

Baltic States Rural Partnerships Programme (BRPP) / Daugavpils District Partnership - Latvia

General details

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Details of activity

Background to the case study	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make a contribution to the “reduction of poverty and social exclusion in the Baltic States” through “improved rural and regional development”. <p>The purpose of the project is all the more specific: “To enhance the capacity of local communities in project areas to improve rural livelihoods on a sustainable basis”.</p> <p>From the outset, we have interpreted the task of the Rural Partnerships Programme as being threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create and test a model for the delivery of integrated (improved) rural development, To provide training and on-the-job experience in “bottom-up” rural development strategies To propose a framework for the continuation and extension of partnership-based local rural development across the three countries. <p>Implementing organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2000 – 2003 - ENTERPLAN International in association with NICO; 2003 onwards in Latvia – NGOs “Daugavpils District Partnership”, “Balvi District Partnership”, “Rezekne District Partnership”. <p>Founders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2000 – 2003 - UK Department of International Development; 2003 onwards in Daugavpils District – Local Authorities, SEB Unibank, Netherlands Embassy MATRA KAP program,
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	<p>Netherlands Community Initiatives Fund KNHM, World Bank/UNDP, European Commission, Latvian Integration Foundation.</p>
<p>Description of activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom up local development is showing positive results in three Latgale districts where the Partnerships are established • Local needs based area strategies are able to attract additional funding for implementation of community projects involving local municipalities and local businesses. • Available funding is important and is always mentioned as one of the first issues for local development. But it is no longer the main one – the main asset are the people in rural areas who have changed over last years and are now bringing change to their communities. The increased ability of rural people to deal with local issues themselves and through Partnerships, creating links to the regional and national level for finding solutions has proved to be efficient to solve problems that are out of competence of local level institutions. • New Partnerships coming in place in other areas of Latvia after year 2003 also understood that the activation of local communities takes time and results are not seen immediately. Local people need to build self confidence and trust in their power to make changes in their lives and their environment. It could take even more than one year for local communities to start discussing their needs together. Also Partnership Boards having representatives from different stake holder groups will need time to learn working together, to listen to each other and to agree on consensus for decision making. • Networking between communities and Partnerships is providing exchange of good examples and support to develop proposals for cooperation to regional and national levels. Seminars and workshops bringing together representatives from three partnerships underlined the interest of hearing and learning from other experiences as well as the pride of telling about success in their own communities. Networking is an important capacity building element to be included in future local development programmes to be continued on different levels – communities and Partnerships. • The sustainability of the achievements to date is secured by forthcoming Leader type Measure and social inclusion activities within the Single Programming Document. Local rural development up to now is very much supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and we believe that the ministry will also take in the future the responsibility not only for Agriculture, but also for people living in rural areas and development of rural Latvia. • Three Partnerships have made the process. It was their job, their free time and their energy that has reached the results



	<p>taken on board by the national level institutions.</p>
<p>Policy context within which the programme operates</p>	<p>The Programme involved people from local communities and local governments, district and regional level institutions and was closely working with the national level institutions – Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments, Ministry of Welfare, Union of Local and Regional Governments, Regional Fund (Latvia), State Chancellery and others.</p> <p>Ministries involved in the RPP were following the developments over the three years and results of the project and lessons learned are reflected in their documents - Leader type Measure in the SPD (Ministry of Agriculture), Joint Inclusion Memorandum (Ministry of Welfare), and others.</p> <p><i>Policy Impact</i></p> <p>The lessons learned within BRPP and the achievements of the three Partnerships in Balvi, Daugavpils and Rezekne districts were delivered to the ministries through the Partnerships, Rural development specialists, seminars and workshops of the BRPP and Policy Dialogue Group discussions.</p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture has included representatives from BRPP Partnership Boards into their working group on Leader type measure which is included into SPD for 2004-2006. The Leader type measure has two components – acquisition of skills and pilot integrated rural development strategies. This will give the opportunity to a number of new areas to start the development of the Leader type approach and for Partnerships, being able to show their capacity as Local Action Groups, to develop and implement integrated rural development strategies.</p> <p>The Ministry of Welfare has included representatives from BRPP Partnership Boards into their working group on Joint Inclusion Memorandum and the experience of the BRPP is taken into Joint Inclusion Memorandum.</p> <p>Through the Policy Dialogue Group, the discussion on the national level led to the initiation of a National Rural Development Consultative Group, involving national level stake holders from farming sector and rural businesses (Council for Cooperation of Agricultural Organizations, Rural Tourism association, etc), municipality representatives (Union of Local and Regional Governments, Association of Small Towns, etc), service providers in rural areas (Agriculture Consulting Centre, State Employment Office, etc) and community representatives (Association of Rural Women, Association of Farmers, etc). The tasks of this group will include consultations to the ministries with respect to the development of the documents for the Integrated Rural Development Plan for the next planning period from 2007.</p>
<p>Geographical focus of the case study</p>	<p>There were three local partnerships (Balvi, Daugavpils and Rezekne Districts) established within the BRPP, but the programme also had a</p>



	national impact on rural development policy.
Impact	<p>More than 1000 people were directly involved in the activities of the Programme through the Partnership Boards, Community Facilitators, Rural development specialists, Policy dialogue group, and 82 implemented community initiative and programme approach projects.</p> <p>The Programme involved people from local communities and local governments, district and regional level institutions and was closely working with the national level institutions.</p> <p>To combat poverty and social exclusion, the Programme empowered local communities to express their needs which find their place in locally focused strategies and through projects which were implemented by local communities themselves and in partnership with local governments, service providing institutions and business partners.</p> <p>Results and Achievements</p> <p><i>Partnerships and strategies</i></p> <p>Three Partnerships which started work in the Programme as project lead entities are now registered as NGOs involving representatives from municipalities and service providing institutions, businesses and local communities (local NGOs). This was a completely natural step arising from the BRPP sustainable local development initiative taken on by locally managed institutions - further developing networks within the district to local communities, municipalities, business sector and linking up to the regional and national level.</p> <p>Within the Programme, the Partnerships developed area based strategies and implemented them using the DFID Small Community Fund of £100 000 for three of them. Community based projects addressing local needs have been implemented not only through the funds of the BRPP, but local communities have also learned to identify and secure support from other funds for their projects. These active communities are building sustainable working relationships with local governments and local businesses which are also providing additional support to local community projects. More than 60 projects out of 82 were funded not only by the BRPP, but also co-funded by local governments. Support to some projects was provided also by businesses. The number of activities initiated under Strategies within the Programme later also received further funding from some international organisations like Red Cross or international partners of local governments (as example – Kalupe Social Centre for elderly persons). In fact this would be very close to reality to state that the amount of funding provided by the BRPP in community initiative projects was doubled by adding funding of municipalities and others.</p> <p>Sectoral institutions on district level have responded to the local needs expressed by Partnerships. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balvi, Daugavpils and Rezekne district State Employment Offices and Daugavpils, Rezekne Agriculture Consulting Offices provided training to local communities



- Daugavpils Branch of Latvijas Unibanka abate bank service costs for community projects
- The Non Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme (managed by Ministry of Agriculture) in Daugavpils district has delivered business development training to the Partnership and communities
- The Social Centre in Balvi town has responded to needs highlighted through community animation and partnership consultations in rural municipalities and has started to provide services there also.

The capacity of Partnership Boards in Daugavpils, Rezekne and Balvi districts has grown over the years benefiting from training delivered by the BRPP and learning by doing – learning through mistakes and acknowledging what it means to listen to the needs of communities, developing procedures for application, selection and monitoring of the projects.

Today when more than 140 community projects are implemented, Partnerships are looking forward to update their Strategies and to express their interest to become Local Action Groups and to receive support for development and implementation of their strategies within Leader type Measure in 2006 to 2008.

Community development

One of the strengths of each of the Partnerships has been the local group of Community Facilitators. These have become the Partnership agents in local areas, carrying out the hard work of activation of local communities on voluntary bases, involving socially excluded groups like disabled people, unemployed, children from families with no regular incomes, young people who are neither learning nor working, and others.

The BRPP has trained 40 Community Facilitators, but each of them has passed on their experience over to their ‘right and left hand’, so we can say that more than 100 Community Facilitators are locally active. One of the major achievements of the BRPP has been the voluntary work of the Community Facilitators and belief that they bring new challenges to their communities. These challenges have been put on a practical foot through training provided to raise self confidence of rural people, developing Community centres where rural people can receive needed information, advice and just come together for discussion, through local environmental, cultural, business and social assistance projects designed by communities.

Municipal capacity and rural services

The capacity of local government in Daugavpils, Rezekne and Balvi Partnerships areas has grown through participation in Partnership board meetings and training delivered by the BRPP. More than 100 representatives from local governments, including chair persons, deputies and social service providers in the three districts received



	<p>training on principles of integrated rural development, community activation and rural appraisal over late summer, early autumn 2003. These were the people previously not being involved directly into activities of the BRPP. After the training their interest in local development raised and this was seen through their interest in future development opportunities for local communities to be provided through Leader type measure.</p> <p>The municipalities learned the needs of their communities, in some areas expressed for the first time directly by the community, learned to respond and in several cases also provide co-funding to the projects developed by the communities. In some local municipalities (like in Nautreni) the premises were provided for development of rural support centre for the community, where information, advice and assistance in cooperation to local farmers were provided.</p> <p>Major service providers to rural inhabitants were part of the Partnership Boards in all three districts, and they learned the needs of local communities. They were able not only to facilitate the implementation of the Partnership strategy, but also to provide the needed assistance (information, training, advice) to the communities directly through their sectoral programmes.</p> <p><i>Rural Development Specialists</i></p> <p>The BRPP provided training for 20 Rural development specialists (RDS), who were following 9 three day training modules. Eleven of the RDS wrote and defended their accreditation work and received Diploma of Galway University. Those who completed the course without preparing the assignment report received a participation certificate from the Rural College in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Five of the RDS are working in the national level institutions and ministries, the rest are from the Latgale region. They all are currently very much benefiting from the training and are promoting partnership principles in their everyday work which is linked with the integrated rural development.</p>
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Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

Theme-Specific Questions

<p>Who was targeted by the programme?</p>	<p>Socially excluded groups in rural areas. The three Partnerships defined individually the groups that were going to be targeted by implementing local strategies. For example, Daugavpils District Partnership has identified – youth (particularly those with special needs), ethnical minorities and long term unemployed people in rural areas.</p>
<p>Which levels of government were involved, informed or consulted?</p>	<p>Local – by taking part in Partnership Board; Regional – by evaluating local development strategies; National – by building national rural development policy that is based on partnerships approach.</p>



<p>What actions resulted in mainstreaming?</p>	<p>The approach and the experience was replicated in Zemgale region by implementing Phare SPF 2002 supported programme on development of 5 rural partnerships.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The Partnerships established within the BRPP are now operating as NGOs on their own capacity.</p> <p>Daugavpils District Partnership has established a small community project fund that gives possibility on local strategy basis to implement up to 30 small scale community projects (€100 to 1000 per project) annually. This project fund is supported by local governments, local banks and in last year the Netherlands community initiatives fund KNHM has co-financed 50% of annual turn over.</p> <p>Also Daugavpils District Partnership is implementing the mission by attracting support to different projects from World Bank/UNDP, European Commission, Latvian Integration Fund etc.</p> <p>More information on the Daugavpils District Partnership activities and summary of implemented community project is available on the web: daugavpils.partneribas.lv</p>

