the wolf image, the community welcomes the new coat of arms. It is accepted as a powerful symbol.

THE POWER OF THE WHOLE. MAINTAIN A SUPPORT NETWORK.

Community identity exists in a wider context. It cannot operate in isolation from the context of the region. The identity of each settlement forms a whole - the historical land of Selonia. Like a pattern in a mitten, like a page in a book. Only by knowing each element of the pattern can we knit a mitten. And the book is made up of its content - page by page.

The whole is formed from equally important patterns. One torn section can destroy the entire mitten, one torn page can change the contents of a book.

But at the same time - one individual pattern is just a pattern. It has no warmth without a mitten. And a single page is not a book.

The strength of each community's identity is fully expressed only in a network of cooperation.

This principle compensates for the region's sparse population, numerically small communities, and a limited number of activists. It also strengthens the identity and competences of each community, demonstrating the common image of mittens, books, and the region.

Shared information, collaboration, mutual support, and resource sharing allow community activists to regain strength and inspiration and give access to various resources.

Cooperation network maintains the common, broader sense of operation. It demonstrates the goal to be achieved in a wider context, emphasizing the contribution of each individual community to it.

PRACTICE

In 2020, a website www.selija.com is created with the help of small municipal funding, it is maintained and updated by the community cooperation network. In the same year, the social networks X and Facebook pages @Selijassalas, Sēlijassalas, as well as the Facebook group "Community Growth Catalysts" were created, where specific information about support tools addressed to communities and project competitions is posted. The number of followers on all social networks is constantly growing.

Events: in 2020, the 1st Selonia Tourism Market was held in Zasa, the tradition is continued by organizing this market in a different community of Selonia every year.

In 2021, for the first time in Selonia, the campaign "Home Cafe Days" took place, in which 21 home cafes participated, with venues covering the entire territory evenly. In 2022, there were 30 home cafes, and in 2024, 34 communities have applied for the campaign.

Since 2022, "Winter Camp" is being organized for members of the cooperation network. It takes place at the beginning of March, before the active tourism season. The camp has become a tradition, and in 2024 it was impossible to accept all the participants who wanted to apply for it.

The smart village movement. Starting from 2021, several communities of Selonia have been actively involved in this movement, receiving consultative support from the community cooperation network. As a result, Selonia is the only region in Latvia that already has five Smart Villages, concentrated in a relatively small area. The organizers of the Smart Villages movement call it "Clusters of Selonia Smart Villages".

MAKE IT SHINE. REVEAL POSITIVE ASPECTS IN DEFICIENCIES!

The principle intends to transform the objective flaws into phenomena that cause amazement, interest, surprise, attract visitors' attention and, above all, change the locals' view on them.

This principle could not be applied without healthy humor which, in turn, strengthens self-esteem of communities - the one who is able to laugh at himself feels sufficiently safe and self-confident.



Fig.34. PR specialist of "The Islands of Selonia" Jānis Dzimtais moderates the communities' event "Annual Light in the East" in an owl mask.



Fig.35. Next to the road Ilze-Bebrene a herd of "moose" is grazing.

Applying this principle over a longer period, humor and paradox are perceived as objectively positive phenomena, they integrate into the life and external image of the region, even becoming a recognition symbol of the place and an example of best practice.

This principle is the basis of the initial name and concept of the community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonia", presenting the sparsely populated territory of Selonia as special and noteworthy, not economically undeveloped and socially hopeless. Also, the name contains an element of paradox and humor - there are no physical, geographical islands in Selonia, it is an inland territory that does not stand out for the diversity of water reservoirs. "Islands" are human settlements in the middle of forests, meadows, and swamps. In five years, the concept of "The Islands of Selonia" has become a frequently used example of the best community development practice in Latvia.

PRACTICE

In 2019, water tourism was not widespread in Selonia. The largest river Daugava is rarely used, but the smaller rivers are shallow and overgrown, so they are considered unsuitable for boating. This year, the association "The Boats of Selonia" was founded, which started intensive cleaning of small rivers, organized clean-ups and offered water tourism services in all weathers. Already in the first year of activity, the association admitted that it had succeeded in:

- introducing new forms of active recreation in Selonia - boating and coasting (wading along the river). In the warm period we sit in the boat and enjoy the river, the rest of the time we wade along the river, continuing to enjoy what nature offers.
- breaking stereotypes - the river can be used for active recreation even if it is shallow and overgrown.
- promoting voluntary work - by investing in joint work, the whole public benefits and the surrounding environment becomes cleaner, visually more enjoyable.

Over the course of five years, implementing a series of projects, "The Boats of Selonia" have purchased varied water tourism equipment, and their services are known throughout Latvia. Boating is organized even in very small bodies of water; this form of active recreation has become extremely popular. It is mostly because of the activities of "The Boats of Selonia" that the special tourism offers of the region "Atbūda, or the fifth season" (wide, annual floods in the floodplain of the Dviete River) is in the center of attention of the Latvian media in spring.

Selonia has acquired waterways



Fig.36. The association "The Boats of Selonia"

The region has poor road infrastructure, there are a lot of gravel roads, which is already a rare phenomenon in other European countries, even in the neighboring Lithuania. Due to this objective lack, the economy is slowed down, some tourist agencies refuse to go to Selonia because of the bad condition of the roads. Roads are a sharp and hot topic in almost all discussions with local governments and the state administration. And often, this problem attracts the main attention without a solution. In addition, the focus is diverted from problems that could realistically be solved within the framework of the specific discussion. The condition of the roads is the main justification for passivity and stagnation. Energy consumption without results, and the impact of communities and local governments on real improvements is negligible.

In 2023, the community cooperation network "The Islands of Selonia" develops the project "The Roads of Selonia", which receives funding from the LEADER program.

As part of the project, video scenes have been created that reflect the most scenic roads of Selonia in the four seasons. The attention is focused on the landscape, as well as the surrounding natural, touristic, and cultural-historical objects, and not on the road surface. The story goes around the ancient, winding roads that tell of the movement of people historically, creating a sense of archaic space and time. The poor quality of the road is presented as an opportunity - it is physically impossible to drive fast here, and it gives time to enjoy the scenery. There is no intense traffic flow here - every driver and his experience are special.

Highways of Selonia have acquired a new look, new value.

INNOVATIONS OR EXTINCTION. JUST THAT SIMPLE.

The principle intends to recognize the socio-economic situation of the region clearly and unequivocally, while using it in two different aspects:

- the decisively important role of local communities in maintaining the viability of their settlement.
- presentation of best practice in the form of a paradox: “If it is possible here, it is possible anywhere.”

The application of the principle requires a real, even critical assessment of the situation, presenting it together with a future perspective and considering possible solutions. The search for solutions must be ambitious, initially outlining an idealistic scenario for the community’s future: “Anything you want, resources are unlimited.”

A phenomenon that must be limited when working with this principle is the tendency of community representatives to demonstrate their wit or their individuality.

The process of the ideal scenario should be directed to the meaningful goal: “So that we all live here together better”. It should be clearly stated that it is the community, the people here and today, who are responsible for the scenario to come true.

By detailing the ideal according to the actual available resources, the ideas to be implemented are fixed. In most cases, it is in the most disadvantaged communities that these ideas will be innovative.

Immediately after the ideas are fixed, a draft action plan is developed, the community is provided with consultative support, information, and encouragement.

The second aspect of the principle is widely used when community cooperation network “The Islands of Selonia” present their position at the state level, telling their story with a principle: “It is very smart to invite lecturers from economically less developed areas. We are forced to be innovative – otherwise you wouldn’t know about us.”



Fig.37. Professional ballet during Dviete community festival in “Apsīšu” garden.



Fig.38. The association “Watermarks” of Kaldabruņa create unique windowpanes for Āčervonka church.

This principle is also applied when promoting a community and settlement, which, due to the distinctly unaesthetic environment, lack of buildings, and services, seems completely unsuitable for quality public life, not to mention the development of tourism.

Community of Ancene

The village of Ancene was formed during the middle period of the Soviet occupation as the center of collective farms – kolkhoz. Its construction consists of several apartment houses, mechanical workshop buildings, as well as a few neat, well-maintained private houses built in the 70s of the last century. There are no historical buildings here, the ramshackle warehouses and former farms are conspicuously visible. In the center of the village there is a closed primary school building. There are no municipal institutions in Ancene, nor are there any public spaces that can be used for the needs of the community. The school building is the property of the municipality and in its current stage it is not suitable for public life.

However, in Ancene with its 140 inhabitants, 15 companies of various sizes operate, there is a modern grain dryer, a logistics company, a factory of log buildings, and a gas station. The community is active, energetic, it has a large proportion of the working-age population. The inhabitants are united, ready to act for the good of their community. There is a registered association “Together two”, though in 2022 it was in a passive period.



Fig.39. Ancene community harvest festival in 2023. Children “surf” on the hills of grain in the big barn.

In February 2022, seminars in the community of Ancene highlighted its strength – businessmen and active inhabitants –, identified a situation in which the investment of the municipality is expected to be minimal. In any case, not to a level that would create noticeable changes.

Ideas have been selected and fixed, and they are highly innovative – “Park in the premises” in the former school, community garden in the overgrown apple orchard, positioning as an entrepreneurial community, an offer for reception of experience exchange groups.

In summer 2022, Ancene renewed the activity of the association, with intensive consultative support, an application for the status of “Smart Village” has been prepared, and this status has been granted. Ancene community celebration was organized, community chat group was created. A project creating a community garden was developed, it was supported in a serious competition, receiving EUR 10,000.00 for its improvement.

In 2023, eight experience exchange groups from Latvia visited the Ancene Smart Village, the Community Garden was improved, and the village festival took place there. Two projects were developed and supported in the cultural program of Selonia. In one of them, the Harvest Festival was organized in the modern granary, which is the largest premise in Ancene.

Kaldabruņa Lighting

The community of Kaldabruņa has been active and united for a long time, and it is ensured by the activity of the association "Watermarks". Its premises in the former Kaldabruņa primary school are the only public place in the village, there are neither municipal institutions, nor post office and shop.

From the municipality, the village has been neglected for a long time as there are no buildings and infrastructure belonging to the municipality. A new and bright object is the viewing platform "Where the sun does not go down" built in 2023 based on the suggestion and visualization of the community.

The community is knowledgeable in planning and idea development processes, regular meetings are held. At the 2022 meeting, in which representatives of the municipality also participate, the issue of lighting the public outdoor space of the village is raised. There is none here.

The proposal was rejected with the sentence: "There is no municipal electricity connection in Kaldabruņa, we cannot do anything." This means: the public infrastructure of this place has been reduced to a stage of non-existence, which justifies doing nothing in the future.

The association "Watermarks" developed the LEADER program project "Smart light for a Smart Village", manufactures and installed four lighting objects of original design in the village, which work with solar and wind energy.

The place has gained an original, aesthetically beautiful, and modern benefit. If there was a municipal electricity connection, Kaldabruņa would probably have received standard street lighting lamps.



Fig.40. Kaldabruņa Lighting

VACUUM ENERGY. CREATE LOCAL SERVICES.

The principle envisages presenting and using the imperfect service and infrastructure environment as a field of opportunity.

This is a way out of the vicious circle: "We cannot develop business because there is no infrastructure here. There is no need for infrastructure because there is no business. We cannot develop tourism because we have no service providers. We don't have service providers because we don't have tourism".

In the absence of services, you must create them yourself. This is our opportunity. The tasks of the process drivers are:

- informing and training community members in starting a business.
- motivating suitable people to create a quality and legally registered service.
- educating existing NGOs about the possibilities of economic activity in the non-governmental sector, motivating them to develop this activity.
- supporting informal communities in NGO registration and start-up.
- securing the first orders for newly founded companies and NGOs, involving them in project events and accepting experience exchange groups as service providers.
- creating specialized tourism routes, routes for reception of experience exchange groups, with priority inclusion of newly founded companies and NGOs.
- advertising service providers and producers of the territory in the informational channels of the community cooperation network.
- motivating community cooperation network members to use internal resources – services created by their community or other communities.
- **regular evaluation, at every public event, caterers, venue owners and designers are noted as equal to musicians, lecturers, and experts.**
- regular support and quality control.

The promoter of the process must follow the principle: if there is the least possibility, pay the people of the community and NGOs for the provision of services, for their work. Pay as much as you can. And pay them first. Don't expect mandatory volunteer work – that's what everyone expects from us. Voluntary work, donations, material contributions of communities are allowed only if resources are not available. There are plenty of such situations, and they might be resolved promptly if you have not exhausted your activists with constant requests for volunteer work.

PRACTICE

“Two Grapes”

In 2019, at the closing conference of the first project of the “The Islands of Selonia”, we presented the created tourism products, and the need to invite caterers from among “the islanders” seemed organic. Two housewives from the Dviete community were approached, they performed the task brilliantly, and requests for event catering followed one after the other. During the year, the housewives registered a business, one of them got a chef diploma. The food is prepared mostly using traditional recipes, from local products grown on their own farms.



Fig.41. The activists of Dviete community. From the left: Gunta Kivliša, head of the association “Augšzemnieki”, and “Two Grapes” - Viktorija Ritiņa and Dace Tamane

Currently, "Two Grapes" is an integral part of events on "The Islands of Selonia". Seminars, conferences, tourist markets and Home Café Days would be unimaginable without them. Traditionally, "Two Grapes" feeds the participants of the winter camp of "The Islands of Selonia", besides not only as service providers, but also as full participants of the camp.

Dviete Community

In 2019, there is a registered NGO "Two Grapes", the museum of Pauls Sukatnieks "Apsītes", a family mini zoo is starting to develop. "Dviete Grapes" does not carry out economic activity, it is considered that receiving tourists is a burden, as it requires extensive volunteer work.

In three years, several companies have been established in the community – "Two Grapes", "Dviete Ice Cream", and "Dviete Mini Zoo". The association "Dviete Grapes" has developed economic activity and is an official provider of tourism services. The association, in cooperation with the Dviete parish administration, manages the former Dviete Manor, where wider events are organized. The manor territory has been improved, and improvement of the other buildings of the manor has been started. The flow of tourism in Dviete is regular and increasing. Compared to 2019, in 2024 it has increased more than four times. At the beginning of 2024, another new company "Chef's Snacks" is opening in Dviete.

Sunākste Community

In 2022, the Sunākste community – rich in skills and talents – is an active developer of its village. Inhabitants of the community can provide quality coffee breaks at events, decorate the premises, make souvenirs, and organize events. However, involvement in project activities or provision of tourism services is difficult because there is no settlement entity. As a result, everything is done voluntarily, and motivation gradually disappears.

In 2023, with the support and consultations of the community cooperation network, the association "The Sun Well" is founded. Already at the very beginning it attracts project funding and economic activity – organizes events, concerts, offers room, territory, coffee break design. The income allows the association to strengthen and develop the economy and visibility of the community.

Vacuum energy has created a series of service providers that work precisely in line with current topics in the EU, such as the Green Deal, short supply chains. Local products, local producers, personal treatment of guests and buyers. Pride in oneself and each other. Self-control of quality and support of neighbors.

“ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS”. DON’T PLAY BY THE RULES.

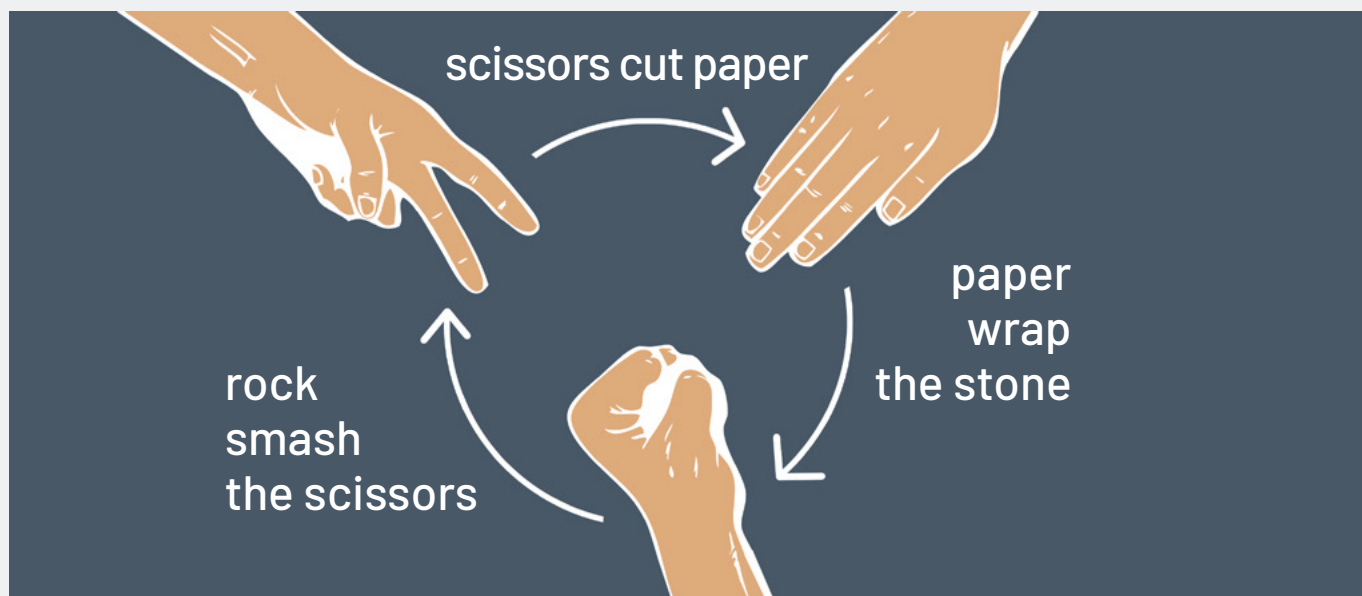


Fig.42. Instructions for the game "Rock, paper, scissors"

The symbol of the betting game “Rock, paper, scissors” is used to characterize the principle. The game is a classic image of a dead-end situation, playing only with the given elements. Each element erases the other, repeating a circular motion without resolution. In addition, the elements used in the game form exact analogues of the initial situation of Selonia – the stone symbolizes a stagnant, immovable public administration; scissors – limited resources; paper – the volume of bureaucracy. Trying to overcome all the mentioned obstacles at the same time consumes a disproportionate amount of community energy, the victories are short-lived, they are erased by the actions of the next element. The effects of positive change are short-lived, and, working against administrative stagnation, limited resources, and growing bureaucracy, communities do not even have time to register these changes. This situation leads to the burnout of active people and the prevalence of passivity even in the medium term.

A radical solution to the situation is the introduction of new elements, new conditions into the game. An unexpected, brave way out of a hopeless situation.

If it is not possible to achieve positive changes with the existing tools. Create new ones – suitable for the situation, people, and place! There is no need to avoid it. Every definition, program, support tool has been developed by someone. And this time it's us.

PRACTICE

The initial goal of establishing a community cooperation network was the economic development of the region by promoting rural tourism. However, several critical aspects clearly emerged during the three-year period:

- The creation of quality tourism products requires serious investments, which the region lacks.
- There is also a lack of sufficient tourist flows that would ensure the economic existence of tourist facilities by providing only tourist services.
- Promotion of the region as a new tourist destination requires unified marketing, which in turn requires serious investments. In addition, the implementation of marketing campaigns is traditionally ensured by the planning region or municipalities. In our case, it didn't work.
- The energy of community cooperation far exceeded the framework of the specific sector. Non-governmental organizations, interest groups, entrepreneurs (whose activity was not directly related to tourism) joined the activities.
- It became clear in practice that the unity of the local community, building the identity and recognition of the place, as well as a personal attitude towards both the place and the guests, are more important than the service level of the tourism product and the income coming from it.

Solution – development of community tourism definitions and conditions for Selonia

In March 2022, a definition of community tourism is being developed for Selonia:

“Community tourism is a direction of rural tourism, with the main goal to increase the liveliness of the place, people's self-confidence and the attractiveness of the region.”

In the case of Selonia, tourism manifests itself as an element of its formation:

- By telling others about our country, we get to know it better and better.
- By creating our land, we understand it more and more deeply.
- By showing our land, we see its hidden details.
- By cooperating with the people of our land, we awaken the liveliness of this land.
- By welcoming guests and being proud of what we have done, we increase the attractiveness of our land.

Community tourism in the context of the historic land of Selonia is characterized by several features, which we have divided into four groups.

Geographical features

- The tourist object is in the territory of the historical land of Selonia. When multiplying the community tourism approach in another territory of Latvia or the EU, a different regional formulation must be applied.
- A tourist object is formed by a community in a group of messuages, a sparse village, a village, or a small town.
- Communities, supporting each other, operate in a unified network of cooperation.

Social and organizational features

- The tourism product is open to community inhabitants, and they are actively involved in its creation and maintenance.
- Community inhabitants directly associate this tourism product with the recognition of their place of living, they are proud of it.
- The community has a leader/leaders who know the general information about the developments, shares information, and provides support to the participants.
- The community has ensured cooperation among different population groups and organizational structures(NGOs, individual service providers, municipal institutions, farms, etc.).
- Community tourism product providers are actively involved in the joint actions, events, and campaigns of the Cooperation Network, and the cooperation network events with volunteer work, infrastructure, range of cooperation partners and financial resources as far as possible.

Cultural and historic features

- The community is aware and identifies itself as a part of the historical land of Selonia, knows its history, borders, and foundations of identity.
- The community has a common cultural-historical space, the community can name the differences of this space(they are defined within the community), it has developed/is developing its own visual and content identity, which is used in marketing materials.

Ethical features

- The creators of the community tourism product recognize the interests of local development and community cohesion as priorities in their activities. The creators of tourism products work to complement each other, respecting the contribution of each person involved.
- The leader/leaders of each community are familiar with the offers of the other communities involved in the Cooperation Network and provide information about them to both tourists and potential cooperation partners.
- When planning wider events, promotions and projects, their implementation is coordinated with the other members of the Cooperation Network, as far as possible, thereby reducing competition and promoting balanced development of the Cooperation Network.

The minimum infrastructure and service requirements necessary for the provision of tourism services have also been defined:

- There is one coordinating person in the community who provides information about all available services. Including - about the service points closest to the community if the specific service is not provided locally.
- Guests have access to a first aid kit, a hand washing facility and a toilet, and drinking water in the community tourism facility/facilities.
- There is a local guide/guides in the community.

PERSON TO PERSON – A HOLIDAY. CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS AND REJOICE IN THE SUCCESS OF OTHERS.

The principle was introduced to address the more common threats from community and civil society activists:

- burnout of communities and their leaders.
- internal competition in the community.
- competition among communities of collaborative network.
- willingness to build competitive relationships with external communities.

In addition, this principle strongly reflects the sparse population of Selonia, which is traditionally perceived as one of the most negative factors. The application of the principle “Person to person – a holiday” changes the perspective on the mentioned factor and encourages to appreciate the importance of each person both in a separate community and in the entire cooperation network.

The principle focuses on the presence of joy and empathy in everyday interactions. It often transforms the continuous work process into a celebration, sparking excitement, humor, and a sense of togetherness.

The implementation of the principle requires certain standards - we organize events and even business meetings in beautiful rooms, dress up ourselves, create a festive atmosphere.

Successes should be celebrated - even if we are tired and even if our achievements have taken too much from us. If we don't, we may not have the strength for future achievements.

Consistent application of this principle allows competitive tendencies to be transformed into cooperative energy. While celebrating our success and that of our neighbor, we can no longer see other communities as competitors. This also applies to external cooperation models. Departing from the attitude “Who is better - us or them?”, external cooperation is formed happily and of full value, the circle of partners is constantly expanding, and everyone benefits.



Fig.43. “The noblemen” of Ērberģe and Vecsaliēna in IV Selonia Tourism market talks live stream.

This principle is also decisive in discovering the value and resources of each individual, which are extremely important in conditions of limited human resources. “We’re just three people here doing something.” Three is a lot - it’s a triple celebration. And if one of the thirty people living in the village adds even a small contribution to these three, it should be appreciated. It should be celebrated.

In 2022, the tradition of honoring fellow people was introduced – the competition “Silver of Selonia”

The sun sows silver, thunder strikes the sky, and silver sparks fall in the Daugava, a silver grove grows untouchable, a nightingale sings in a silver voice. We put a silver coin in water to purify it, we give a silver spoon to a newborn child, we look for a silver bullet in our pocket when evil can no longer be destroyed by other means. A silver ring highlights the hand of the wearer, not itself. People are the silver of Selonia. These fine grains, these sparkles. And “The Silver of Selonia” contest lays out dark blue woolen shawl to collect them. So that we can forge spoons, brooches and, if necessary, bullets.

Be Silver. And apply Silver.

Objectives of the competition:

- to create an opportunity for the wider public to learn about the people who, with their work, name, or lifestyle, polish the historic land of Selonia daily.
- To create an opportunity to see the silver shining in ordinary things and small places, and to say good words about your fellow people.

Whether we can appreciate the fine grains of silver and use them to create a spoon, a brooch, or a ball, depends on us. From people who act. From people who see. We are sighted, and we are writing:

- about positive-thinking, creative people whose living makes their place of being better.
- about people whose performance raises Selonia’s fame on a Latvian or European scale.
- about people who build and unite their community, inspire, and support others.
- about local entrepreneurs who not only manage their company/farm successfully, but also participate in parish events and support them materially.
- about rural people who have special passions, for example, are famous near and far for their delicious cakes, swim in winter or make beautiful blankets for children from the wool of their home-grown sheep.

Anyone can be a writer, and both the writers and characters of the descriptions receive awards. All applicants receive a special prize – a silver brooch in the shape of a wolf’s paw. The top three nominees receive a silver “rotadata” (a needle-shaped piece of jewelry) depicting a star brooch and a wolf silhouette.

The awards have been specially created for this competition and have already become a special badge of honor, as the competition will take place for the third time in 2024. Pins are worn on festive occasions, and by them we can recognize the brightest people of Selonia.



Fig.44. The nominees and laureates of the first competition “The Silver of Selonia”

Culture Programme of Selonia

This program is the first public financial instrument addressed directly to Selonia. It has been created and started to be implemented in 2023 with the initiative of the communities of Selonia.

Undoubtedly, this is both an achievement and a lot of work. We focus on achievement, we celebrate.

The celebration includes waiting together for the last night of project submission (similarly, political parties await election results), a festive atmosphere, flowers and a coffee table for the project evaluation committee, a program evaluation seminar.

Traditionally, regional cultural program evaluation seminars were not organized in Latvia, they appeared only in 2023, limited to a meeting and discussion.

The administrators of the Selonia Cultural Program, the partnership "Neighbors" and the "Community Cooperation Network "Islands of Selonia"", despite limited financial resources, decided in favor of the celebration. A holiday for yourself and all project implementers of the first cultural program.

The celebration was held in beautiful premises, with an excellent choir concert, a traditional Selonian feast table and a vote for the most popular project of the cultural program, which received a special prize - a scarf with a wolf paw pattern unique to Selonia.

This celebration included a serious evaluation of the program, presentations of project implementers and analysis of mistakes.

Celebrating does not exclude a responsible, perfectly done job. Celebrating makes it worth doing.



Fig.45. The knitters of Bebrene and Slate knit the special pattern of Selonia "wolf's foot" in the campaign of Latvia "A scarf for Latvia". A workshop in 2022, in Jēkabpils, organized by the entrepreneur Lolita Bērziņa.



Fig.46. "The wolf's foot" has been chosen the Sunākste community association "The Sun Well" receives the audience award - a scarf with the pattern "wolf's foot".

THERE IS LIVELINESS IN LIVING. DON'T TOLERATE WHINING IN ANY EXPRESSION.

The principle has two main components:

- common position in both face-to-face and remote communication.
- a complex set of all forms of perception – visual, auditory, intellectual, and kinesthetic environment.

In an economically weakly developed region, where the population is decreasing and the availability of services is shrinking, lamentation is a common occurrence in a large part of the public. As it becomes the basic form of communication, even high-quality, development-oriented events do not bring about adequate changes in society. They are not recognized and appreciated, thus erasing their positive effect.

To reduce this tendency as much as possible, it is necessary to stop whining in almost all forms of communication. In any discussion, seminar, event, this tendency must be stopped initially. If the community is difficult or objectively in an unenviable situation, take extra time to express emotions. Before starting rational work, let yourself get angry, shout, curse. Anger is energy. It has power, temperament, and movement. A phenomenon that hinders development is steady lamentation. Active anger is much more concentrated in time. Rarely will events be completely overwhelmed by expressions of anger. Monotonous whining, on the other hand, can do this very easily.

Whining about the good times gone by is also not acceptable in publications and remote communication. However, this does not mean only uniformly positive communication. On the contrary, criticism and objections must be expressed openly and convincingly. With self-respect. With indications on ways to solve the criticized situation.

All the above-mentioned cooperate in the implementation of this principle – innovation, celebration, transformation of negative phenomena, introduction of new elements into the game. The ways out of the wailing room are several and varied.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the principle includes all forms of perception – visual, auditory, intellectual, and kinesthetic.

It is the visual and kinesthetic environment that is traditionally given less attention in both face-to-face and remote communication. This principle encourages compliance of the visual image and color code with the content of any event.

Rational, positive information presented in depressing colors will lose most of its effect. An event with inspirational content, organized on unattractive, inappropriate premises, will not have the expected impact.

Attractive and fit does not always mean maximum comfort. The physical environment of the event can be the most diverse, but its choice must be justified and coordinated with the content of the event. The environment is an essential part of the effect you intend to achieve with your event.

If there are no suitable premises, choose to hold an event in an orchard, shed, yard with the principle: “This is our orchard/shed/yard, we can get together here and be happy for each other. And do more things.” Bring flowers, a pretty mug of lemonade, and a home-baked flatbread. It will be more meaningful than gathering in the warm parish administration hall and hoping for tea and some cookies from the municipal budget, whining: “We have nothing, they don’t give us a meeting place, nothing happens to us, and nobody does anything.”

PRACTICE

Golden cards

In 2023, as part of the SWOT analysis of the Selonia Smart Region strategy, Golden Cards of Selonia have been defined:

- Still little known, therefore mysterious and intriguing. What is unknown is worth attention.
- A relatively large amount of untouched nature has been preserved, the sparse population has contributed to the preservation of the effect that professor Janina Kursite calls the sacred landscape of Selonia.

- The legacy of the pre-Christian period has been preserved through natural inheritance, which can be assessed as a unique phenomenon in Latvia.
- The population's ability to self-organize at the level of small communities and social formations.
- A strong sense of independence, self-sufficiency, pride, and independence.
- Willingness to decide in favor of ethical values at the expense of everyday comforts.
- The sense of beauty and taste cultivated by most of the population, which can be read in the landscape and the arrangement of messages.
- Ability to create tourism and cultural products from limited resources.
- The ability to preserve the authentic environment and human contact outside the level of commercialization.
- The possibility of developing socio-economic processes in a manner consistent with the identity of the historical land.

Knowing that we possess such abilities and opportunities is more than enough to break the tradition of lament. The task of the promoters of the process is to achieve the spread of this awareness in the largest possible part of the population.

Identity Signs of Communities

The community identity signs developed in 2021-2023 basically use pure, saturated colors.

In signs where the use of colors is more austere, the appeal of liveliness is created by the unifying basic tone - the blue of the archeological woolen shawl of Selonia.

Signs live today - in everyday life and holidays of communities, flags, souvenirs, event decorations. There is liveliness in living.



Fig.47. In 2022 during the Folk Art Festival Gala Concert the identity signs were projected in animated form.



Fig.48. Folk Art Festival “Sēlija rotā” in 2024 takes place in Jaunjelgava in Aizkraukle region. Identity signs are widely used in posters and visual presentations. In this poster – the sign of Jaunjelgava.



Fig.49. From the left: the community of Dignāja is proud of its community sign and the flag of Selonia, welcoming people entering Dignāja parish. The soul of the Sunākste community, Ramona Ukrina, presents the Sunākste sign to her community; Sign of the Sēlpils community in the heart of Sēlpils - at the organic farm “Boļāni”.

IDENTITY SIGNS OF SELONIA COMMUNITIES, THEIR DESCRIPTIONS

AKNĪSTE



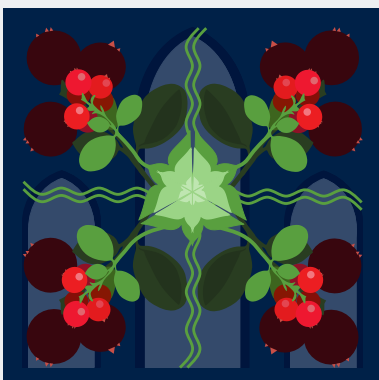
The rhythm of the logo's lines reveals a stylized image of Aknīste's yellow brick church. The church's silhouette also incorporates the steep drop at the edge of the hill fort in the center of Aknīste and its great size in proportion to the village. The center of the logo features Saltupju sacred spring with its oxidized iron bed, banks (orange) and clear stream of water (blue). The over color scheme of the logo reflects the village's proximity to Lithuania, as these tones are predominant in Lithuanian folk art. The logo has few curved, flowing lines (except for the spring), symbolizing the community's pragmatic character.

ANCENE



In the foreground are piles of grain (grain fields) with tiny blue cornflowers in them. On the sides are grain silos topped with flags, structured like sheaths of grain or the pigtails of Ancene girls. The towers resemble lighthouses emitting jets of flame, which prevent young families, children, and grandchildren from drifting away. In the background is dust from the grain and the country roads. The center is dominated by a red traditional Latvian Jumis sign formed by grain harvesting machines, the symbol of harvests, fertility, and abundance. Red represents strength, energy, life and vitality.

ASARE



The logo's background features a silhouette of the neo-Gothic windows of Asare Manor. In the foreground are Asare's renowned lingonberries and the winding lines of country roads, while in the center is a rose window and some wild tulips, the predominant species in the park of Asare Manor.

BEBRENE



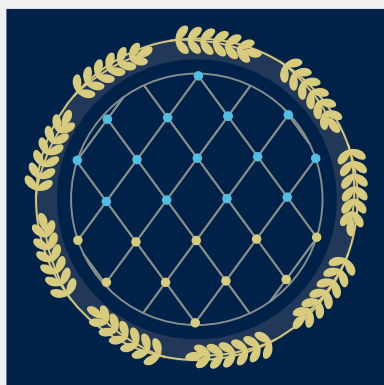
The logo depicts the Dviete floodplain, where every spring a small stream turns into a massive lake. Springtime trees and migrating birds are reflected in the water. The curves in the lines and their connecting points represent diverse peoples coming together. The colors are reserved, cool as the spring waters. The logo is ascetic and without unnecessary details.

BIRKINEĻI



The logo depicts a backlit window during twilight at the home of the poet Rainis, "Berķenele." Rainis' house brings the light of knowledge and culture to Berķenele. The homemade curtains in the windows symbolize patience, women's strength, and the work ethic. The logo has a peaceful feel and evokes a sense of home and calm. The predominating white color represents spirituality and purity.

ČERVONKA



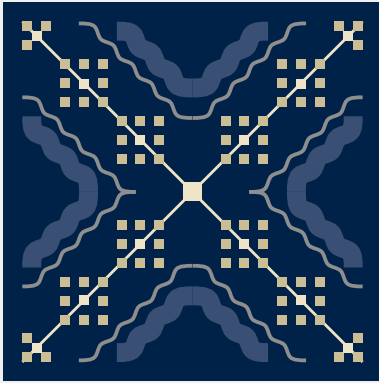
The center of the logo is filled with elements from the stained-glass windows at Červonka Manor, including a rooster symbolizing Baron von Hahn. The "net" in the stained-glass represents the unity of the people of Červonka, as the blue and yellow dots are linked together. The circle of the stained-glass is formed by a crown of sheaths of grain, which according to legend was presented by the peasants to the baron at harvest festivals, irrespective of the state of the relationship between the serfs and their lord at the time. The logo expresses the community's pride in Červonka's greatest treasure, the manor, even though the von Hahn family is long gone.

DEMENE



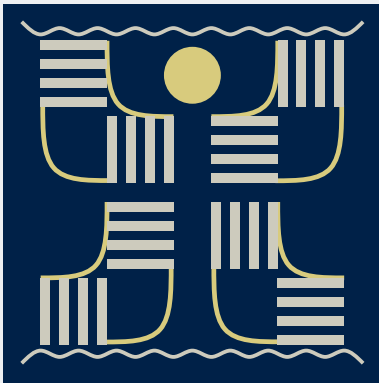
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DIGNĀJA



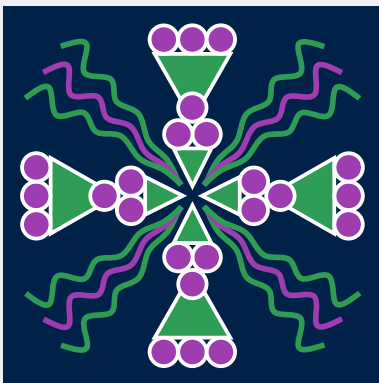
The logo depicts a golden cable across the Daugava River, with a stylized ferry or platform on the cable. The patterns on the platform are taken from archaeological costumes of the ancient inhabitants of Selonia i.e., a bronze half-ring ornament woven into a woman's shawl. The banks of the Daugava rest on the typical staggered hillforts of Selonia (Dignāja Hill Fort). The logo's rhythm is here/there, forward/back, crisscross, past/future.

DUNAVA



The logo depicts a ferryman, a powerful male in the middle of the Daugava River. The ferryman's figure forms eight rafts, while his head forms the sun reflected in the water. The composition is robust, laconic, weighty, and unambiguously masculine, reflecting the community's manly energy, hard physical work and earthiness. Dunava's ferrymen are local legends, and the logo reflects the unusual nature of this body of men who live on in their descendants' imaginations.

DVIETE



The logo's main element is the pride of Dviete - Pauls Sukatnieks' grapes. The bunches of grapes are arranged to form another Dviete delicacy - homemade ice cream. To highlight the grapes and the ice cream ball motif, the contour line is white. The wavy green and violet lines conjure associations with grapevines and festival banners.

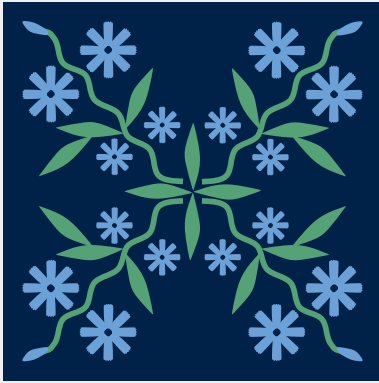
EGLAINE



In the center of the sign is the symbol of Stender's Alphabet - the big A, which is now in motion. A symbol of both the Stender Museum and the beautiful Eglaine school. Signs from all corners include train "carriages" with illuminated windows, which symbolize the great importance of the railway in the life of the Eglaine community and the movement of people on the border - crossing, going, and coming.

Moon boat and moonlight in the background - a reference to Rainis's Moon Girl.

ELKŠŅI



The biggest tourist attraction in Elkšņi is the hickory coffee brand “Kafeja Alīda,” whose founder Jolanta Kovnacka is the heart and soul of the community. Therefore, the central element of the logo is a hickory tree, whose nuts give the coffee its unique flavor and aroma.

ĒRBERĢE



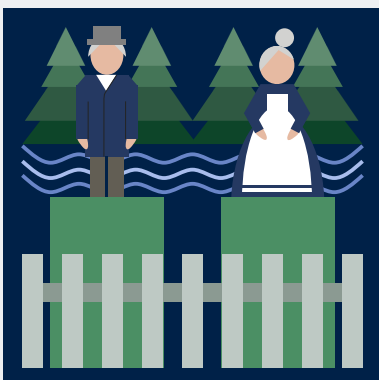
The logo’s main elements are golden feathers, symbolizing the lingering presence in Ērberģe of Baron Hahn (meaning “rooster” in German), prosperity, as well as a popular tourist show at Ērberģe Manor performed in aristocratic costumes. The second element is the railings on Marija’s (Mary’s) Bridge, highlighting their bright violet color and ornamentation. The lines of the railings are woven together with the good work done by the people of Ērberģe for their community.

GĀRSENE



The central elements of the community’s logo are the Blue Lady, the local castle’s dragons’ teeth walls and the nature trails along the river bends. The river bends are arranged so they also form the flowing hair of the Blue Lady, Gārsene’s famous ghost. A silhouette of the castle walls is reflected in the ornamentation of the hem of the lady’s dress. The overall composition is also associated with the local watermill (now a small hydroelectric dam).

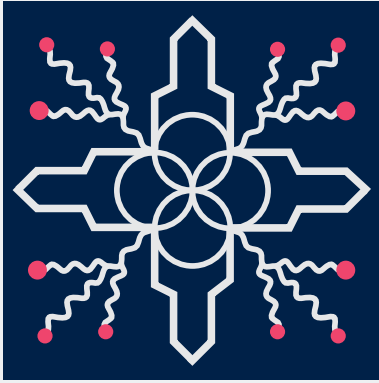
JAUNJELGAVA



The logo depicts the guardians of the village, a grandma and grandpa, who simultaneously stand on a pedestal and tend to their small garden plots. The fence in the foreground represents the border of Selonija and protection. In the background are the waters of the Daugava and forests.

The logo also employs elements of Jewish attire which have become pop culture icons.

KACĪTE (ILZU)



The central elements of the community's logo is a silhouette of Ilžu Church, which is reflected in a small lake whose intersecting circles form a "rose window" ornament. Surrounding this are apple trees whose branches form a typical Lithuanian metal cross. The overall composition of the lines is also reminiscent of a Lithuanian metal cross, a reference to both the nearby border with Lithuania and the many Lithuanians who visit the local church.

KALDABRUŅA



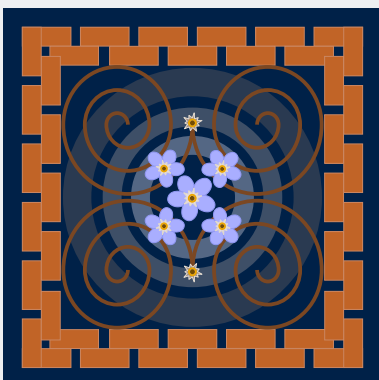
The central elements of the community's logo are the Cold Well (Kaltenbrunnen in German) and the reeds which have become a symbol of Kaldabruņa over the years, celebrated in the Meadow Museum housed in Kaldabruņa's school, the center of village life. The color tones are cool, silvery, and almost translucent. A crucial aspect of the logo is the mirroring process, as this place is a center for spirituality and nurturing individual talents for the surrounding district. The reflections of reeds in the cold well represent lightness in depth and movement in emptiness.

KAPLAVA



The central figure of the sign is a horse, a toy horse without a rider. Kaplava horse farm "Klajumi" is one of the most important places in Kaplava. The toy horse is the inhabitants' hope and the greatest wish for children to return home. In the second plane, the winding Daugava. The border – a gilded line, on the other side – a field of forget-me-nots (the national flowers of Belarus), in the foreground bright marigolds – flowers of coziness, warmth and brightness, the love of the place grown by Kaplavians themselves.

KALKŪNI



The logo is framed by bricks from the famous Kalkūni brick kiln. The center features onion rings of varying widths. In the middle are spirals from the dough of cinnamon chimney cake, as well as some forget-me-nots (forget-me-nots are also the national flowers of Belarus, as the border with Belarus is nearby).

LEIMANI



The central element of the community's logo is a hand-turned millstone. The stone's grooves spark associations with the most famous symbol in the local Symbols Park, the Fire Cross (representing movement and fertility). The logo also incorporates sheaths of grain, with the turning rhythm reinforced by golden grains aligned in the direction of movement.

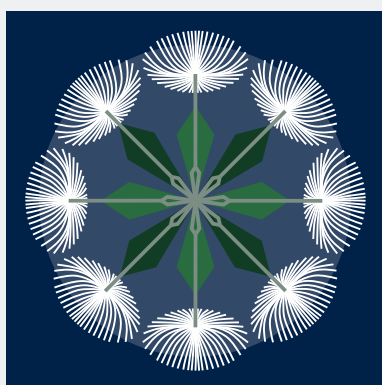
The logo's background includes a symbol representing the goddess Laima (a pine needle).

LIELZALVE



The logo's background features an ornament from the closet of the lord of Lielzalve Manor. In the foreground is an opened book in which history is being written using quills in the colors of Selonia's flag.

MEDUMI



The central element of the community's logo is a crown of dandelion puffs. Dandelion puffs and dandelion seeds represent lightness, youth and the guarantee of sunny uplands in the future. "Nothing will ever destroy that sun (the golden dandelions on the hills in spring)," explains Diāna, the head of Medumi Youth Centre.

The coat of arms of Medumi features an oak tree on a golden hill, and there is a place near the village called "Zelta kalns" (Golden Hill.) Therefore, the key message of the logo is ensuring the hills remain golden.

NERETA



The central element of the community's logo are the models for the birch trees described in Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš's literary work "Baltā grāmata" (The White Book) at "Riekstiņi" farm in Nereta. The tips of the birches are as prickly and sharp as the character of the local people, who are typically direct, ungiven to flattery and critical of both them and others. The center of the logo contains another element taken from the illustrations for "Baltā grāmata" i.e., a pattern on the wooden boards in the barn at "Riekstiņi." This symbol also reflects Nereta's status as a centre of Selonia's identity. The logo also employs the contours of birch leaves. The grey blue color of the bog lichens is a tribute to the local bogs and the area's natural beauty as a whole.

PAŠULIENE



The pattern of the glove, which in this case is a symbol of identity, belonging to a place and at the same time Latvianness, is located at the beginning of the road/labyrinth. It must overcome inconveniences, difficulties and obstacles to get to the middle of the sign where it has its rightful place. The labyrinth is built from the “pipes” of the pumping station, talking about how this settlement came to be. The white lines break in some places - the flow of energy in the community is hampered, contact with people has either not yet been established or has been lost. The lines of the sign resemble the layout and construction of Pašulienē village. In the background are the forests of the Pašulienē nature reserve. Sign closed - haven.

PILSKALNE



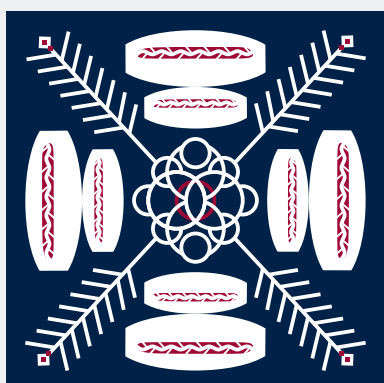
The logo presents traditional ornaments found on the doors of historic buildings, such as barns, taverns, and grain kilns. This same line rhythm is employed to represent a unique industrial heritage site, the grain kiln at Pilskalne Manor. The winding path of Pilskalne’s forest meadows and the overall mood of the landscape is expressed by ferns enclosing them from all sides, which protect the area’s natural beauty. The logo is oriented toward the centre, just as regular gatherings are the bedrock of Pilskalne’s community spirit.

RADŽUPE



The logo comprises flower-scented baths and tuibs used in sauna rituals. The hickory tree and marigolds are common medicinal plants. The wavy orange and yellow lines represent the radiance of the local area, feminine magic, and hops stalks. The wavy blue lines symbolize waterways, the river, bogs, and the steam in the sauna. The overall composition evokes the sparkling eye of a forest nymph.

RITE



The logo comprises several snow-white pillows placed on top of each other with Richelieu cutwork borders. These pillows symbolize the hard work, care and pride of our grandmothers. In the logo’s center are loops of thread, circles and intersecting circles, representing togetherness, human contact and interaction. The pine needle, an element symbolizing the goddess Laima, represents cleanliness, tidiness and hard work. The logo employs clean and fresh colors.

SALIENA



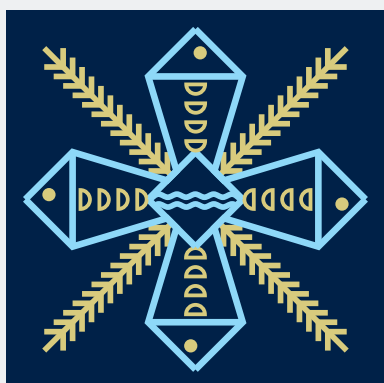
The main element of the sign – the arched bridge of Poguļanka which is already established brand of Saliena. Birds are gathering at the bridge – the heritage of Kārlis Grīgulis – and numerous creative people of Saliena – poets, artists, musicians. The meander of the Poguļanka river. The reflection in the river – interest in the history of their place, willingness to fit and respect the heritage. The flock of birds, gathering – community staying together, cooperation and unity.

SAUKA



The logo comprises the silhouettes of opened books, whose spines form the letter “S” in the colors of Latvia’s flag. The intertwined book silhouettes are reminiscent of the Latvian “Auseklītis” (Morning Star) sign, which was a key symbol of the National Awakening and is still revered in Sauka today. Stylized elderberry flowers run diagonally across the logo, representing the renowned elderberry syrups made by Sauka artisan Gita Kļaviņa. The logo employs clean and fresh colors.

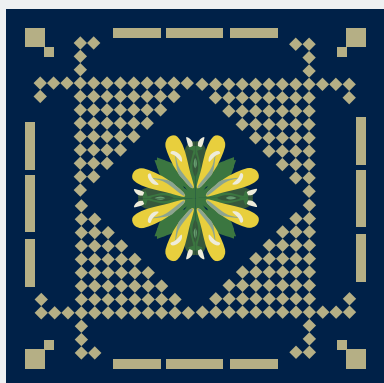
SECE



The logo comprises the silhouettes of fish and sheaths of grain, representing the backbones of Sece’s economy.

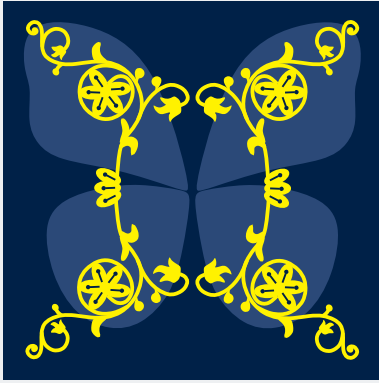
The row of scales in the middle of the fish and the golden coins symbolize wealth (scales = money.) In the middle of the logo is a wave enclosed by a rhombus shape, evoking Sece’s famous fish farming ponds. The wave, which is cordoned off from the rest of the logo, is also a reference to the origin of Sece’s name, “Daugava secen” (meaning, “the Daugava passes by”). Straight lines dominate the logo, expressing the pragmatic and practical character of the Sece community.

SĒLPILS



The dominant features of the logo are bronze ornaments found on archaeological women’s shawls (9th–12th centuries AD) of Sēlija, in the form of hillforts and Jumis signs (Jumis is the god of fertility.) In the middle of the logo is a field with a rare woad flower, used in ancient times to dye fine pieces of attire dark blue, which represents traditional craft skills. The field represents Lejasdopeļi burial site, the most important archaeological site of ancient Sēlija, located in Sēlpils Parish. Woads are practically extinct today, and the complex dyeing process is symbolic of Sēlpils’ role as keeper of Selonia’s ancient culture. The bronze ornaments in the logo are deliberately a little tarnished to emphasise the sense of antiquity. The elongated lines along the edges of the logo can be interpreted as drawers in the Cabinet of Folk Songs of Sēlpils.

SKRUDALIENA



The logo comprises just two elements. The dark blue butterfly in the background is taken from the coat of arms of Skrudaliena Parish, representing an already established part of the community's identity. The flowing yellow lines in the foreground reflect patterns in a wood carving found above the entrance to the yellow church in Skrudaliena. The fluidity of the lines and the ornament itself testify to the centrality of feminine strength and energy in the community. The plants and flowers depicted within the lines symbolize residents' appreciation of beauty and their neat little village houses set amidst pretty flowerbeds. This element and its bright yellow color are highly typical of the district and point to the proximity of the border with Belarus, celebrating the integration of cultural and architectural diversity.

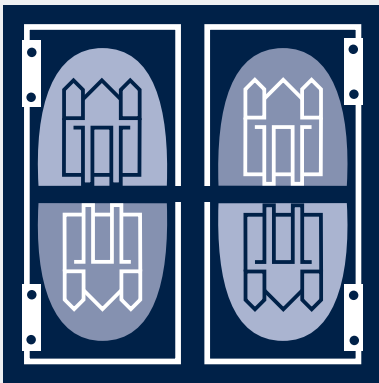
SLATE



The logo is encircled by a pattern from a Slate folk costume skirt which resembles a barcode. The main motif is a cloudberry.

In the logo's center the cloudberry leaves form the not-quite-overgrown Ezerpurvs Bog in Slate Forest, with a small cross in the middle (a reference to the legendary copper ladder).

SUBATE

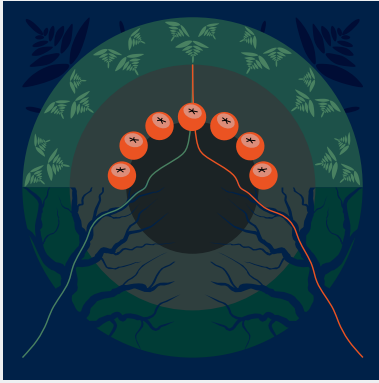


The logo takes the form of a mirror within a mirror.

On the first mirroring level, Subate's traditional window shutters reflect cultural affinity with Lithuanian villages, as Subate is a border crossing point with Lithuania. On the second level, the large, extended forms represent Subate's lakes, which determine the layout of the village and set the parameters of local life. The logo also depicts the narrow strips of land between the lakes.

The shapes of the lakes are also reminiscent of the area's historic Jewish gravestones. The third level includes a stylized portrayal of Subate's unique Lutheran church, which is set on a hill with magnificent views of Subate. The final element, which is located on the church gate, is a traditional porch, symbolizing Subate's openness to diverse cultures, faiths, visitors, ideas and new beginnings.

SUNĀKSTE



Through a play on words, the name of Sūnākste can be translated as “the moss well.” Two streams flow out of the moss well, each entering a different river. The sinews of the rivers are represented by the silhouettes of old trees, symbolizing blood circulation.

In the center of the logo is a semicircle of rowan berries, which symbolize magical protection of oneself and one’s home against the evil eye. The eyes of the village are wide open to everything new.

ŠĒDERE



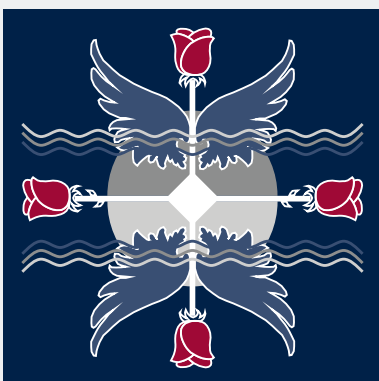
In the logo two linden trees with intertwined branches take pride of place on the ceremonial apron sash of a farmer’s wife. The intertwined branches represent the people of the community reaching out to each other. The ceremonial apron takes the form of Šēdere’s millpond, over which flows a stream of water.

VIESĪTE



The logo comprises several elements which characterize Viesīte. The logo is split down the middle by a narrow-gauge railway track with grass growing between the sleepers. Viesīte is the center of memory for the long-closed Little Railway, and locals divide their history into eras before and after the railway operated. Another aspect of Viesīte’s identity is derived from the village’s historic name “Āžu krogs” (The Tavern of the Rams). This name is still used by locals in everyday conversations, and rams are employed as decorative ornaments around the village. A set of ram’s horns are the dominant feature of the logo, also forming the letter “V.” Near the center of the logo are four symbols which could be perceived as the ram’s eyes or acorns, which are part of Viesīte’s coat of arms.

ZASA



The logo is based on local legends about Sugar Hill and the silver stream running beneath it, the island of roses, and the Werewolf Tree which on full moon nights reveals its magic powers on the pearl bridge. The logo’s way lines also represent a natural landmark of Zasa, the millpond created from damming the Dzirnupīte River, which is the dominant feature of Zasa Park. The muse’s wings represent the most important mission of the Zase community – giving inspiration to creative people and being creative ourselves. The legendary rose is said to reflect the character of the local people – ambitious, capricious and reserved. These qualities are reflected in the cool, nighttime, moonlight tones in the sign.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Research documents of Dviete community – questionnaire and analysis.

Appendix 2 – Identity palette of Sunākste.

Appendix 3 – Influence of community cooperation network on social, cultural, and political environment.

Appendix 4 – Erasmus training course programs for 5 days and 7 days



APPENDIX 1 – RESEARCH DOCUMENTS OF DVIETE COMMUNITY – QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS.

1

DVIETE

Deklarēto iedzīvotāju skaits 2020.gada janvārī – 187

Iedzīvotāju skaits, kas norādīts kopienas aptaujas anketās:

Aptaujas anketās norādīts salīdzinoši korekti, dominē iedzīvotāju skaits robežās no 350 līdz 500 cilvēkiem. Atšķirības ir ļoti būtiskas.

Atšķirību iemesli:

- Dvietē ir aktīva kopienas daļa, īstenotās darbības rosina domāt par būtiski lielāku iedzīvotāju skaitu ciematā;
- Kopienas pašapziņa, kas uzskatāmi atspoguļojas aptaujas anketās. Pašcieņas līmenis liedz pieņemt to, ka reālais iedzīvotāju skaits ciematā ir tik neliels;
- Statistikas datus ir fiksēts tikai ciemata iedzīvotāju skaits, taču kopienas dzīvē piedalās arī viensētās dzīvojošie.

Ziņas pēc atslēgvārda „Dviete” www.google.com pirmajā šķirklī

[Dviete — Vikipēdija](#)

[lv.wikipedia.org > wiki > Dviete](http://lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dviete)

Dviete, arī **Dvīts**, ir ciems Ilūkstes novada **Dvietes** pagastā, pagasta centrs. Izvietojies pagasta dienvidos **Dvietes** upes un tās pietekas Rotupes krastā autoceļu ...

[Dviete – Ilūkste | Tūrisma klubs "Sniegpulkstenīte"](#)

www.sniegpulkstenite.lv > velomarsruti > dviete-ilukste

Dvietes muižas apbūve, muižas pārvaldnieka ēka un muižas parks veidots 19. gs. vidū. Parka platība ir 7 ha. Parkā ir ar 3 kanāļiem saistīti dīķi, 2 akmens dārzi ...

[Dvietes pagasta pārvalde – Ilūkstes novada pašvaldība](#)

www.ilukste.lv > pasvaldiba > dvietes-pagasta-parvalde

Dvietes pagasta pārvalde. Adrese: „Pagasta pārvalde”, **Dviete**, **Dvietes** pagasts, Ilūkstes novads, LV-5441. Kontakttālruni: 65475434, 28377279. E-pasts: ...

[Dviete nav tikai punkts Latvijas kartē. Uzņēmīgas dvietietes ...](#)

skaties.lv > beztabu > interesanti > dviete-nav-tikai-pun...

2020. gada 25. febr. - Ilūkstes novada **Dviete** atrodas 207 kilometru attālumā no Rīgas, bet no ... **Dvietē**, vīnogu selekcionāra Paula Sukatnieka dzimtas mājās ...

[Cimos Dvietē | Bebrene. Atpūta un tūrisms. - Mana Bebrene](#)

www.manabebrene.lv > cimos-dviete

Cimos **Dvietē**. watch Publicēšanas datums: sestdiena, 2017 gada 19. augusts. Vēl pirms dažiem gadiem pasaulē pazīstamā selekcionāra Paula Sukatnieka ...

[Dviete, Dvietes pagasts, Ilūkstes novads - Adrešu katalogs ...](#)

www.lursoft.lv > adrese > majas

Informācija par Latvijas adresi **Dviete**, **Dvietes** pagasts, Ilūkstes novads.

["Madaras", Dviete, Dvietes pagasts, Ilūkstes novads, LV-5441 ...](#)

www.lursoft.lv > adrese > [madaras-dviete-dvietes-pagas...](#)

Dviete, Mednieku kolektīvs. Ilūkstes nov., **Dvietes** pag., **Dviete**, "Madaras". Attīstīt nenoplicinošu medību saimniecību; iesaistīt savus biedrus medījamo dzīvnieku ...

Kopienas aptaujas anketās norādītās svarīgākās vietas

Muiža, „Apsītes”, dižozols, baznīca, parks, pļavas, paliene, Mini zoodārzs



WordItOut

WordItOut

Iedzīvotāju atbildes ir uzskatāmi nesakrītīgas ar publiski pieejamo informāciju. Google meklētāja pirmajā šķirklī pastarpināti uzrādās būtiskākie Dvietes objekti iedzīvotāju skatījumā – muiža, parks, „Apsītes”, u.c. Meklētāja rezultātu informācija ir uzskatāmi pasīva – tā ir vikipēdijas lapa, biedrības, kura nedarbojas Dvietē, sniegtā informācija, pašvaldības informācija, kā arī ziņas par mednieku kluba darbību. Tikai vienā rezultātā uzrādās būtiskā informācija – par „Apsītēm”, Dvietes muižu, biedrībām.

Publiskais, nevalstiskais un komercsektors Dvietē:

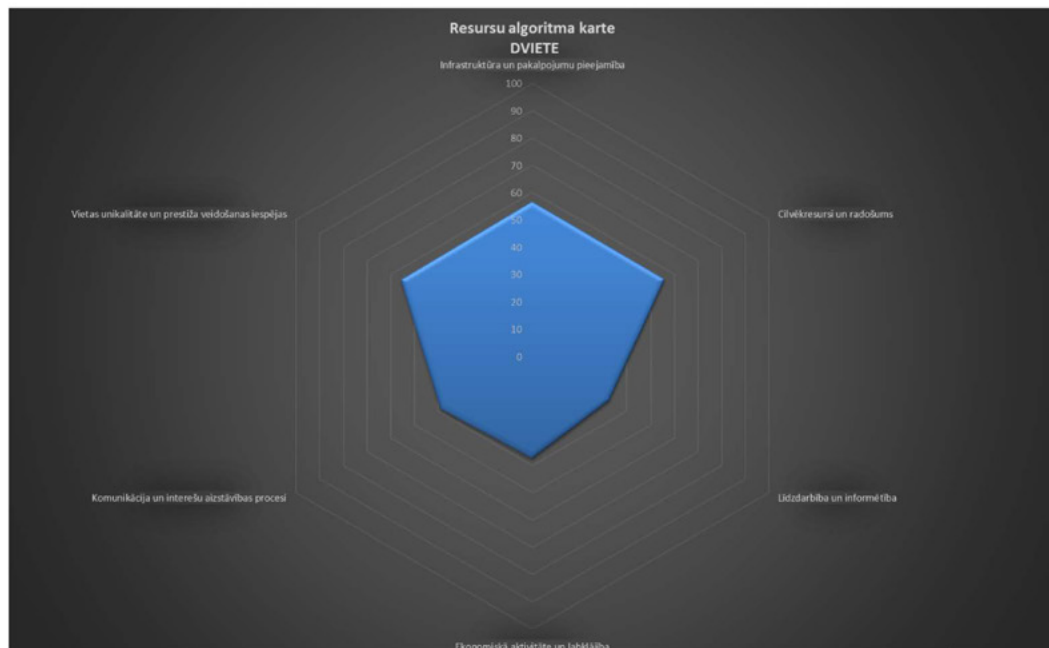
Dviete ir Ilūkstes novada Dvietes pagasta centrs. Tur atrodas šādas pašvaldības/publiskā sektora iestādes:

Pašvaldība, kultūras nams, pasts, bibliotēka, Paula Sukatnieka muzejs „Apsītes”, Dvietes muižas komplekss, Sociālā atbalsta centrs.

Nevalstiskais sektors, reliģiskā darbība: Dvietē darbojas divas aktīvas NVO, kas pārstāv vides aizsardzības, kultūras un tūrisma veicināšanas, amatniecības un mūžizglītības jomas. Abas darbojas aktīvi, labā līmenī, atpazīstamākā no tām ir „Dvietes vīnogas”. Šī biedrība faktiski formē Dvietes kopienu, kā arī atpazīstamību. Aktīvi darbojas Romas katoļu baznīcas draudze.

Svarīgākie uzņēmējdarbības objekti:

Veikals, aptieka, remontdarbnīcas. Dvietes saldējuma ražotne, Dvietes mini zoo, ēdināšanas pakalpojumu sniedzēja Dace Tamane.



Semināra norises forma.

Semināra norises forma – draudzīga, ar vidēji lielu apmeklējumu. Daudz diskusiju, aizrautīgu un ieinteresētu, liela daļa laika atvēlēta neformālām sarunām. Piedalās NVO sektora pārstāvji, uzņēmējdarbības pārstāvji. Nav pārstāvēta pašvaldība. Piedalās divi pārstāvji no Bebenes. Aptaugas anketas tiek aizpildītas gan semināra norises laikā, gan individuāli.

Mājasdarba izstrādes metode.

Mājasdarbs tiek izstrādāts, organizējot kopienas aktīvistu sanākumi biedrībā „Dvietes vīnogas”. Izstrādes notiek diskusiju formātā, izvēloties svarīgāko attīstības elementu, kas būtu reāli īstenojams.

Mājasdarba prezentācijas forma.

Mājasdarbs ir sagatavots stāstījuma formā, nav rakstisku materiālu. Prezentē viens cilvēks.



**Dvietes mūza – „Apsītes”, muiža.
Jaunā mūza – kafejnīca, pievilcīga ēdināšanas iestāde.**

Specifika

- Spēcīga personība, kas virza kopienas dzīvi, apvieno iedzīvotājus. Muzejs „Apsītes” ir veltīts tik pat spēcīgai personībai;
- Novada „nomale”, neliels ciemats, kurā publiskie pakalpojumi, infrastruktūra ir nodrošināta minimāli;
- Ļoti augsta kopienas pašcieņa, lokālais patriotisms;
- Pēdējo 2 gadu laikā, pateicoties kopienas aktivitātēm, noformējies pievilcīgs, bagāts tūrisma piedāvājums;
- Veidojas nelieli uzņēmumi, kas iekļaujas kopējā ciemata attīstības ainā;

Riski

- Trūkst informācijas publiskajā telpā, elektroniskie mediji sniedz radikāli atšķirīgu priekšstatu par Dvieti;
- Nosaukums un identitāte – Dviete saistās ar Dvietes upes palieni, pļavām. Taču ciemats Dviete ar šo parādību ir saistīts minimāli;
- Jaunākās paaudzes trūkums aktīvajā kopienā;
- Novada pašvaldības neieinteresētība un vietējās pārvaldes pasivitāte;
- Ierobežoti cilvēkresursi jau izveidotā piedāvājuma uzturēšanai un attīstībai;
- Publiskās infrastruktūras trūkums.

Iespējas un darbības

- Uzlabot informācijas apriti elektroniskajos medijos, sociālajos tīklos, nodrošinot Dvietes atpazīstamību atbilstoši tās tēlam;
- Veicināt jaunākās paaudzes piesaisti aktīvajai kopienas daļai – mudinot veidot uzņēmējdarbību, izmantojot esošo tūrisma piedāvājuma bāzi, izmantot NVA jauniešu programmas, veidot sadarbību ar Daugavpils mācību iestādēm, piedāvājot prakses vietas, organizējot nometnes un izglītojošas nodarbības. Akceptēt attālinātu līdzdalību Dvietes kopienas attīstībā;
- Pievērst pastiprinātu uzmanību „diasporai” – cilvēkiem, kuriem ir saiknes ar Dvieti, tādējādi palielinot aktīvo kopienu; piedāvāt vasaras atpūtu, kas kombinēta ar brīvprātīgo darbu kopienā;
- Uzlabot sadarbību ar novada pašvaldību, meklēt konstruktīvas sadarbības formas;
- Paplašināt un detalizēt jaunās mūzas piedāvājumu, paredzot tai izveidot kopienas atbalsta sistēmu;
- Detalizācijā rekomendējams iekļaut papildus funkcijas kafejnīcai – tūrisma informācijas sniegšana, suvenīru, vietējo rokdarbu ražojumu tirdzniecība;
- Veidot sadarbību ar tuvākās apkārtnes, novada pārtikas ražotājiem, lai nodrošinātu lokālo produktu izplatību.



Kultūras ministrija



Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds



Demokrātijas atbalsts

Projekts “Kopienas izaugsmes katalizators” Nr.2020.LV/NVOF/MIC/001/02
Projektu finansiāli atbalsta Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds no Kultūras ministrijas
piesūktajiem Latvijas valsts budžeta līdzekļiem, īsteno biedrība «Ūdenszīmes»



Projekts "Kopienas izaugsmes katalizators"
Nr.2020.LV/NVOF/MIC/001/02
Projektu finansēti atbalsta Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds no Kultūras ministrijas piešķirtajiem Latvijas valsts budžeta līdzekļiem

Kopienas aptaujas anketa (DVIETE)

Informācija par respondentu:

Vārds, uzvārds * (*Līdzī, norādiet, ja vēlaties):	Vēcums		Dzimums
Dzīvesvieta:	Novads, pagasts (lūdzu, ierakstiet)	Atzīmējiet ar x Dzīvoju viensētā Dzīvoju ciematā	

Lūdzu, novērtējiet skalā no 1 līdz 10, cik svarīgi, Jūsaprāt, ir šādi faktori vietas potenciālam kategorijā „Infrastruktūra un pakalpojumu pieejamība”

ceļu infrastruktūra, sasmēdzamība	atālumš no lielākajiem attstības centriem	medicīnas pakalpojumu pieejamība	izglītības pieejamība bērniem – bērnu dārzs, skola, vidusskola	mūžizglītības pieejamība pieaugušajiem	pagasā pārvalde – pieejama pašvaldība uz vietas	bibliotēka	veikals	interneta pārklājums	autoserviss, citi aktuālie pakalpojumi

Lūdzu, novērtējiet skalā no 1 līdz 10, cik labi nodrošināti (pieejami), Jūsaprāt, ir šādi faktori vietas potenciālam kategorijā „Infrastruktūra un pakalpojumu pieejamība”

ceļu infrastruktūra, sasmēdzamība	atālumš no lielākajiem attstības centriem	medicīnas pakalpojumu pieejamība	izglītības pieejamība bērniem – bērnu dārzs, skola, vidusskola	mūžizglītības pieejamība pieaugušajiem	pagasā pārvalde – pieejama pašvaldība uz vietas	bibliotēka	veikals	interneta pārklājums	autoserviss, citi aktuālie pakalpojumi

Par anketas saturu atbild biederība „Udešzīmes”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē. Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.



Līdzīgu, pārdiet savu viedokli vietās potenciālam kategorijā „ Cilvēkresursi un radošums ”	
Cik cilvēku kopumā dzīvo Dvietē? Reāli dzīvo visu gadu?	
Cik daudzi dzīvo vasarās/brīvdienā mājās?	
Cik % no visu gadu apdzīvotajām mājām būtu dēvējamas par skaistām, sakoptām?	
Cik % no vasaras mājām būtu dēvējamas par skaistām, sakoptām?	
Cik daudziem ir augstākā izglītība?	
Vai izglītības līmenim ir nozīme?	
Cik liels ir tas cilvēku skaits/procents, kas nosaka/organizē svarīgākos notikumus Dvietē?	
Cik daudzi no šiem cilvēkiem ir pašvaldības darbinieki?	
Cik daudzi no šiem cilvēkiem ir “iebraucēji” – vasaras māju īpašnieki, cilvēki kas pārcēlušies uz dzīvi Dvietē no citurienes?	
Kurš cilvēks, Jūsaprāt, ir Dvietes „dvēsele”?	

Līdzīgu, pārdiet savu viedokli vietās potenciālam kategorijā „ Līdzdarbība un informētība ”	
Cik daudz Dvietē ir biedrību/aktīvo cilvēku apvienību?	
Vai jūs darbojaties kādā no tām?	
Cik % no kopējā iedzīvotāju skaita tajās iesaistās?	
Vai ir svarīgi iesaistīties biedrībā?	

Kādēļ? (atbilstošos atzīmējiet ar x)

ir iemesls sanākt kopā, satikt cilvēkus	
var iemācīties jaunas lietas, organizēt pasākumus, kaut kur aizbraukt	
var izdarīt nozīmīgas lietas savas vietas attīstībai	
var ietekmēt pašvaldības lēmumu pieņemšanas procesus	
var ietekmēt lēmumu pieņemšanas procesus valsts līmenī	

Par anketas saturu atbild biedrība „Ļūdenszīmes”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē. Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.



Lūdzu, pārdziļiniet savu viedokli vietās potenciālam kategorijā „Vietas unikālitate un prestiža veidošanas iespējas (neizmantojie resursi)”

Lūdzu, nosauciet:	
3 svarīgākās vietas Dvietē:	1: 2: 3:
3 skaistākās vietas Dvietē:	1: 2: 3:
3 tādas vietas, kas krīt uz nerviem vai duras acīs:	1: 2: 3:
3 tādas vietas, ar ko Jums saistās personīgas, īpašas atmiņas. Tām nav jābūt skatāmām/sakoptām;	1: 2: 3:
3 tādas vietas, kas saistās ar svarīgiem vēsturiskiem notikumiem, arī tad, ja tās nav sakoptas/apskatāmas;	1: 2: 3:
3 vēsturiskas personības, kas saistītas ar Dvieti;	1: 2: 3:
3 mūsdienu cilvēkus, kas saistīti ar Dvieti:	1: 2: 3:
3 vārdus, kas raksturo Dvieti;	1: 2: 3:

Par anketas saturu atbild biedrība „Īdēnszīmes”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē. Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.



Lūdzu, pārdiet savu viedokli vietās potenciālam kategorijā „**Ekonomiskā aktivitāte un labklājība**”

Kā Jūs varētu teikt par savu dzīvi (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):

dzīvoju labi, pārticīgi	
esmu turīgs, bagāts cilvēks	
dzīvoju pārticīgi	
dzīvoju trūcīgi	

Kas veido Jūsu priekšstatu? (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):

man ir laba ģimene, jūtos droši	
man pieder sava māja/ir ģimenes māja	
manā īpašumā ir zeme(cik daudz?);	
manā īpašumā ir mežs	
mani ienākumi ir pietiekami ikdienas vajadzību segšanai	
varu izveidot uzkrājumus, veikt lielākas iegādes	
man pietiek līdzekļu veselības uzturēšanai	
man ir laba veselība, tās uzturēšanai līdzekļi nav vajadzīgi	
man ir interesants darbs/ vaļasprieks	
mans darbs nav pietiekami atalgots	
Dvietē nav man piemērota darba	

Esmu (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):

pensionārs	
algots darbinieks	
pašnodarbinātais	
zemnieku saimniecības/uzņēmuma īpašnieks	
bezdarbnieks	
mājsaimniece	

Par anketas saturu atbild biedrība „Uzdevsmies”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē. Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.



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Lūdzu, ierakstiet, Jūsprāt, atbilstošos skaitļus:	
Cik daudz Dvietē ir uzņēmumu/zemnieku saimniecību?	
Cik piemājas saimniecību?	
Kā Jums šķiet, cik % no iedzīvotājiem ir uzņēmēji, zemnieku saimniecību īpašnieki?	
Kā Jums šķiet, cik % no iedzīvotājiem strādā pašvaldības, valsts institūcijās?	

Lūdzu, paudiet savu viedokli vietas potenciālam kategorijā „Komunikācija un interešu aizstāvības procesi”

Cik bieži Jūs sazināties ar sava novada/pagasta pašvaldību (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):	
1 reizi mēnesī	
1 reizi 6 mēnešos	
1 reizi gadā	
Nekad	
Cits variants:	
Kādos jautājumos vērsties pašvaldībā(atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):	
kārtoju maksājumus	
pēc sociālā atbalsta	
iesniedzu dokumentus	
prasu padomu kādas konkrētas situācijas risināšanā	
iesniedzu savus ierosinājumus un idejas	
piedalos iedzīvotāju sanāksmēs, sabiedriskajās apspriešanās	
Cits variants	

Par anketas saturu atbild biežība „Ļaidszīmes”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē. Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.



Pie kādiem speciālistiem savā pašvaldībā vērsaties biežāk? (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):	
Novada domes priekšsēdētājs	
Pagasta pārvaldnieks	
Komunālās daļas, īpašumu apsaimniekošanas speciālisti	
Grāmatveidības, finanšu speciālisti	
Projektu speciālists	
Sociālā dienesta darbinieki	
Kultūras darbinieki, sabiedrisko attiecību speciālists	
Nezinu, kā viņus sauc, pagastā strādā	
Cits variants	
Vai esat piedalījies kādā protesta vai atbalsta akcijā? (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):	
Nē	
Jā:	
Kā tas notika:	
piedalījies ar savu parakstu	
organizēju parakstu vākšanas kampaņu, sagatavoju materiālus	
piedalījies sanāksmē	
organizēju sanāksmi	
sagatavoju iesniegumu un savācu parakstus	
Vai zināt, kādi šai akcijai bija rezultāti? (atzīmējiet ar x atbilstoši):	
Jā, pozitīvi	
Jā, negatīvi	
Nenoskaidroju, nezinu	

Par anketas saturu atbild biedrība „Īdēnszīmes”. Iegūtie viedokļu dati tiks izmantoti projekta rezultātu nodrošināšanai un var tikt izmantoti projekta publicitātē.
 Informācija par respondentu (vārds, uzvārds) netiks nodota trešajām personām. Informācija par respondentu (dzimums, vecums) projektā tiks izmantoti tikai apkopotā veidā.

APPENDIX 2 – IDENTITY PALETTE OF SUNĀKSTE.

Projekts “Kopienas izaugsmes katalizators. Empātija” Nr. 2022.NVOF/MAC/012/028
Projektu finansiāli atbalsta Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds no Kultūras ministrijas piešķirtajiem
Latvijas valsts budžeta līdzekļiem.



SUNĀKSTE

Uzskata, ka jau Livonijas ordeņa Sēlpils fogtejas laikā 1516. gadā Frīdrihs fon Plāters Sunākstē dibinājis vikāriju, bet 1570. gadā, pirmā Kurzemes un Zemgales hercoga Gotharda Ketlera laikā, celta senākā Sunākstes baznīca. Apvienotajai draudzei 1742. gadā ar mācītāja Radecka gādību uzcēla jaunu Sēlpils-Sunākstes draudzes koka baznīcu, kas līdz 1816. gadam atradās tagadējā Sunākstes pagastā pie senā ceļa uz Koknesi mūsdienu „Zvanītāju” māju vietā. Tajā no 1766. līdz 1796. gadam sprediķoja Vecais Stenders un vēlāk viņa dēls Jaunais Stenders. 1816. gada augustā, tuvējam Pīrāgu krogam aizdegoties, liesmās aizgāja bojā arī Sunākstes baznīca.

Pēc I Vispārīgajiem latviešu Dziedāšanas svētkiem mācītājs Kārlis Gotlobs Stenders 1873. gada 22. augustā 10 priekšpusdienā atjaunotajā Sunākstes baznīcā, pēc tam pie G. F. Stendera kapa un mācītājmuižas parka audzē sarīkoja dziedāšanas svētkus, kurā piedalījās astoņi kori no sešām Kurzemes guberņas Sēlpils draudzes novada dziedāšanas biedrībām ar aptuveni 200 dziedātājiem. Sunākstes mācītājmuižas birztalā risinājās dziesmu kari un pirmo vietu ieguva Sunākstes jauktais koris. “Latviešu Avīzes” un “Mājas Viesis” ziņoja, ka svētkos bijuši pieci līdz seši tūkstoši klausītāju.

Pēc Kurzemes tautskolu pārskata 1875. gadā Sunākstes draudzes skolās mācījās 241 skolēns. Tagadējais Sunākstes ciems izveidojies pie 1878. gadā uzbūvētās Lielsunākstes Piksteres pagasta skolas.

Sunākste ir ciems Aizkraukles novada Sunākstes pagastā, pagasta centrs.

Izvietojies pagasta vidusdaļā Lauces krastā autoceļu V956 un V926 krustojumā 36 km no Jaunjelgavas un 115 km no Rīgas.

Sunākstē atrodas pagasta pārvalde, pamatskola, saieta nams, bibliotēka, pasts, veikals. Apdzīvotā vieta izveidojusies pie Sunākstes pagastnama un skolas; izaugusi pēc kara gados kā kolhoza «Sunākste» centrālais ciemats.



Periodikā atrodamas interesantas, īpatnējas un vietu raksturojošas ziņas par Sunāksti: Jēkabpils Vēstnesis, Nr.5 (09.11.1923)

Kāds Sunākstes pagasta pilsonis, dabūdams atraidošu atbildi no savas iecerētās, mēģinājis to „iezālot,” ar ģīftīgu pulveri. Par šo soli vainīgam būs jāatbild tiesas priekšā.

Jēkabpils Vēstnesis, Nr.31 (04.08.1932)

Ledus gabali, uguns un ūdens virs Sunākstes p. centra...

26. jūlijā Sunākstes pag. piemeklēja briesmīgs krusas negaiss. Pērkonim graujot, ar briesmīgu vēju krākdami nāca zemē krusas gabali baloža olu lielumā. Pa gaisu lidoja koku zari, lapas, no jumtiem plēstās skaidas. Troksnis bija tik liels, kā simtiem ložmetēju šautu. Negaisa pusē ēkām izsisti visi logi. Ledus gabali ar briesmīgu vēju un lietu brāzdamies sacēla ļaudīs, kas atradās mājās iekšā, šausmīgas izbailes. Apkārtne bija tā necaurredzamā baltā tumsā.

Cauri krusas sienai nevarēja izlausties neviens dzīvš radījums. Cilvēki un lopī, kas nepaspēja glābties zem jumta tika sadauzīti. Labi paaugušie lauki maz acumirkļos pārvērtās ar zemi sajauktā duļķainā, zaļā putrā. Kartupeļu laksti sašķaidīti un sadauzīti. Augļu kokiem un ogu krūmiem krusa nosita augļus un gandrīz visas lapas. Jaunam ābelītēm atlausti zari, nosisti šīs vasaras augumi, pašam stumbram sadauzīta un daudzās vietās atšķelta miza.

Tomātu, gurķu un sīpolu nevarēja pazīt. Nenopļautā āboliņa un pļavu zāle zemē sadzīta. Ar mašīnu to vairs nenopļaut, labi ja ar izkapti to varēs sameklēt. Labi paaugošais āboliņa un pļavu atāls zemē sadzīts, tā kā otrā dienā lopī bija jālaiž kailās ganībās.

Cietušo lauksaimnieku posts pardaudz liels, tai to spētu visu aprakstīt, un kas to nav redzējis, tas nevarēs izprast šo posta ainu.

Nopostītas galīgi sekošas saimniecības /.../

Nerunājot par zemē ieguldīto kapitālu, paceļas jautājums ar ko varēs šīs saimniecības kārtot savus maksājumus saimei, nodokļus, % zemes bankā un krājkasēs un citus.

Vērotājs.

Jēkabpils Vēstnesis, Nr.33 (19.08.1943)

Dziesmu svētki Sunākstē 1873. gadā

Šogad, kad paiet 70 gadi no pirmajiem vispārējiem dziesmu svētkiem Rīgā, sunākstleši ar lepnumu var atskatīties arī uz sava novada pirmo dziesmu svētku 70 gada dienu. 1873 g. 22.augustā notika pirmie dziesmu svētki Sunākstē. Jēkabpils muzejā glabājas viens šo dziesmu svētku programmas eksemplārs, kam šāds virsraksts: Dziedāšanas svētki tai 22. Augusti 1873 Sunākstē noturēti.

Dziesmu svētki iesākās ar garīgu koncertu Sunākstes baznīcā, pēc kam nolikts gājiens uz Vēca Stendere kapu, kur paredzēta runa un kādas dziesmas nodziedāšana Tālāk seko atpūšanās brīdis un dziesmu svētku trešā daļa – laicīgs koncerts brīvā dabā, Sunākstes mācītāja muižā.

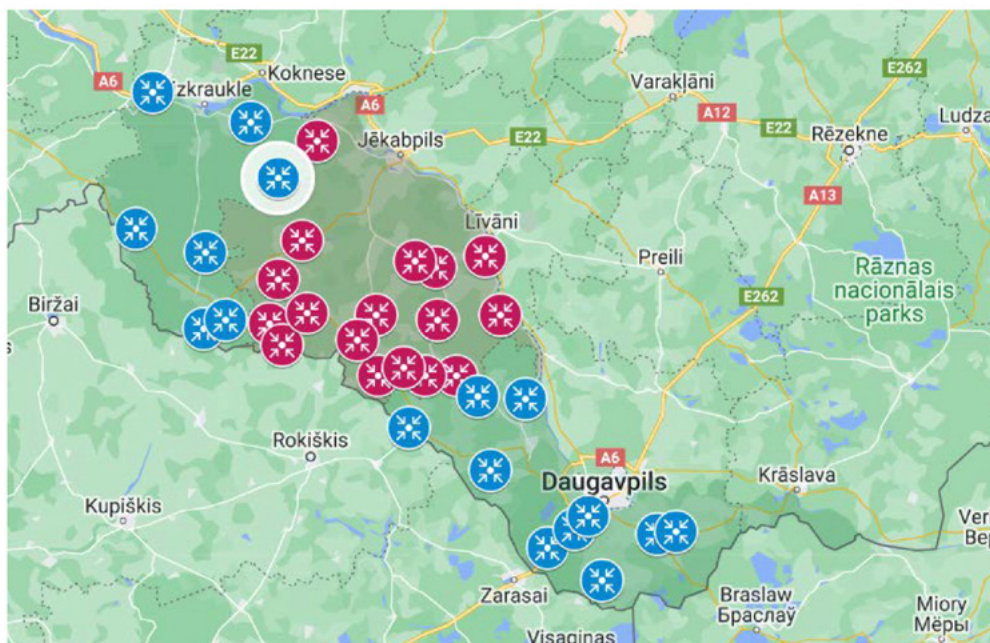
Tālāk programmā teikts, ka bez tam vēl katrs koris savas īpašās dziesmas dziedās, tas labākais dabūs "goda-maksu".

Cik un kādi kori piedalījušies šais dziesmu svētkos, nav, diemžēl, zināms. Varbūt Sunākstē par to būtu vēl kādas ziņas saglabājušās, tāpat varbūt vēl arī kas cits vienam otram vecākam cilvēkam sunākstietim ir zināms par šiem dziesmu svētkiem?

Dziesmu svētku atlikums domāts Stendera pieminēkļa celšanai, kā to lasām programmā:


„Ja kas no biļetu naudas pāc tām vajadzīgām svētku izdošanām atliksies, to nosūtīs priekš Stendera goda staba celšanas. Tāpēc, ja kas ko vairāk dos jeb sametīs, to ar pateicību saņems". Biļešu cena ir: 50. 20 un 10 kap., par . drukātu programmu jāmaksā 5 kap ". Atlikums laikam nav bijis ik kāds lielais, jo pieminēklis Stenderam līdz pat mūsu dienām ir palicis necelts.

Sunākste Sēlijas kartē



Kopienas iedzīvotāji par kopienai raksturīgo

Sunākstes kopienas pārstāvju anketēšanas datu apkopojums (<i>cipari pie atbildēm nozīmē atbilžu biežuma hierarhiju. 1 – visbiežāk minēts, 2 – otrs biežāk minētais variants utt. Vienādi cipari nozīmē, ka variants respondentu anketās atzīmēts vienādu reīžu skaitu</i>)		
1. Uz kādu debesspusi jūs visbiežāk skatāties? Gan ģeogrāfiski, gan ideju un sadarbības nozīmē? (atzīmējiet ar x)	Austrumi 2 Ziemeļi 2	Rietumi 1 Dienvidi 1
2. Par kādu laiku jūsu kopienā visbiežāk runā? Sakārtojiet prioritārā secībā! (pielieciet 1., 2., 3)	Pagātne Tagadne 1 Nākotne 1	
3. Par kādu cilvēku grupu jūsu kopienā visbiežāk runā? Sakārtojiet prioritārā secībā! (pielieciet 1., 2., 3.)	Bērni 3	Uzņēmēji
	Jaunieši	Lauksaimnieki
	Darbspējas vecuma cilvēki 2	Skolotāji
	Pensionāri 1	Bezdarbnieki, sociāli atstumtie cilvēki
	Ģimenes 2	Cits variants
4. Iedomājieties, ka jūsu kopiena, ciemats, ir ūdenskrātuve . Un jūs tajā iemērcat roku. Kāda ir ūdens temperatūra ? (atzīmējiet ar x)	Ļoti auksta	Ļoti sildoša
	Spirdzinoši vēsa 1	Karsta
	Varētu nopeldēties 1	Vāroša

	Patikami silta 1	Nevaru iemērkēt roku, tur ir ledus!
4.1. Kāda ir ūdens kustība ? (atzīmējiet ar x)	Ūdens nekustas	Ūdens lēni plūst 2
	Ūdens viegli viļņojas 1	Ūdens plūst žigli 2
	Ūdens spēcīgi viļņojas	Ūdens griežas kā atvars
5. Kādas līnijas visvairāk piestāv jūsu kopienai (atzīmējiet ar x pie viena no 4) Ja iespējams, pamatojiet: Viļņi, kas nes uz priekšu, saules stari, mežs; relatīvs miers	 1(2) 2(2) 3(1) 4(2)	
6. Mana kopiena ir (ierakstiet atbildi):	Puķe, koks, augs (kāds?): bērzs, ozols, bērzs, madara, pīlādzis, liepa, bērzs, pienenes, kļava Dzīvnieks (kāds?): kaķis, kaķis, kaķis, skudra, kaķis, zīlīte, gailis, briedis, govys Nedzīvs priekšmets (kāds?): bumba, spogulis, sols pie saimes galda, grāmata, aka, pieminēklis, klubs, akmens	
7. Manas kopienas krāsas ir (atzīmējiet ar x līdz 3 krāsām):	Balts 4 Melns Pelēks 6 Sarkans Zils 5 Dzeltens 2 Zaļš 1	Lillā Oranžs 4 Jūraszaļš 5 Brūns 3 Salātzaļš 5 Sudrabs Zelts, bronza 5
8. Manas kopienas aizstāvis ir (atzīmējiet ar x):	Pērkonis 2 Lauma Laima 3	Dēkla Jumis 1 Ūsiņš
9. Manai kopienai vairāk piestāv :	Saule	Mēness
10. Ierakstiet dabas parādību , kas visvairāk raksturo Jūsu ikdienas noskaņojumu! Ierakstiet dabas parādību, kas visvairāk raksturo jūsu tuvākā kaimiņa noskaņojumu!	Es visbiežāk esmu kā... viļņojoša jūra; saule spīd; vējš; varavīksne; sajūsma; prieks; cerība; saule; peldošs mākonis; saulaina; vējš; kaķis Mans kaimiņš ir... vienmēr nevaļīgs; migla; migla zem saules stariem; kluss; noguris, gaida palīdzību un atbalstu; varavīksne; pērkonis; vējš; lietus; ūpis	
11. Kāds gadalaiks visvairāk valda jūsu kopienā (atzīmējiet ar x):	Ziema Pavasaris 1	Vasara 2 Rudens 1
12. Iztēlojieties, ka jūsu kopiena ir viens cilvēks . Kas šim cilvēkam visvairāk radīs laimes, svētku sajūtu (atzīmējiet ar x tikai vienu variantu)?	Mūzika 1 Smarža Cilvēki 2 Krāsas	Gaismas 3 Ēdiens Dāvanas Laika apstākļi 3
13. Viena rakstura īpašība vai rīcība , kuras dēļ jūsu kopiena būtu gatava kādu izslēgt no sava vidus (ierakstiet):	Manā kopienā necietīs: apmānu, melus, nodevību, pazemošanu, necieņu pret otru; augstprātību, lepniību, negodīgumu, nesaticību, mums vēl nav īstas kopienas...	

14. Manai kopienai ir raksturīgs (atzīmējiet ar x tikai 2 no variantiem!):	Miers 3	Neprāts
	Organizētība 4	Ticība
	Kaislības	Darba tikums 2
	Nesaticība	Spontanitāte 4
	Mīlestība	Klačas
	Palīdzība 1	Līdzjūtība 4
	Gudrība 4	Materiālisms 4

Identitātes pasākumā iegūtais :

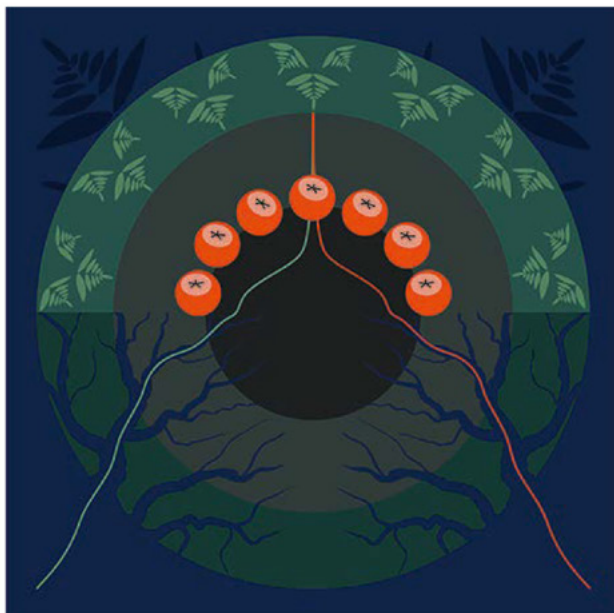
Vārdi: deķis, vilnas fabrika, Stenders, Ābice, Sunākstes baznīca, sūnas, tikai grants ceļi, krūmmellenes, lopkopība, skanīgs vārds, kultūra, sūnas, pīlādži, skaisti

Līnijas: pīlādžoga, baznīcas loga aprises, bišu šūnu aprises, koki

Krāsas: oranžs, sūnu zaļš, tīri zaļš, zils



Sunākstes kopienas zīme



Atslēgas vārdi: avots, aka, sūnas, upju baseini, pīlādži

Krāsas: oranžs, zaļš, sudrabzaļš, zils

No "sūnu akas" iztek divas tērcītes, katra ieplūst citā upju baseinā.

Upju baseinu dzīslējums – vecu koku silueti – asinsrite.

Zīmes centrā pīlādžogu pusaplis.

Visam jaunajam plaši atvērta acs.

Resursi un potenciāls

Sunākste ir pagasta centrs bijušajā Jaunjelgavas, šobrīd – Aizkraukles novadā. Tas robežojas ar Viesītes pagastu kādreizējā Viesītes, šobrīd Jēkabpils novadā. Atrāšanās uz novadu robežas, kā arī tas, ka Sunākstē nevar nokļūt pa ceļiem ar asfalta segumu, lielā mērā nosaka Sunākstes raksturu. Ciemats ir plašs, ērts, izkopts ar izcilu gaumi. Tas uzskatāmi reprezentē Sēlijas vēsturiski apdzīvoto vietu raksturojumu – sakopta, skaista „sala” lielo mežu ielokā.

Pagastā dzīvo 340 cilvēki, un ciematā ir gan pagasta pārvalde, gan bibliotēka, gan Saieta nams, ko paši sunākstieši mīlīgi dēvē par „namiņu”. Veikals nesen bankrotējis, kas sāktņēji šķiet nepamatoti, jo spriežot pēc vizuālajiem parametriem, ļaudis šeit dzīvo pārticīgi un kārtīgi. Turklāt, nokļūšana uz citām iepirkšanās vietām ir sarežģīta. Paši sunākstieši atzīmē: „Mums visa pietiek, laikiem gan veikals nav mūsu pati lielākā vajadzība,”. Kopienas lielākā rūpe šai sakarā ir nevis sadzīvīskās neērtības, bet gan tas, ka pamestā veikala ēka bojās vietas estētiku.

Izteikta estētiskā prioritāte pār praktisko ir vēl viena izteikta Sunākstes īpašība.

Tā atspoguļojas vietas vēsturē, jo Sunākste saistās ar Vecā Stendera vārdu un Ābeces taku. Sunākstes baznīcā savu skaistāko dziesmu ciklu „Es strauta malā slāpēs eju bojā” komponējis Haralds Sīmanis. Saikni ar dzimteni saglabājis arī Sunākstē dzimis mākslinieks Zīgfriāds Sapietiks, kurš radošo dzīvi pavadījis Skotijā – viņa veidotais piemineklis „Sibīrijas krusti” veido vēl vienu ciemata iezīmi.

Baznīca ir viena no Sunākstes nozīmīgākajām vietām, taču – ne tieši reliģiskā nozīmē. Tā piesaista apmeklētājus no visas Latvijas saistībā ar Stendera piemiņas pasākumiem. Lielu lomu šai ziņā spēlē „Stendera biedrība”, kurā aktīvistu pamatā ir no Viesītes un Rīgas, sunākstiešu līdzdalība tajā vērojama mazāk.

Pašā Sunākstē vēl reģistrēta biedrība „Stendera klubs”, kuras darbība pēc vairāku projektu īstenošanas šobrīd ir noklususi. Biedrības vietu kopienas attīstībā pilda aktīvo iedzīvotāju interešu grupa, kurā ietilpst gan kultūras nama vadītāja, gan bibliotekāre, gan pagasta tehniskie darbinieki, gan aktīvie iedzīvotāji. Ir izstrādāts arī kopienas plāns, taču biedrība šobrīd nav oficiāli reģistrēta.

Attiecībā uz reģionālās reformas ietekmi, sunākstieši atzīmē, ka tā sola vairāk brīvības – novada centrs Aizkrauklē ir tālu un grūti sasniedzams, kas nozīmē iespējas darboties brīvi un pašpietiekami.

Resursu esence:

- Spēcīga, jau noformējusies iedzīvotāju kopiena;
- Iedzīvotāju vairākuma izteiktā pieķeršanās Sunākstei, atziņa, ka šeit dzīvot ir ļoti skaisti, neraugoties uz infrastruktūras nepilnībām;
- Izteikti estētiskā ciemata vide;
- Bagāts kultūrvēsturiskais mantojums, kas padara Sunāksti atpazīstamu Latvijas mērogā;
- Ainaviski izteiksmīga apkārtnē, kam ir ļoti augsts vērtējums sabiedrības vērtību sistēmā;
- Attīstības perspektīvas, kas saistāmas ar divu valstiski svarīgu infrastruktūras objektu – Zalves poligona un Vēja parka izbūvi Sunākstes tiešā tuvumā.

Vēlmes un vajadzības

- Autoceļu infrastruktūra, ciemata sasniedzamība. Šī vajadzība gan tiek atzīmēta izteiktā vēlamības izteiksmē, jo kopiena ir pielāgojusies pašpietiekamai dzīvei, tiek atzīmēts, ka agrāk ceļi bija vēl sliktāki, taču tas nav traucējis apmesties Sunākstē un dzīvot šeit labu, pilnvērtīgu dzīvi.

- Vajadzība oficiāli dibināt Sunākstes attīstības biedrību, jo tam ir visi priekšnoteikumi, arī stabils biedru sastāvs. Process nav virzīts tālāk sakarā ar to, ka šobrīd neviens nav apņēmies uzņemties administratīvo darbu, kas saistīts ar organizācijas dibināšanu un uzturēšanu;

- Vēlme pēc lielākas izpratnes no pašvaldības, valsts pārvaldes puses par mazo lauku kopienu attīstības jautājumiem kopumā. Tiek pausts viedoklis par to, ka šādās kopienās nav iespējams nodalīt dažādas sabiedrības grupas – jaunieši, seniori, u.c., visi darbojas kopīgi, kā ģimenē. Uzstādījumi pēc pasākumiem konkrētām sabiedrības grupām samērā bieži kavē sunākstiešu līdzdalību projektu konkursos, sadarbības aktivitātēs.

- Vēlme saņemt savlaicīgu, korektu informāciju par izmaiņām pašvaldības darbā, kā arī par jaunajiem valsts nozīmes infrastruktūras objektiem un to ietekmi uz kopienas dzīvi.

Sunākstes kopienas katalizators ir aktīvo iedzīvotāju kopums – spilgtas personības, kuras mīl Sunāksti un augstu vērtē dzīvi tieši šeit.



- Vēlme ciešāk sadarboties ar „Stendera biedrību”, tiek atzīmēta tās atsvešinātība attiecībā uz Sunākstes kopienu. Sadarbības stiprināšana, pretimnākšana tiek gaidīta tieši no „Stendera biedrības” puses, jo līdz šim sunākstieši uztverti tikai kā talku dalībnieki, darbaspēka masas, kuras pienākumos it kā pašsaprotami ietilpst gan baznīcas, gan mācītājmuižas teritorijas uzkopšana.

- Vajadzība aktīvāk iekļauties Sēlijas kopienu sadarbības pasākumos, akcijās, informācijas apritē.

Katalizatori un ieteikumi

Katalizatori

Spēcīga, jau noformējusies iedzīvotāju kopiena.

Šis ir pats būtiskākais Sunākstes katalizators, kas ir reti sastopams citās kopienās. Sunākstes kopiena ir spilgtām personībām bagāta, gatava kopdarbībai sava ciemata labā. Kopiena ir atsaucīga, spējīga ātri reaģēt uz sadarbības piedāvājumiem, ko apliecina sunākstiešu dalība gan Sēlijas tūrisma tirgū 2022.gada maijā, gan ļoti veiksmīgā iesaiste akcijā „Mājas kafējnīcu dienas” 2022.gada septembrī;

Iedzīvotāju vairākuma izteiktā pieķeršanās Sunākstei, atziņa, ka šeit dzīvot ir ļoti skaisti, neraugoties uz infrastruktūras nepilnībām.

Sunākste šai kontekstā ir unikāla. Neviens no kopienas pārstāvjiem nenorāda uz kritisko ceļu infrastruktūru, nepieejamajiem pakalpojumiem kā būtisku trūkumu dzīvei Sunākstē. Kopienas uztverē uzkrītoši dominē estētiskās, intelektuālās vērtības, praktiskās dzīves radītie sarežģījumi ir sekundāri. Ļoti augstu tiek vērtēts dabas skaistums, tās bagātība, ainava, miers, cilvēku atsaucība, vietas vēsture.

Izteikti estētiskā ciemata vide.

Sunākstes ciemats izceļas ne tikai ar sakoptību, bet arī ar izteiktu gaumi, telpas izjūtu. Ciemats nav pārblīvēts ar stādījumiem, nepārdomātām dekorācijām. Visas būves, pieminekļi, apstādījumi ir harmoniski, ar estētisko vērtību. Sunākste ir piemērota gan tūristu vizītēm, gan pasākumu norisēm bez būtiskiem uzlabojumiem.

Bagāts kultūrvēsturiskais mantojums, kas padara Sunāksti atpazīstamu Latvijas mērogā.

Sunākste saistās ar Stendera vārdu un viņa kultūrvēsturisko mantojumu. Tāpat Sunākstes baznīca atpazīstama ar Haralda Sīmaņa darba periodu tajā. Turklāt, sunākstieši atzīmē arī tautas tradīcijas, leģendas par vietas rašanos. Personības un saglabāta vēsturiskā atmiņa – tas ir vēl viens būtisks vietas attīstības katalizators.

Ainaviski izteiksmīga apkārtnē, kam ir ļoti augsts vērtējums sabiedrības vērtību sistēmā.

Sunākstes apkārtnē izceļas ar izteikti skaistām ainavām. Taču vēl būtiskāk par nenoliedzamo dabas bagātību ir tas, ka šī bagātība iedzīvotāju vērtību sistēmā ieņem ļoti nozīmīgu vietu. Tas rada drošu pamatu neizpostītos dabas resursos balstītu tūrisma piedāvājumu un citu uzņēmējdarbības veidu attīstībai.

Attīstības perspektīvas, kas saistāmas ar divu valstiski svarīgu infrastruktūras objektu – Zalves poligona un Vēja parka izbūvi Sunākstes tiešā tuvumā.

Prognozējoši, šīs perspektīvas var būtiski uzlabot Sunākstes autoceļu infrastruktūru, kas nozīmē tās ērtāku sasniedzamību un, līdz ar to, ārējā apmeklējuma pieaugumu. Tāpat, šo objektu tiešais tuvums var radīt jaunu darbavietu, jaunu servisu izveides iespējas Sunākstē. Ņemot vērā iedzīvotāju skaidri nolasāmo un specifisko vērtību sistēmu, būtu nepieciešams pievērst uzmanību ekonomiskās attīstības un vietas rakstura harmonijas saglabāšanai.

Ieteikumi

- **Oficiāli reģistrēt Sunākstes attīstības biedrību**, kas pavērs iespējas papildus finansējuma piesaistei, kā arī kopienas pasākumu dažādošanai un paplašināšanai.
- **Izmantot biedrības „Stendera klubs” radīto Sunākstes atpazīstamību tieši kopienas attīstības labā.** Ja šai gadījumā nav veiksmīgi kontakti tieši ar biedrības vadību, ieteicams izmantot tiešos kontaktus ar tās biedriem, stiprinot sunākstiešu iesaisti „Stendera kluba” aktivitātēs ne tikai kā pasīvajam darbspēkam, bet arī kā aktīvajiem biedriem, plānotājiem un organizētājiem, kā arī radītās atpazīstamības labuma saņēmējiem;
- **Aktivizēt ciešu sadarbību ar pārējām Sēlijas kopienām**, iesaisti kopīgās sabiedriskajās, tūrisma akcijās.
- **Veidot Sunākstes ainavu tūrisma maršrutus, pašā ciematā nodrošinot servisa iespējas** – ēdināšana, naktsmītnes, mājražotāju produkcijas iegāde.
- **Izveidot reālu, pamatotu ieteikumu un rīcību komplektu kopienas sadarbībai ar Aizkraukles novada pašvaldību**, Sunākstes ciemata atpazīstamības palielināšanā un iekļaušanā Aizkraukles tūrisma piedāvājumā;
- **Pievēst pastiprinātu uzmanību Vēja parka un Zalves militārā poligona izbūves procesiem**, būt lietas kursā par šo objektu ģenerētajām iespējām Sunākstes iedzīvotājiem. Informēt iedzīvotājus par ekonomiskās aktivitātes, veidojamo servisu iespējām;
- **Motivēt kopienas iedzīvotājus veidot dzīvesstila, mājražošanas uzņēmumus**, ģenerējot papildus ieņēmumus no prognozējamās ienākošās tūrisma plūsmas.

Mūsu pagastā ir avots,

no kura iztek divas upītes. Un katra no tām tek uz citu baseinu – viena uz Daugavas, otra uz Lielupes, stāsta sunākstieši.

Divējādas plūsmas satikušās arī pašā Sunākstē. Viena vedina vēsturē. Stenders, Sunākstes baznīca, Ābeces taka, „Stendera biedrība”, Haralds Sīmanis un viņa Sunākstes baznīcā tapušais dziesmu cikls ar Fransuā Vijona vārdiem „Es straute malā slāpēs eju bojā.” Plaša, stabila un labi saredzama plūsma gan interneta meklēšanas rīkos, gan sabiedrības uztverē.

Otra plūsma ir Sunākstes cilvēki. Un šī burbuļo kā līksms meža strauts, jo sunākstieši, nudien, straute malā no slāpēm bojā neiet. Neiet bojā nedz no bezceļu dzīvošanas, nedz no dīvainās novadu dalīšanas un pārdalīšanas, nedz no citiem maznozīmīgiem apstākļiem.

Sunākstē nevar nokļūt taisni un vienkārši, visi uz šejieni vedošie ceļi likumo caur mežiem, pļavām, krūmājiem, un neizceļas ar labu tehnisko stāvokli. Asfalta segumu vēl neviens no tiem nav ieguvis. Tā teikt, brauc lēnām, izbaudi, cik Sēlija skaista un bagāta.

„Ieraudzīju, cik šeit ir skaisti, iemīlējos uz vietas, un paliku dzīvot Sunākstē”. Tas ir šīs sarunas refrēns, dziesmu cikla par Sunākstes cilvēkiem piedziedājums.



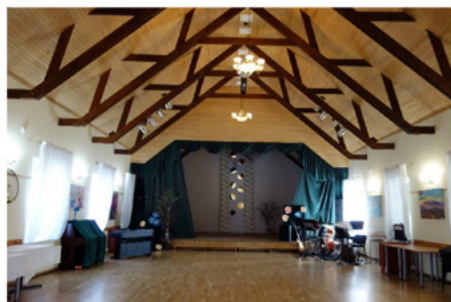
Ciematš šo mīlestību atspoguļo pilnā mērā. Sunākste ir plaša, ar izcilu gaumi sakopta „sala” lielo mežu ielokā. Pagastā dzīvo 340 cilvēki, un ciematā ir gan pagasta pārvalde, gan bibliotēka, gan Saieta nams, ko paši sunākstieši mīlīgi dēvē par „namiņu”. Veikals gan bankrotējis, kā tad tā? Izskatās, ka ļaudis šeit dzīvo pārticīgi un kārtīgi, un gana daudz vēl viņu. Pie tam, tā nokļūšana uz citām iepirkšanās vietām ir sarežģīta. „Mums visa pietiek, laikam gan veikals nav mūsu pati lielākā vajadzība,” saka ciematnieki. **Viņu lielākā rūpe šai sakarā ir nevis sadzīvīskās neērtības, bet gan tas, ka pamestā veikala ēka bojās vietas estētiku. Lūk.**

Ar sunākstiešu mežrožu audzi tiekamies bibliotēkas un pagasta pārvaldes mājā, kur mājīga telpa ierīkota arī interešu kluba tikšanās reizēm. Nākamais, kas pievērs uzmanību tūlīt pēc bibliotekāres Ramonas Ukrinas gaišā skatiena (tas ir no tiem, kas rada sajūtu – ei, mēs taču sen esam pazīstamas, pie savējiem atbraucām arī šodien) ir plašā un veselīgā telpaugu kolekcija uz platajām koka palodzēm. Vesela botāniskā dārza oranžērija!

Otra mājas saimniece, Sunākstes Saieta nama vadītāja Vineta Lavrenoviča, laiku nekavē: „Ideju un sapņu banka mums jau ir! Top arī kopienas plāns, paskat, te ir pieraksti. Ļoti gribas atgriezties aktīvā dzīvē, divi kovīdgaži mūs ir ļoti nogurdinājuši.”

Kas tad šobrīd sunākstiešiem ir galvenais? Kā rādās dzīve pēc lielās slēgšanās un pašvaldību reformas?

„Sakarā ar reformu izskatās, ka ir vairāk brīvības,” saka Vineta, „Aizkraukle ir tālu, un mēs varam darboties samērā brīvi. Tomēr- būs jāpastāv par saviem 340 iedzīvotājiem. Ne kā pašvaldības darbiniekiem, bet kā iedzīvotāju kopumam. Esam domājuši arī biedrību dibināt, protams, tomēr tā karognesēja loma ir jāuzņemas kādam, kurš nav nodarbināts pašvaldības darbā. Kā Saieta nama vadītāja no sirds vēlos, lai sunākstiešiem no manis būtu tik liels labums, cik vien var būt! Šeit strādāju jau 20 gadus, varētu domāt, ka aizsēdējusies. Tomēr visu laiku parādās jaunas idejas, ieceres, pasākumi. **Paskat, tagad ļoti liela loma būs kopienu darbībai, mazajos pagastos it kā mazinās tā atšķirība starp pašvaldības darbiniekiem un iedzīvotājiem. Visiem kopā par sevi jāpastāv. Un ļoti jāgrib lietas mainīt, citādi nekas nenotiks.**”



Kopienas plāns Sunākstei top. Un varam tikai raudzīt, kā to padarīt košāku, tieši šai salai piemērotu. Kādās kopīgās darbībās iesaistīt, jo šejieniešiem ir daudz, ko dot, un visa labā saņemšanai viņu rokas ir pareizi saliktas.

Dosimies vien droši iekšā tai mežrožu audzē, kas sapulcējusies uz tikšanos. Dāmas, pastāstiet, kas jūs esat un kā dzīvojiet?

Dace Kalniņa ir māksliniece, beigusi Latvijas Mākslas akadēmijas grafikas nodaļu. Tikko iznākusi grāmata ar Daces ilustrācijām. „Sunākstē esmu ienācēja, šobrīd nodarbojos ar radošu ģimenes dzīvi,” Dace zīmē, un nav liela runātāja. Vairāk runā viņas ilustrācijas un pašas izgaismotais tēls. „Mūsu māksliniece, jā, dzīvo lauku mājā ārpus ciemata, mēs ļoti lepojamies ar Daci!”, tūlīt papildina pārējās dāmas.

Akadēmiskā māksla un estētika Sunākstes kopienas vērtību skalā atrodas ļoti augstu, tas redzams ikvienā taciņas likumā. Ne miņas no „šite uzliksim vēl zaķus, un te tāda

plika vieta, derētu kādu dobi ar košām vasaras puķēm”. Ciemata centru rotā veselas divas izcilas kvalitātes skulptūras – Stendera ābece piemiņas zīme un „Sibīrijas krusti”. Uzmanību īpaši piesaista otrā, tās Sēlijai neierastais stils. Skulptūras autors ir Zigfrīds Sapietis, dzimis sunākstietis. Otrā pasaules kara laikā devies emigrācijā, un tās vilnis Zigfrīdu aizskalojis līdz Skotijai. Edinburgas mākslas pasniedzējs un skulptors šo darbu dzimtajam ciematam dāvinājis 2019. gadā.

Māksliniecei Dacei blakus Dina Aļeņikova. „Esmu agronome. Un bez Sunākstes nemaz nedzīvotu, nevaru no šejienes aizbraukt. Mana dzimta šeit dzīvo vismaz septiņās paaudzēs. Šobrīd mums ir zemnieku saimniecība, kur strādā visa ģimene.”



Dzintra Kadirova saka: „Es atkal ieprecējos dzimtā, kas Sunākstē dzīvo septiņās paaudzēs! Pirms 22 gadiem tas bija. Iemilēju Sunāksti, protams. Esmu dārzniece, audzēju tomātus. Biju Anglijā strādāt, bet, nūdien, vairs negribu. **Mīlās mājas ir mīlās mājas! Tas malkas šķūnītis ir mans. Un tā siltumnīca ir mana.** Zīnu, ka pavisam aizbraukt nevarētu. Sunākstē ir labi dzīvot. Pirms pandēmijas mums bija tik daudz tematisku nodarbību – pīšana, pārļošana, tamborēšana. Pīt man ļoti patīk, no tā neatteikšos!”

Vija smaids ir silti latgalisks: „No Varakļāniem pārcēlāmiem, divpadsmit gadiņi man bija. Izmācījos par pavāri, un Sunākstē atgriezos.” Par viņu vairāk sakāms citām sarunas dalībniecēm – Vija ir vienmēr un visur, viņai nekad nav par grūtu. Vija ir vietas siltums. „Man patīk palīdzēt,” tā viņa pati.

Dzidra Sunākstē ienākusi Atmosdas laikos. Prom no pilsētas, toreiz arī bija tāda plūsma. Paziņas ieteikuši Sunāksti, darbs aptiekā. „**Braucu uz šejieni, un sapratu, ka palikšu. Iemilēju šo vietu. Skaisti.**”

Ilga Lukstiņa smejojoties saka: „Esmu ielāps, kur vajag, tur es! Sunākstē ienācu kolhoza laikos pēc augstskolas, kā jaunā speciāliste. Tik skaista vieta dzīvošanai, un ceļi toreiz bija daudz sliktāki. Kur tik visur neesmu strādājusi, un tepat Sunākstē! Sākot no kurinātāja līdz būvzinierim. Krājbankas filiālē, Lauku konsultāciju birojā, pat skolā, kad nebija, kas māca.”

„Jā, kad Ilga mums bija Lauku konsultants tepat uz vietas, tad zinājām daudz vairāk, varējām aizbraukt pieredzes apmaiņās, visi jaunākie projektu konkursi, saimniekošanas metodes, pasākumi, viss tūlīt nonāca pie mums. Tagad Lauku konsultāciju birojā faktiski vairs nav to konsultantu, kas strādā uz vietas. Tā ļoti pietrūkst. Jābūt cilvēkam uz vietas, to nekas nevar aizvietot, ” atzīmē Vineta.

Silvija Zunda: „Ienācu Sunākstē pirms deviņpadsmit gadiem. Martā. Saprātu, ka Rīgā viena pati neizvilks divus bērnus. Un par Sunāksti jāsaka – iebraucu, ieraudzīju, iemīlējos. Visu mūžu esmu strādājusi par grāmatvedi, tagad pensijā, taču palaižu atvaļinājumos pagasta darbiniekus. **Dzīvoju viena pati lielā mājā, ir saimniecība. Un man nevienu brīdi nav bijis bail. No pašas pirmās dienas.** Arī toreiz braucām ar autobusu, un kādi martā te ir ceļi, to var saprast tikai tie, kas pie grants ceļiem dzīvo! Tomēr vietas skaistums un drošība, tā sajūta, ka te ir mana vieta, tas bija pāri visam.”



Bibliotēkas vadītāja Ramona Sunākstē ieradies vien pirms desmit gadiem. „**Mums ir lauku mājas, bez saimniecības. Savu lauku māju meklējām ilgi, un Sunākste nav tā pati populārākā vieta, kur pārcelties. Tomēr, kad braucām skatīties, nevarēju acis atraut – kāda te ir daba! Cik te ir skaisti!** Ceļi briesmīgi, bet nu iztiekam. Sākumā domāju – dzīvošu mājā, audzēšu burkānus. Bet darbs mani atrada. Cilvēki šeit ir ļoti atsaucīgi, uzreiz radās tāda savējo sajūta. Un kā tad atteiksi? Vēl bez bibliotēkas darba mums ir vokāli instrumentālā grupa „Laimīgs gadījums”. Mans vīrs ir mūziķis, es pati dziedu. 2015.gadā, kad vajadzēja mūziku pasākumam, tad tas arī notika – pārējiem iedevām pa instrumentam, un aiziet! Vineta, piemēram, no pilnīgas nulles iemācījās spēlēt basģitāru. Jums vajag mūziku Sēlijas tūrisma tirgum? „Laimīgais gadījums” būs klāt!”

Mirdzas Caunes stāsts pārspēj „standup” monoizrādi: „Šeit ienācu 1989. gadā, darbabiedrene ieteica Sunāksti. Nopirkām „Lazdiņu” māju. Briesmīgā stāvoklī tā bija, degusi, pārbūvējama, arī ceļi tagad ir daudz, daudz labāki. Nu, 4.aprīlī iebraucām ar čemodāniem, ar bērniem un manu mammu. Gulējām sienā visi. 13.oktobrī uz mammas dzimšanas dienu pirmo reizi iekūrām „Lazdiņos” krāsni. Jāsaka, ka jaunībā es biju baigā ņuņa, to nevarēju un šito, un šito arī ne. Bet tad izmācījos par trolejbusa vadītāju, un man

bija tāds darbaudzinātājs, kas to ņūņņu par cilvēku pataisīja! Un pati arī ilgi mācīju trolejbusa vadītājus. Zin, ka katram to var iemācīt, tikai vajag pareizo pieeju un pacietību. Skaidrs, ka Sunākstē trolejbusi nebraukā, un vadītāji nav jāmāca. Toties te man ir kārtīga veca māja. **Atbrauc ciemiņi, saka „Kā man patīk tavs vēstures muzejs!”, bet man tai muzejā jādzīvo, citreiz jau sakaitina arī!** Oi, un es esmu Sunākstes draudzes priekšniece jau no 2007.gada, tur jau arī ir kārtīga ņemšanās.”

Pārējie stāstu papildina – Mirdza raksta pagasta senioriem apsveikumus, darbojas pensionāru klubīnā, dzied ansablī.

„Nu, stāsti, stāsti, ko vēl tu brūvē,” mudina mūsu kompānijas vienīgais kungs.

„Vēl, nu ko tad vēl, nu tas tā dabiski notika. Kā jau jaunienācējs laukos, pirmos divus gadus vārīju zaptē kā traka. Pēc tam skatos, ka mīlzum daudz tās zaptē, to nu neviens nevar apēst. Ko darīsi? Mēģināju brūvēt vīnu. Un, kad atvēru pirmo brūvējumu, man bija bailes to kādam teikt, tik garšīgs viņš bija! Saskries visi, kas tad man pašai paliks? Bet nu nekas, tagad jau pietiek citiem arī. Aizbraucu kādreiz uz tirdziņiem, kādu degustāciju sarīkoju, Mācītājmuižā arī talciniekus labākos pacienāju, tā gan.”

Vienīgais kungs ir Andris Šinke. Vēsturnieks. „Es Sunākstē dzīvoju no 2009.gada, esmu dzimis Jēkabpilī. Nācu balstīt tēvu, kurš vairs nevarēja viens dzīvot. Nu, tēvs to manu atbalstu izturēja vienu gadu. Pie tam, es nemaz nedzīvoju Sunākstē – dzīvoju uz Sēlijas vaļņa ass, „Staltānos”. Tur ir Staltānu kalns, mēs esam kalnieši, mums savi tikumi.”

Andrim jāpajautā arī par Sunākstes nosaukumu – no kā tas cēlies?

„Stenders teica „Sūnu aka”, un es viņam piekrītu, no tā. Mācītājmuižas parkā ir avotiņš, tas varētu būt šī aka ar sūnām. Tas avots, no kura divas upes iztek, tas ir citur, tikai zinātājs atradīs.”



Ja reiz pie vēstures esam nonākuši, tad jāparaugās, kā ir dzīvot vietā, kuru pazīst pēc leģendām un seno laiku vārdiem?

„Eh, nu baznīcas zeme ir sadalīta pa gabaliņiem, kas te par ko rūpējas. Baznīca ir Sunākstei, Stendera kalniņš – Viesītei, traucē tās robežas, kuru dabā nekādi nav. „Stendera biedrība” – kas tur labs var būt? Priekšnieks no Viesītes, visa valde no Rīgas, sunākstiešus var malā atbīdīt. Redz, Stendera kalniņš tāda jauka vieta, kur nekas nav jāiegulda, var tik zīmēties. Nu, labi, Ābeces taku viņi taisa un tā. Bet, vienalga, šeit pietrūkst tādas kopdarbības,” Andra runā griež īsta kalnieša skarbums.

Tomēr arī pārējie sarunas dalībnieki atzīst, ka talkās pie Sunākstes baznīcas pietrūkst tieši vietējo cilvēku masas. „Ir jāuzrunā vienkāršais cilvēks, vietējais, lai mēs visi sajūtam to diženumu. Citādi pēdējā talkā bija tā, ka sunākstieši talko atsevišķi, rīdzinieki atkal atsevišķi. Pat zupa katram savā katlā bija,” atceras draudzes priekšniece Mirdza.

„Visiem ir jānāk kopā – Viesītei, Stendera biedrībai, sunākstiešiem. Ir labi, ka Stendera biedrība ir atpazīstama, tā pievērš Sunākstei uzmanību. Robežas mainās, taču mūsu vērtības ir un paliek šeit. Visas Latvijas vērtības. Un to dēļ taču mums jāspēj cieši sadarboties,” saka Vineta.

Sadarbībai sunākstieši ir gatavi. Viedie ciemi? Jā, šogad pieteiksimies, vai mums vieduma trūkst? Paskat, Ābeces dzimtene, kas tad vēl var būt viedāks? „Mājas kafējnīcu dienas” septembrī? Pieteiksimies! Vīns mums jau ir, un saimnieces, kas labi gatavo, arī ir. Paskat, jau šodien vismaz trīs ir klāt.

Ir mūzika. Ir māksla. Ir vareni cilvēki. Ir dižena vēsture.



Nav ceļu? Nu un tad? Tie likumu likumi, tie dubļi un putekļi mūs ir savilkuši ciešā avota virpulī. Dzidr un neizsikstošs tas mūs baro, tas mūs stiprina. Ūdens pietiek vēl divu upju baseiniem.

Materiālā izmantotas Māras Jubertes fotogrāfijas.

APPENDIX 3 – INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY COOPERATION NETWORK ON SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

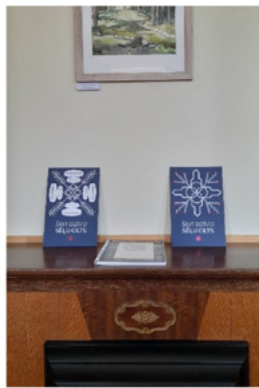
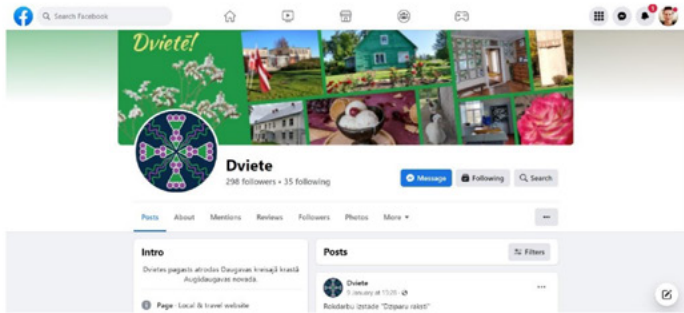


REBRANDING SELONIA

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

This document provides an insight into the publicity of the project at different levels - national, regional and local communities. The materials illustrate the involvement of society and state institutions, too. The visual materials used in this document are intended for informational purposes only as an attachment to the submission.

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



IDENTITY SIGNS IN COMMUNITIES

Communities use community identity signs in social networks, events, included in local souvenirs - they are proud of these signs as symbols of belonging.

Questions - what is it? What does it depict? - is the best conversation starter with community guests.

"Post stamp" of Sunākste community on hand-made Christmas card



PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



IDENTITY SIGNS IN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

The identity signs of the communities were used in the visual design of the biggest cultural festival of the region "Sēlija rotā". Follow the link to see them in action:

https://youtu.be/2hDI_TmZf8il?t=162

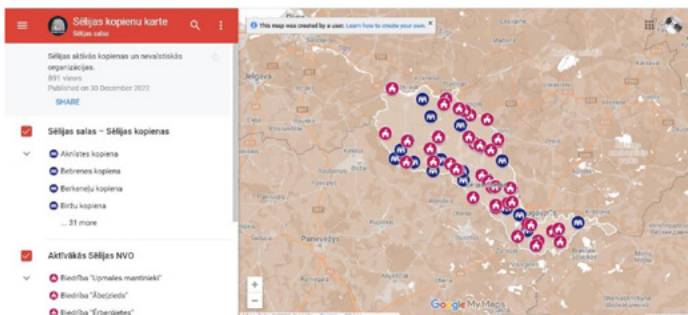
and

<https://youtu.be/Hj1eAyB8Lrg?t=288>

Signs are used in the visual design of 12 selonian community TV program cycles "They come from the Milky Way. Selonia. Identity". Follow the link to see them in action:

<https://retv.lv/raidijums/no-piena-cela-nakusi-selija-identitate>

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



REBRANDING EVENTS IN NATIONAL LEVEL

The largest Latvian conversation festival "LAMPA", 2022, Cēsis. More information by following the link: <https://festivalslampalv/lv/video-arhivs/1937?fbclid=IwAR1E6nvv8yZyJWCWJpdM8Kwe5qfZEnTJcWDyHR3OQkivZ8-Dsct6EavJo3Q>

10th Congress of Selonija, 2021, Viesīte. More information by following the link: <https://youtu.be/JIRh2UsE34U?t=6514>

Communities map of Selonija communities in Google maps. More information by following the link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1OiWF0qV7s0t-yQ5ecYqiJU0INwRpNGI&ll=56.18960210437995%2C25.857550106189688&z=8>

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



IDENTITY REBRANDING IN NATIONAL LEVEL

The 1st Selonian
NGO Forum, 2021,
on-line platform.

The Minister of
Culture of Latvia gave
a congratulatory
speech to the
participants of the
forum. More
information by
following the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/selijassalas/videos/422348946778527>

The second Selonian
NGO Forum,
2022, Viesīte. Saeima
member Imants
Paradniēks presents
the flag of Selonias.

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



IDENTITY REBRANDING IN PEOPLE MINDS

The first "Silver of Selonia" recognition competition for people's lifetime contribution.

Laureates and awarding during the 2nd Selonian NGO Forum, 2022, in Viesīte.

A badge of honor "Silver of Selonia" - Sterling Silver brooch with the image of a wolf, included in the middle of an Selonian archaeological brooch shape.

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



SOCIAL REBRANDING AS GAMING WITH PROCESSES AND SCENARIOS

Process building
game in action:

Processes are played
out for the non-
governmental
organizations of the
city of Jēkabpils -
development of
scenarios for building
the city's identity.

The process game is
used during the
training of the
innovative project,
"Development of
professional social
work in local
governments"
implemented by the
Ministry of Welfare of
Latvia.

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



POLITICAL REBRANDING WITH POLITICANS

The visit of the President of Latvia Egils Levits in Selonia, we discussed the future of the communities of Selonia and issues of identity.

The members of the national Saeima and the decision-making body of local municipalities took part in the tourism policy event.

The Minister of Agriculture of Latvia shares on Twitter account his impressions of the economic policy event in Kaldabruņa held during the project.

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



POLITICAL REBRANDING WITH POLITICANS

The members of the national Saeima and the decision-making body of local municipalities took part in the culture policy event.

The members of the national Saeima and the decision-making body of local municipalities took part in the internal and external national security policies event in Demene parish, Latvia border area with Belarus.

More information by following the link:
<https://youtu.be/yMNCfm0Thns>

PUBLICITY AND SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT



COMMUNITIES RELATIONS REBRANDING - NETWORKING

Annual Tourism
Markets

Daily Craft and home-
made markets

Shared experience
trips

Common measures
of identity
construction

Common public,
national holidays and
other holidays

Communities
common creative and
training camps

Common territory
marketing measures

Regular local
workshops in small
communities

The role of communities in the process of building Selonia's identity

Daina Alužane's, chairwoman of the community cooperation network "Islands of Selonia" speech at the 10th Selonian Congress, 2021, in Viesīte.

The network of communities "Islands of Selonia" operates almost 4 Years. We always say: it developed it self- as an initiative of cooperation project between tree Rural Partnership of the region. Today, I tell you right way- as it was!

Network of communities didn't develop randomly, there where creators of it. It was created and designed by people. First two years, the impulse was given by CSOs- The ones who was big- Project partners, and the ones who was small- the ones who preserve the local identity to be viewed and seen by the arrivals and tourists and been recognised by residents.

In 2017, we were 17, but now we are 30 villages and small towns. Every island goes its way to search for they identity and the way how it can be expressed. We know them all by faces, works and characters. The colours, sounds of language, lines, rhythm of life are the drops that gathers in the bowl of Identity of Selonia. Yes, "Islands of Selonia" is one of those organisations, that gather those drops and traying to translate and understand. Can we estimate, when the bowl will be full to affirm "This is identity of Selonia. Ready. Explore it" We can't. We can't name the day, when everything will be measured, weight and term into words.

Recent Years i have answered so many times on the same question: Can You describe people of Selonia? I still can't find an answer. I don't want to put Selonians into boxes and put a label onto them- People of Selonia is proud of Selonians are slow un discreet. I want Seonians to be free people and want them to be different every day and not follow expectations of others.

Maybe identity of Selonia is Freedom? Freedom to be different in each community, be happy with ability to delight and strictly reject those who come with foreign truth it the yard. I assume, the in Selonia the old fashion habit still is alive- to remember that the freedom of ones ends where the freedom of others starts. Thats the way we live here, and there is a huge possibility that diversity is the element that unites us, even it might sound strange.

Identity is a process- and it is long-term process, as long as tribe, nation and land exist. The face of community changes with every newcomer and with those who leaves, especially if this person is strong to gather people around. You really need so little. Even Identity for historical lands need a space for changes, because we build a history today. We did it Yesterday and we will do it tomorrow. To freeze in words today's reality, you can things that is already past.

This is the reason Why I am grateful, as our code of identity is not written and printed. It means, that people, who lives here today, with draw a future of this land. Those who are Selonians today, also those who found their homes in Selonia recently.

Selonia is a cloak, that is woven in small, rhythmic and dispersed weave without central element that dominates on other level elements. And also network of Communities "Islands of Selonia" is built as fishery net but not as cobweb. It is

important for us every single node in it. Regarding big things- Selonia can't forget its living blood- people who lives here now and preserves this land today. This i can identity we have to foster and highlight among other historical regions of Latvia.

Significance of recognition of identity of Rural Communities of Selonia is simple as it is- Rural Communities are identity of Selonia.

APPENDIX 4 – ERASMUS TRAINING COURSE PROGRAMS FOR 5 DAYS AND 7 DAYS

Training course for adults "Revitalization of the Region. A Success Story.

Methods, Resources, and Practice / Rebranding Selonia"

A group of 10 people.

Time	Venue	Content
Evening of Day 1, arrival	Gārsene Manor	Welcome dinner, local products, and legends of Gārsene. A brief overview of the region's history and contemporary realities. Demonstration of the video projection "The Paths of Selonia". Exhibition of Selonian communities' identity symbols.
First half of Day 2	Gārsene Manor	Series of lectures on territory rebranding methodology, examples, stories about creating identity marks. Presentation of smart region strategy.
	Gārsene Manor	Lunch
Second half of Day 2	Gārsene park and village	<i>Elements of rebranding – nature, active recreation, link between cultural and historical heritage of the place in different periods of history.</i> Getting to know Gārsene. The community's path to the name of smart village, its impact in revitalization of the territory. Valdis Kalnietis's collection of antiques, Gārsene Lutheran church. Active recreation with the community of Gārsene - boating in the mill pond, walking in the nature trails. Coffee break in the park Trip to Aknīste, café "Kalniņā", a recreation center. A family business model in a small town. Dinner in Aknīste
First half of Day 3	Subate	<i>Rebranding elements – borderline situation, religious and national diversity, landscape.</i> Meeting in the partnership "Neighbors", the influence of the LEADER program on the development of the territory. Lunch in Subate.
Second half of Day 3	Kaldabruņa	<i>Elements of rebranding – the absence of administrative structures, specific cultural and historical heritage, and an unconventional view of it.</i>

		<p>Visit to the Meadow Museum, multimedia projection "Midnight Meadow".</p> <p>Rebranding practice – glass processing workshop, social business in non-governmental organization, promotion of employment. LEADER program projects in practice.</p> <p>Coffee break.</p> <p>Dviete.</p> <p><i>Elements of rebranding – grape breeder's heritage, community cohesion, intergenerational cooperation. Economic effect of community identity - rapid development of small business in Dviete.</i></p> <p>Dinner</p>
Day 4	Viesīte	<p><i>Elements of rebranding – layers of history in a small town. The impact of communities; railwaymen's community, "Residence of the Goats' Village". Imprints of changing economic and political times.</i></p> <p>Tour around Viesīte. Little Engine Museum, Palace of Culture, "Residence of the Goats' Village".</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p><i>Elements of rebranding – the community's intelligence and sense of beauty, location as an isolated village, the unique cultural and historical heritage, its significance in today's life.</i></p> <p>Sunākste church, Sunākste center.</p> <p>Dinner at Sunākste Assembly House, story of the association "Well of the Sun" about themselves and the Sunākste community, dinner with the local musical ensemble.</p>
Day 5	Gārsene	<p>Breakfast, transfer to the airport via Jēkabpils.</p> <p>If time permits, a visit to Krustpils Castle will be included, the entrance fee is covered by the participants themselves.</p>

Training course for adults "Revitalization of the Region. A Success Story.

Methods, Resources, and Practice / Rebranding Selonia"

A group of 10 people.

Day	Venue	Content
Evening of Day 1 / arrival	Gārsene Manor	Welcome dinner, local products, and legends of Gārsene. A brief overview of the region's history and contemporary realities. Demonstration of the video projection "The Paths of Selonia". Exhibition of Selonian communities' identity symbols.
First half of Day 2	Gārsene Manor	Series of lectures on territory rebranding methodology, examples, stories about creating identity marks. Presentation of smart region strategy.
	Gārsene Manor	Lunch
Second half of Day 2	Gārsene park and village	<i>Elements of rebranding – nature, active recreation, link between cultural and historical heritage of the place in different periods of history.</i> Getting to know Gārsene. The community's path to the name of smart village, its impact in revitalization of the territory. Valdis Kalnietis's collection of antiques, Gārsene Lutheran church. Active recreation with the community of Gārsene - boating in the mill pond, walking in the nature trails. Coffee break in the park Dinner in Gārsene Manor
First half of Day 3	Subate	<i>Rebranding elements – borderline situation, religious and national diversity, landscape.</i> Meeting in the partnership "Neighbors", the influence of the LEADER program on the development of the territory. Lunch in Subate.
Second half of Day 3	Kaldabruņa	<i>Elements of rebranding – the absence of administrative structures, specific cultural and historical heritage, and an unconventional view of it.</i> Visit to the Meadow Museum, multimedia projection "Midnight Meadow". Rebranding practice – glass processing workshop, social

		<p>business in non-governmental organization, promotion of employment. LEADER program projects in practice.</p> <p>Coffee break</p> <p>Dviete.</p> <p><i>Elements of rebranding – the grape breeder’s heritage, community cohesion, intergenerational cooperation. Economic effect of community identity - rapid development of a small business in Dviete.</i></p> <p>Dinner</p>
Day 4	Daugavpils	<p><i>Elements of rebranding – influence of the national city on the rural area, multicultural environment, cultural and historical heritage of European level.</i></p> <p>Daugavpils Fortress, Mark Rothko Museum, Clay Art Center.</p> <p>Getting to know the city and free time.</p>
Day 5	Viesīte	<p><i>Elements of rebranding – layers of history in a small town. The impact of communities; railway men’s community, "Residence of the Goats’ Village". Imprints of changing economic and political times.</i></p> <p>Tour around Viesīte. Little Engine Museum, Palace of Culture, "Residence of the Goats’ Village".</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p><i>Elements of rebranding – the community's intelligence and sense of beauty, location as an isolated village, the unique cultural and historical heritage, its significance in today's life.</i></p> <p>Sunākste church, Sunākste center.</p> <p>Dinner at Sunākste Assembly House, story of the association “Well of the Sun” about themselves and the Sunākste community, dinner with the local musical ensemble.</p>
	Sunākste	
First half of Day 6	Leimaņi	<p><i>Elements of rebranding – traditions and their exposure today. Volunteer work as a driving force of the society, existing without project funding. Society as a maintainer of the village’s image.</i></p> <p>Baking bread, getting to know the park of Latvian signs, history of the village.</p> <p>A film about the meteorite of Leimaņi.</p>
Second half of Day 6	Zasa	<p><i>Elements of rebranding – the role of personality in the image of a place; artists who change the face of the</i></p>

		<p><i>village. Cooperation between NGO and the municipality.</i></p> <p>Craft center „Rūme”, park, windmill.</p> <p><i>Elements of rebranding – newcomers to the community, the role of cooperation network in the integration process.</i></p> <p>The story of „Nyx&Iris”, visit to the manor and horse stables.</p> <p>Dinner</p>
Day 7	Zasa	Breakfast, transfer to the airport via Jēkabpils

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