



Deliverable 7.2

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REVITALISATION OF URBAN SPACES: AGENSKALNS MARKET RIGA, 28 September 2018, Kalnciema Quarter

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Network SUSPLACE, in cooperation with Kalnciema Quarter, organised a practical research seminar in Riga on 28 September 2018. The aim of the event was to stimulate discussion, find practical suggestions and policy proposals for the sustainable development and creative revitalisation of Agenskalns market. The event was attended by 14 early stage sustainability researchers, 11 professors and four non-academic partners from six European universities, one non-governmental organisation and two companies. The participants also included representatives and experts from Riga City Council, the tourism development bureau Live Riga, Riga Stradins University, the Ministry of Culture, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection and Agenskalns neighbourhood association, an independent architect and three undergraduate students in anthropology. The seminar was facilitated by Emils Kilis, a researcher at Baltic Studies Centre.

The participants looked for solutions to three major challenges related to the development of Agenskalns market:

- How can all stakeholders work together effectively? How to develop new forms of private-public partnerships and foster co-operation at the local and national level?
- How to build an identity for Agenskalns market, promoting the reputation of a cultural and historic place?
- What models of sustainable financing are available?

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DISCUSSION

Considering the cultural significance of Agenskalns market and its role in the development of the neighbourhood, it is necessary to involve and represent the interests of as many different parties as possible in the planning and implementation stages of the project. It was highlighted during the discussions that, in order to cooperate successfully, it is necessary to identify (i) the expectations, resources, capacities, risks of the parties involved, and (ii) both existing and potential partners. It is also necessary to formulate a value-based vision for the development of the project and the collaborative models to be developed during the project, without forgetting to precisely link different forms of action to specific values.

Participants indicated that it is necessary to decide whether the model for managing cooperation will be centralised or decentralised. While a centralised model is easier to manage and decisions are made quicker, a decentralised approach is more democratic and inclusive. It is necessary to identify potential partners, establish a stakeholder cooperation platform and management model (with a management team, an advisory board or an advisor, and an independent facilitator). It is also

necessary to clarify the roles of the different partners (e.g. generating ideas, giving advice, participating in the implementation of the project etc.). Different collaborative models may be needed for different projects or different groups (e.g. farmers, entrepreneurs, universities, NGOs).

The collaborative model can be developed locally and nationally, then expanded with the involvement of international partners and stakeholders. As cooperation improves and the range of cooperation partners broadens, it is advisable to regularly review the common vision and forms of cooperation.

In creating an identity for Agenskalns market and promoting its reputation, it must be ensured that the Agenskalns market brand reflects genuine values that are clearly communicated to visitors and buyers. The values on which the image of the market is based must be formulated (i) in cooperation with the neighbourhood community, involving a wide spectrum of local residents, such as young people, seniors, families, etc. and (ii) drawing on the study of the cultural heritage of the particular site. The market should support local residents and trusted local producers, emphasising the importance of short food chains. By emphasising that the market provides fresh produce from local producers, there is potential to demonstrate alternative food supply practices and to create a variety of new links between existing practices (e.g. community gardens can be connected with local cuisine; waste-lab; common areas etc.). It is also possible to develop new social enterprises, which are part of the overall vision and correspond to the values that the market stands for.

The long-term financial stability of Agenskalns market can be ensured through various financing models and several income-generating activities. The neighbourhood association of Agenskalns can assist with the attraction of funds, and this can contribute to the development of Agenskalns market as a multifunctional community centre. It is also possible to attract crowd-funding and donations, which are also used by large multinational corporations. By emphasising the identity and role of Agenskalns market in the life of the local community, it is possible to attract funding from the European Union (e.g. ERDF), as well as investors who invest in projects based on their social impact.

It is also possible to engage in activities that provide additional income. Participants proposed night markets, organising concerts, as well as the involvement of students to perform certain tasks or to implement projects. During the discussion it was mentioned that various services can be provided in the market building. Some parts of the market building (including the basement) could be rented as premises for corporate events and storing goods. Upper floors can house cafes and restaurants. It was pointed out that Agenskalns market could be a place for the development of new enterprises - the market as an incubator for ideas and technology. Also, the opportunity to offer paid services to the local community (such as a locksmith, cobbler, hairdresser, skating rink etc.) as well as tourist-oriented services (e.g. tours, maps of the area, accommodation, bike rental for a tour of Pardaugava with a neighbourhood map) should be considered as well. Other services such as the production of renewable energy can also be considered.

The hosts noted that the main benefit of the seminar was the international exchange of experiences and the focus on different opportunities for cooperation in the implementation of the Agenskalns market project. The Kalnciema Quarter team indicated that several of the suggestions made at the seminar had already been tried or considered in the past, but also emphasised that some ideas that are common in Europe are still a challenge in Riga. Prominent examples of this would be the construction of bicycle paths and waste recycling. Additional challenges for the development of the market are related to the small and ageing population, and the low income of the people living in the surrounding area. In this regard, the creation of a food distribution point would be particularly relevant, as it would address the continued availability of local produce and facilitate development of alternative food distribution practices.