



# Rural Cultural Planning project final report

Supported by



Project Support Facility

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Project case study locations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Urban versus rural</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1. Classification	8
3.2. Rurban	10
<b>4. Political strategies towards rural development</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1. EU strategies towards rural regions	12
<b>5. Process and methodology</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. Cultural planning specifics and considerations in urban-rural area</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1. Public stakeholders	15
6.2. Private stakeholders	16
6.2.1. Company town	16
6.3. Tourism and narratives	17
6.4. Social dynamics	18
6.4.1. Generational questions	18
6.4.2. <i>Life on stage</i>	18
6.4.3. Conflicts	19
6.4.4. The collective	19
6.4.5. Integration	19
6.5. Cultural landscapes	19
6.6. Cultural institutions	20
6.7. Linking local to global	20
6.8. Ageing society	21
6.9. Seasonality	21
6.10. Competition among towns in urban-rural areas	21
6.11. Mapping	21
6.12. Data	22
<b>7. Cultural Mappings</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>8. Capacity building and activities reaching stakeholders</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>9. Future projects</b>	<b>32</b>
9.1. Themes of potential explorations in urban-rural contexts	33



Activity with local school children. Photo: Ugnė Palšaitytė

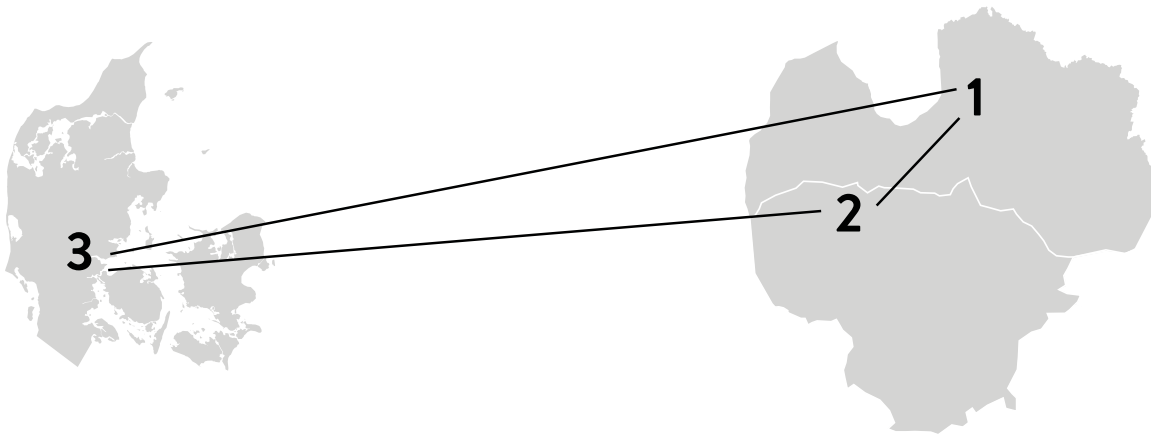
## Preface

The project *Rural Cultural Planning (RurCultural)* was carried out with the support of the Council of Baltic Sea States Project Support Facility (CBSS PSF) from January 2022 to June 2023. **Danish Cultural Institute (DK)** acted as the Lead Partner, with **Vidzeme Planning Region (LV)** and **Laimikis.lt (LT)** as co-partners. **Billund Museum (DK)** acted as an associated organisation, fully participating in the project's activities with its own budget.

*RurCultural's* key objective was to transpose the established methodology of Cultural Planning, which has been applied mainly in urban settings, not least in the recent (2019-2021) Interreg BSR-supported project *Urban Cultural Planning*, to rural settings.

The project's activities included three Cultural Mapping pilots in **Līgatne (LV)**, **Grindsted (DK)**, and **Papilė (LT)**, capacity-building training for municipal staff, project partners meetings/workshops in the three pilot locations – in August 2022, March 2023 and April 2023, respectively, as well as an extra meeting in Riga in December 2022.

Partners have been communicating news and updates on the project's progress on their webpages and social media channels. At the conclusion of the project, project partners are committed to continue the collaboration by applying for new funding to support further steps resulting from *RurCultural*.



## 1. Introduction

*RuralCulturalPlanning* was born from the experience and knowledge accumulated in the recently concluded Interreg BSR project *UrbCulturalPlanning* (2019-2021). Based on the knowledge and policy recommendations generated in this project, the Cultural Planning methodology was tested in a new context – 3 small communities in rural settings: 1) Līgatne (LV), 2) Papile (LT) and 3) Grindsted (DK).

This method can support the capacity of public authorities to deal with complex societal challenges in rural areas, such as depopulation, lack of job opportunities, declining quality of life, and ageing population, by offering and supporting the participation of citizens in the cultural and creative sector, which in turn can act as a stimulus for human and social capital influx into the community.

***RurCulturalPlanning* set out to focus on the following tasks:**

- Anchoring the Cultural Planning method as a policy instrument with relevant policy makers dealing with rural development;
- Transferring knowledge and methods accumulated and tested in *UrbCulturalPlanning* to agents of change in rural areas;
- Adapting the Cultural Planning method to rural BSR typologies by setting up pilot projects (Community Mapping);
- Expanding the BSR network of practitioners based on the Hubs of Excellence created as a result of *UrbCulturalPlanning*.

The process has opened up various exciting aspects about the significant differences between the cultural planning process in a neighbourhood of ten thousand people in a major city/urban setting (reference to *UrbCulturalPlanning*) vs a small town of fewer than 10 000 people in a rural setting. However, it has also opened up an interesting discussion around the understanding and classifications usually used to determine and define rural and urban, as some similarities were found in the process in both territorial typologies.

## 2. Project case study locations



### Grindsted

**Municipality:** Billund  
**Region:** Syddanmark

**Partners:** MARK museum (Billund municipality's museum)

**Local collaborators:** MARK museum (Billund municipality's museum)

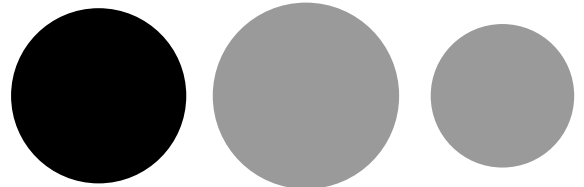
**Closest town of 50 000 +:** **40 min** (public transport)

**Connectedness to the capital:** 2hrs 59 minutes (private vehicle), **4 hrs** (public transport)

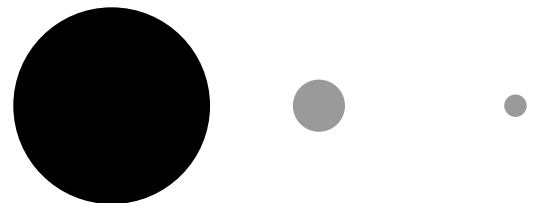
**Type of built environment:** mainly single-family houses organised around a main road with an industrial and agricultural heritage.

**Main characteristics:** Greening post-industrial town facing consequences of industrial pollution and challenging dynamics with Billund – an international “company town” attracting tourism and investment, located only 13km from Grindsted.

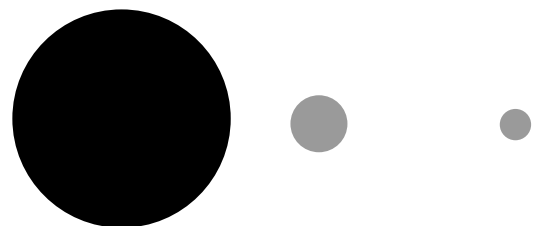
**Size km<sup>2</sup>:** approx. 8,49 km<sup>2</sup>



**Inhabitants:** 9,750



**Density per km<sup>2</sup>:** 1,100



**Growing or shrinking population:** stable



## 2. Project case study locations



### Papilė

**Municipality:** Akmenė

**Region:** Šiauliai

**Partners:** Laimikis.lt NGO

**Local collaborators:** Papilė eldership, The Memorial Museum of Simonas Daukantas, Simonas Daukantas Gymnasium, Vilnius TECH Faculty of Creative Industries;

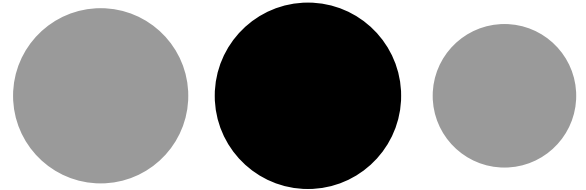
**The closest town of 50 000 +:** Šiauliai 38 min (private car), **55 min** (public transport)

**Closeness to the capital:** 3 hr 8 min (private car), **4 hrs 8 min** (public transport)

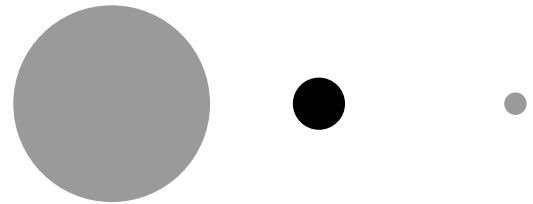
**Type of built environment:** mainly single-family house structures organised around a main road.

**Main characteristics:** agricultural town within the industrial area with natural resources from the Jurassic period. Has an active local community.

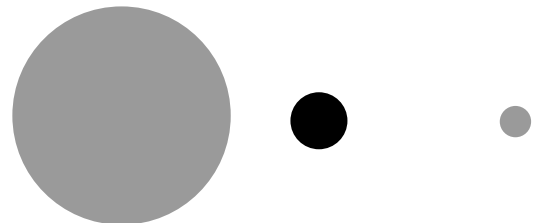
Size km<sup>2</sup>: approx. 9 km<sup>2</sup>



Inhabitants: 2581 (2021)



Density per km<sup>2</sup>: 287



**Growing or shrinking population:** shrinking



## 2. Project case study locations



### Līgatne

**Municipality:** Cēsis

**Region:** Vidzeme

**Partners:** Vidzeme Planning Region

**Local collaborators:** Līgatne tourism and information centre (until 01/2023)

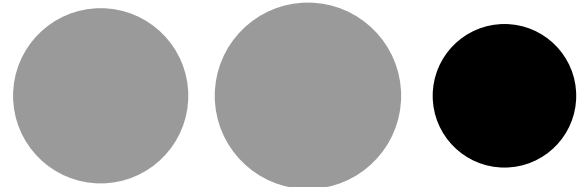
The closest town of 50 000 +: **1 hr 10 min** (private car), **2 hrs 17 min** (public transport)

**Closeness to the capital:** 1 hr 10 min (private car), **2 hrs 17 min** (public transport)

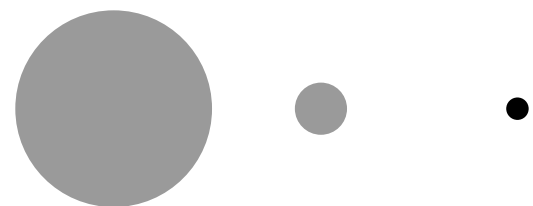
**Type of built environment:** Small clusters of 2-3 wooden workers' apartment houses placed around a five-hill landscape and with an industrial quarter in the middle of the valley.

**Main characteristics:** Protected cultural heritage town in the middle of a natural reservoir. Post-industrial factory town, which is not linked to agriculture or farming, face an influx of inhabitants and tourism development.

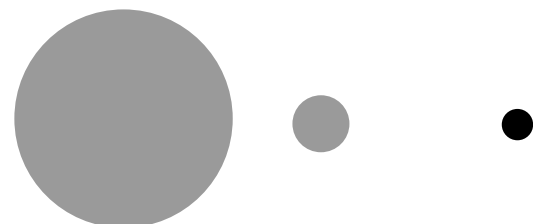
Size km<sup>2</sup>: 7 km<sup>2</sup>



Inhabitants: 1122 (2021)



Density per km<sup>2</sup>: 160



**Growing or shrinking population:** growing



### 3. Urban versus rural

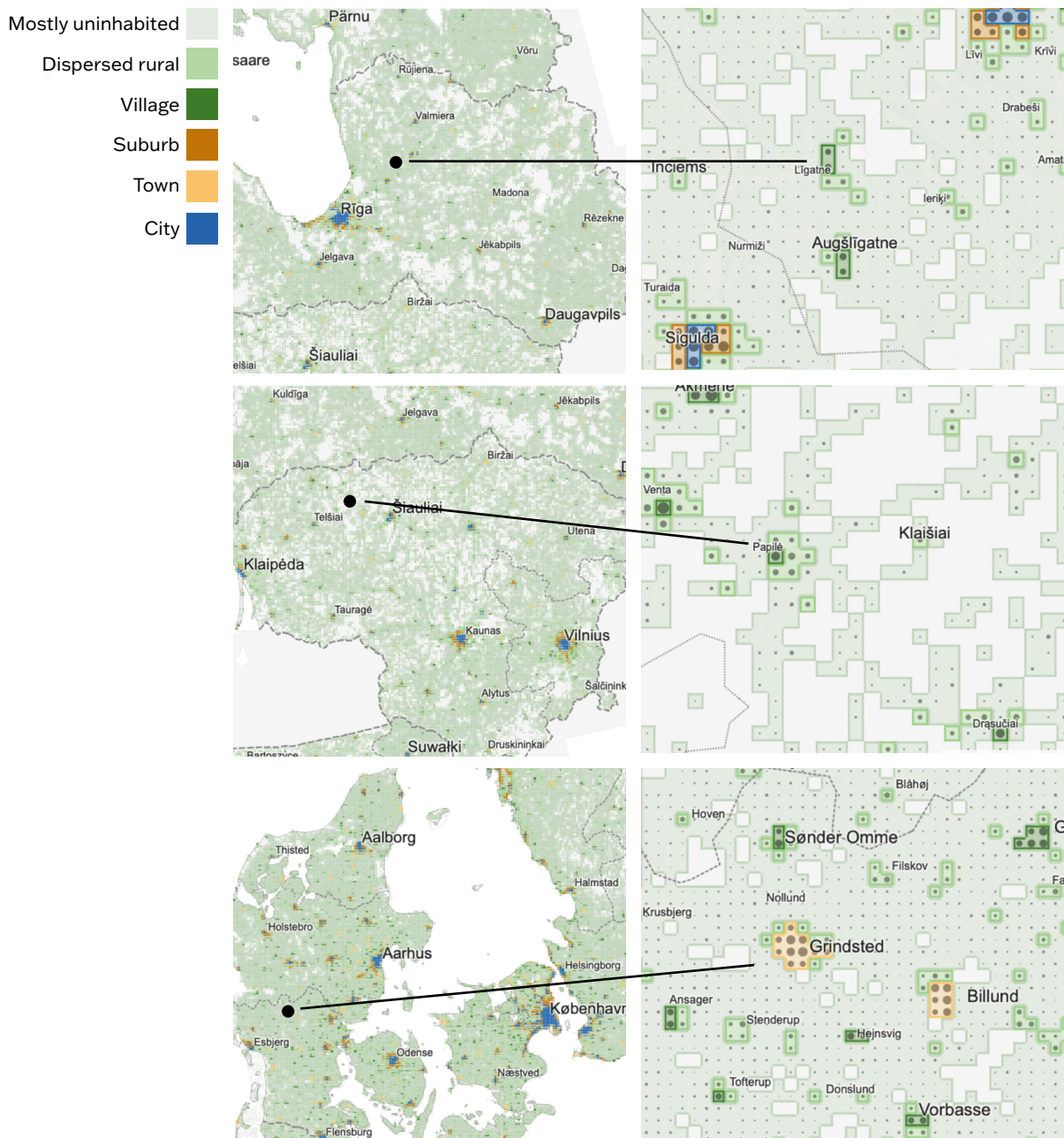
#### 3.1. Classification

On the EU level, the first level of the urbanisation classification, Eurostat distinguishes between 3 main degrees: **cities, towns, suburbs, and rural areas.**

Unfortunately, such classification does not separate villages from thinly or non-populated areas, which is problematic. So to introduce more nuance in the hierarchy of settlements – a second classification level was introduced: **cities, towns, suburbs; villages; dispersed rural areas and primarily uninhabited areas.**

Within this classification, using the [map provided by Eurostat](#), we can determine that the three project areas cannot necessarily be described as rural.

We can see that Papilė and Līgatne are a mix of a village and dispersed rural territories surrounded by mostly uninhabited territories. Grindsted, on the other hand, is classified as a town but is also surrounded by dispersed rural territories and mostly uninhabited territories.





This shows us that the areas we are looking at are still seen as urban centres, even though predominantly rural areas surround them.

To give even more nuance to the way we understand these regions, Eurostat has introduced a larger classification model where the urban-rural typology has been introduced to include the concept of remoteness, identifying intermediate and predominantly rural regions where less than half of the local population can drive to the centre of a city of at least 50 000 inhabitants within 45 minutes.

This classification then divides the EU into territories as follows:

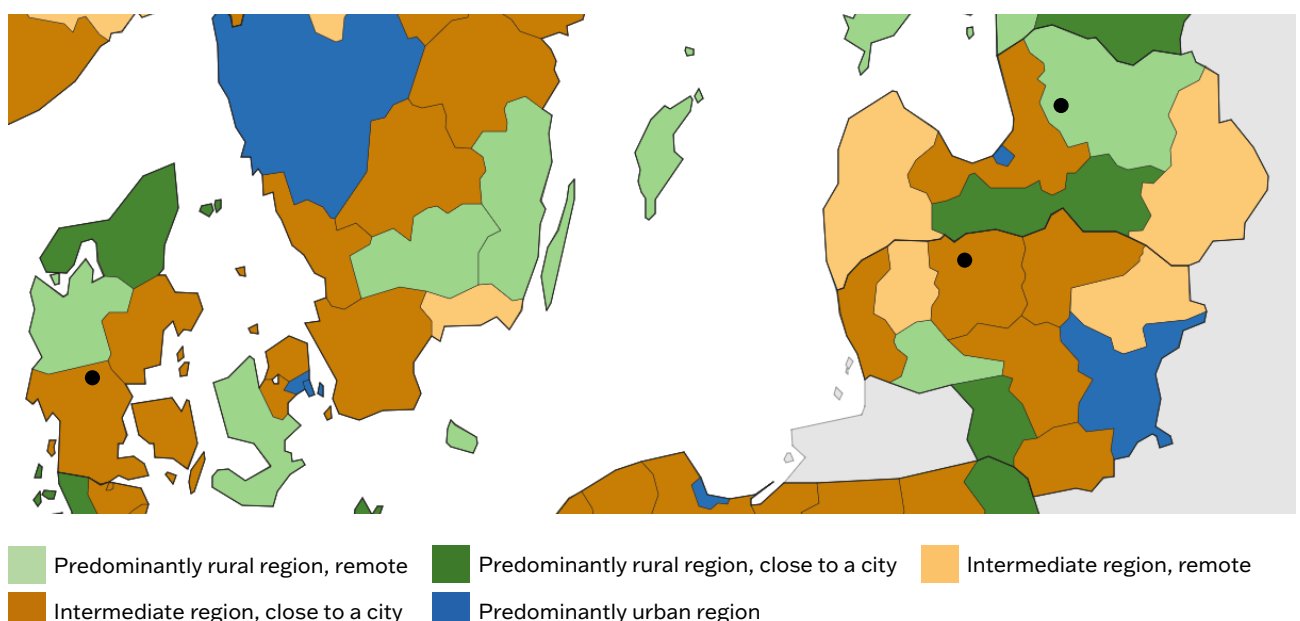
- 1) predominantly urban region;
- 2) intermediate region, close to the city;
- 3) intermediate region, remote;
- 4) predominantly rural region, close to a city;
- 5) predominantly rural region, remote.

Within this classification, we see a different picture. All of the areas are seen as urban-rural typologies. In the urban-rural typology, only 20,8% of the EU population lives in predominantly rural regions. Denmark has 70% of its population living in urban and intermediate regions, Latvia has over 80%, and Lithuania has 95% of people living in this urban-rural typology.

Papile is part of an **intermediate region close to a city**. Šiauliai (101,511) is a 37 min drive away.

Grindsted, like Papile, is part of an **intermediate region close to a city**. Vejle (113,720) is a 40 min drive away.

On the other hand, Līgatne is part of the most rural region in Latvia – Vidzeme. This is classified as a **predominantly rural region, remote**. However, the closest city of more than 50 000 people is the capital, Rīga, but it is only 70 km away, which means this combination of rural and closeness to the capital makes this area very attractive for those who wish to stretch their days between both typologies.



### 3.2. Rurban

There is also another model recently being used more often – rurban.

*Sorokin, in his Rural-Urban Sociology (1929), uses the word “rurbanization”, which according to him, is a terminological invention of C. J. Galpin in 1918. Parson in 1949 exposed the idea of “rurbanisation” in his book – Essays in Sociological Theory. According to him, Rurban communities are the rural socio-geographic spaces where styles of life and standards of living have changed so much that they resemble those in urban localities (1).*

In all three areas of the *Rural Cultural Planning* project, life is predominantly urban if we look at the systems in which people are part of. Food, daily needs, infrastructural, social and economic networks keep the inhabitants connected to the urban centres so that the main distinguishing factor between urban and rural life is the surrounding landscape.

However, if we look closer at the notion of different communities in these areas, it is clear that this picture is far more nuanced. The older generation keeps the rural lifestyle alive, and people moving into the area often search for the rural idyll. On the other hand, younger people and young professionals may want to maximise links with surrounding cities.

This classification lets us understand that there are many gradients when discussing rural and urban contexts and that cultural planning should consider these nuances. The features ascribed to urban and rural areas can also vary from country to country. Especially looking at the administrative-territorial units, we can see significant differences between the EU countries.

<u>Latvia</u>	<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Lithuania</u>
City	Regional capital city	City
Village	City	Town
Small village	Town	Eldership (ward)
Homestead	Rural area	Sub-eldership

Significant differences exist between how the term town or village is perceived in each country, how they are governed, and what self-governance model is in place.

These aspects put the classic cultural planning approach developed in the *Urb Cultural Planning* project in a new context, where these distinctions are crucial, and a policy-level cultural planning approach must find a unique point of departure in each location. As we find out, there are nuances to the rural. It is about the rural landscape but also about elements of a lifestyle either by choice or as a result of centralisation, which forces people to urbanise in some cases against their will.

1. Parsons, T. [1949] (1954), *Essays in Sociological Theory*, revised edition, New York, Collier-Macmillan Limited/ London: The Free Press.

## 4. Political strategies towards rural development

In Denmark, a recent political movement of decentralisation has set out to *move services closer to citizens*.

*In connection with moving services closer to the citizens also in rural areas, in 2020, a political agreement was negotiated that includes establishing 20 new local police units, with 110 new local police officers, to ensure that the police are present and accessible all over the country (Justitsministeriet, 2020). In late 2021, the government also presented a new plan outlining initiatives for the creation of 20 decentralised hospitals, more defibrillators, and further rapid alert systems that improve emergency response capacity (Indenrigs – of Boligministeriet, 2021b) (Nordregio report 2023:2).*

In addition, the Danish government's decentralisation of certain public institutions and universities out of the main cities is a heated topic. Could Denmark have made the full circle with centralisation, and the pendulum is now swinging in the other direction? Moreover, is such direction even on the table for the Baltic states due to the lack of resources?

In contrast, in Latvia, resource scarcity and population decline have precipitated a centralisation movement. In 2021 a territorial reform in Latvia merged 119 municipalities into 43. While in Lithuania, there are 60 municipalities (after the 1996 reform), most of which face population loss. This has raised questions of identity and also the loss of workplaces. This also means the closure of schools and other services – not due to the municipality merger but also driven by the same factors of population loss and the need to concentrate resources. Within the school reform in Latvia, around 120 schools face closure or restructuring into lower-grade schools.

While in Denmark, the health centres are moving closer to small urban settlements, in Līgatne, no local doctor is present. Similarly, in Lithuania, healthcare services are reduced in small towns and the countryside. Small towns in Lithuania (like Papilė) face the potential closure of train stops based on economic reasons. This creates forced urbanisation, often against the will of people. These infrastructural decisions affect how people imagine themselves in the areas and how they feel about the public sector. People in some Baltic rural areas experience resentment due to the reduction of public services and facilities, even though this reduction is justified from a fiscal point of view, as there is a minimum number of users to make a service viable.

## 4.1. EU strategies towards rural regions

*Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, has stated that “Rural areas are the fabric of our society and the heartbeat of our economy. They are a core part of our identity and our economic potential. We will cherish and preserve our rural areas and invest in their future.”*

*The Rural Pact provides a framework for cooperation at European, national, regional and local levels. It is designed to facilitate interaction on rural matters between public authorities, civil society, businesses, academia and citizens. It has three objectives:*

- *amplify the voice of rural areas and raise them higher on the political agenda;*
- *structure and enable collaboration and mutual learning;*
- *encourage and monitor voluntary commitment to action. (2)*

Cultural planning is one of the tools to help respond to the three objectives mentioned.

*Nordregio report 2023:2 Service provision and access to services in Nordic rural areas describes cultural activities as essential in remote locations. It was emphasised that cultural and leisure activities, e.g. sports, music, literature, and other arts, are of great importance for ensuring an attractive living environment and improving public health in rural communities. Interviewees in Suðuroy also emphasised that activities for younger people are essential.*

## 5. Process and methodology

The project set out to carry out cultural mapping in three different areas. It was initially planned to be carried out by local collaborators within the towns, which is confirmed to be the ideal scenario as we find out that being a person from the outside in urban-rural areas has more disadvantages than advantages. Because of a lack of knowledge and capacity in cultural planning, local partners did not carry out the cultural mapping process. The project experts Līva Kreislere and Trevor Davies changed the role of overseeing experts and mentors of the project to a more hands-on approach – Līva K. in Latvia and Trevor D. in Denmark. They carried out the cultural mapping process in Latvia and Denmark individually. The local partners were involved in the process and supported it. Therefore, Vidzeme Planning Region and Mark Museum also had a learning experience.

In all three locations, cultural mapping was based on conversations with locals within groups and individually to find personal stories that can form part of the existing narratives of the place and point to the need for possible future narratives. Also, walk-and-talks were used as a method. The findings are then compiled in a *baseline study* document, which is then communicated to the community for feedback and continued discussion. This method proved to be successful and applicable in urban-rural contexts. Individual interviews prove to be important in rural-urban contexts as individuals in tightly knit communities are often afraid of speaking unpopular or critical opinions. One of the key findings is the importance of keeping interviewees' anonymity before publishing or publicly discussing the mapping. Experience shows that sometimes views which are expressed in interviews in confidence, interviewees may wish to review to avoid direct quotations and not to disrupt relationships with others.

This mapping process gave much insight into the individual communities and general rural-urban specifics, which were not previously considered before the project. Although the methods were similar, the different contexts and questions did make each process unique.

In **Grindsted**, the process was centred around considerations by the museum on how the mapping process could be translated into a design process for MARK museum as a key factor of change in the local community. A central role in this process took the concept of sustainability and future visioning of the area as it is the focal point of the MARK museum. They are investing significant resources and energy in a new museum building project. Grindsted is also unique within the three areas with its dynamics concerning the town of Billund (6,742 inh.), a strong international and entrepreneurial tourism and production point. Mark Museum also operates a unique traditional farm and a community called Kaerensminde with over 500 volunteers, creating a unique cultural planning situation. Grindsted's proximity to Billund and Lego land also puts them in a position where creativity and play are at the core of strategic planning.

In **Līgatne**, the area was undergoing a change in the political structure and was facing many transformations, so the initial process was done in a moment of much unknown. Therefore it was interesting to continue the mapping process and follow the improvements done by the new administration. This switch also meant that the local collaborator who organised the

initial mapping interviews was terminated, and therefore the mapping process lost ground in the community. However, Līgatne's former mill gained a new owner, and the mapping process results were used to strategise about the area and for the incomers to understand the local context better.

**Papilė** is the case of a town with rich cultural and natural resources, a consolidated community, active cultural organisations and schools – and a lack of shared vision for cultural development. While there are small active enterprises (like bees therapy, kayaks rent, guided tours to geological sites) and vibrant cultural activities (community festivals, guided tours, poetic events, etc.), which are based on local cultural and natural resources, the image of the town and its surrounding villages needs to be developed and communication of the place and its activities needs to be fostered. It is possible due to the strong interest of young people coming from this area, the openness of local eldership and Akmenė's municipality and the enthusiasm of local cultural (Memorial Museum of Simonas Daukantas) and educational institutions (Simonas Daukantas gymnasium). The starting point for consolidating local cultural and natural resources and local enterprises for cooperative cultural development and strengthening the image of the place was the mapping of local activist organisations, accompanied by interviews, focus groups, and workshops conducted by urban games and research laboratory Laimikis. It in cooperation with Vilnius TECH Creative Industries student Ugnė Pališaitytė, whose family originally comes from Papilė. This process centred a lot around the local school and the children, and organically creative workshops with the children were designed and centred around local natural resources and the children's perspectives on their town. The memorial museum also became a key player in the project.

Walk and talk with locals in Papilė. Photo: Julius Narkunas



## 6. Cultural planning specifics and considerations in an urban–rural area

The considerations and specifics of cultural planning in urban-rural towns or villages of up to 10.000 people compared to neighbourhoods in dense urban areas with the same amount of inhabitants. These are aspects which should be taken into consideration when initiating programmes in an urban-rural area.

### 6.1. Public stakeholders

In smaller towns, people often *enjoy an active dialogue with elected officials in the local municipal administration and have a good mutual understanding of the most important tasks. This was also the case between supervisors and employees in different service sectors, who are described as being in sync with what is needed and going the extra mile to get it done, even with limited resources.* (Nordregio report 2023:2)

The flow and involvement of politicians and public sector actors have a lot more implications than in urban areas. The changes in key people become more disruptive as the town's social dynamic is more reliant on person-to-person contact. Individual trust between people is key to involving citizens in activities. This also means that the cultural planning process must be rooted in trustworthy people within the community, ideally, who are not outsiders.

Simultaneously, it is advisable that the mapping process should be facilitated by someone outside the community; therefore, a team of local and external members is advisable. As experienced in Līgatne, many public sector leading roles are taken by professionals from nearby towns, which means after their tenure, they are leaving and taking the actions, projects, initiatives, and energy with them. Gaining trust is then much harder for anyone coming from outside. Some smaller towns facing decline can be vulnerable, where emotionally, the sense is that someone from outside is coming to *fix* things. This is not very different from urban neighbourhoods, however, much more tangible and direct.

Additionally, in contrast to cities, the stakeholder group is fixed within small towns. One must choose a partner to work with that would fit the narrative or the imagined activity.

In Līgatne, the mapping process occurred when public sector officials were in a moment of limbo. The municipal reform had taken place, but no real restructuring had taken place, and a couple of months after the mapping – many of the mentioned and interviewed people were, in fact, not present anymore. This disrupts the process. However, on the other hand – for the new administration – the document is a possibility to see the problems previously and what aspects they should be aware of. This presents an opportunity of embedding the cultural planning process in the political cycles. The mappings are a great tool to show the new administration the local specifics, existing resources and needs of the area, which could help the planning process and have a closer understanding of the community. This is most useful in countries where a centralisation movement occurs, merging small municipalities into larger ones. The cultural sector can make the relationship between cities and small towns' municipality centres more intimate.

In Laimikis. It experience, cultural planning is more productive when is driven by a key person from the local community, with outside experts navigating through the cultural planning process. Thus Laimikis. It identifies the first step of cultural planning as identifying the needs of the local actors who are going to carry out the processes after the project. Similarly to smaller neighbourhoods in the cities, in rural areas, one can find strong networking actors. However, the contacts in small towns and villages are more intensive. Thus in smaller communities, the understanding of challenges is shared, and the will to solve the challenges is shared by many community members. Laimikis. It notes that concrete actions and practical problem-solving cooperation with the community members instead of an isolated mapping phase are highly preferable in rural communities and adds that the same is valid for urban communities in smaller neighbourhoods.

## **6.2. Private stakeholders**

Entrepreneurs often take on the municipality's role, for example, developing public spaces or providing transportation services. Usually, this is done with a private interest in the tourism business, which is why relationships between the private sector and the inhabitants can be complicated. On the one hand, locals are happy to see such developments. On the other hand, they might have to suffer the consequence of an increase in noise, pollution, or other changes in their environment, which come with the development of businesses. Sometimes this can mean a complete shift of power structures and governance, as seen in the case of Billund. These relationships must be carefully monitored, and municipalities must be involved in moderating the dialogue between inhabitants and the private sector.

Additionally, the municipality and private sector are more likely to compete in small communities. For instance, in Līgatne, a private cultural venue offers concerts for free and also for a fee. The municipality, therefore, has to rethink what they are offering as there are so few residents. One must diversify and not take away the audience from the private sector and vice versa.

However, it is not the case in Papilē, where small enterprises are looking forward to the strategic development and communication plan from which they could benefit. Because there are no plots for real estate development, there is no ground for pressure and conflicts. In fact, the members of local communities expressed the need for community spaces, as there is no property available. At the same time, there are big heritage areas owned by a local entrepreneur, which are nicely arranged but underused. There is a lack of local initiatives connected to tourism infrastructure while there is a summer camp by Papilē, there is a strong need for further development of places to stay and eat. Overall, there is quite a big niche for the private sector.

### **Company town**

Līgatne and Billund are both historically company towns. *A company town is a place where traditionally, one company practically dominates public life, such as housing, work, infrastructure, community facilities and culture* (adapted from Wikipedia). In Līgatne, the paper mill built all the infrastructure and housing, but in Billund, this was done by the Lego Family Foundation. Such a unique situation of the private sector being in a monopoly is rarely found in an urban setting. In Billund, locals say *Billund is a society built around Lego - the company*. Both towns are no longer exclusively run by the companies. The company town



has, however, a unique dynamic, which can offer an interesting setting to explore cultural planning, as the relationships between the private and public sectors are so close. Both in Līgatne and Billund, the company created the cultural infrastructure essential for a happy and resilient society. Līgatne paper mill case shows that over time company town dynamic creates a strong reliance on the company for help with any problem. In Līgatne's case, the factory even donned the burial services. However, since the company is no longer present in Līgatne (the mill closed in 2014), the community is left with weak self-organisation skills and a longing for the past, which truly democratic systems cannot replace.

### 6.3. Tourism and narratives

Contrary to large urban settings, small towns are more often looking at strategic city planning through the lens of tourism. This includes the idea of branding and *selling* the town. It is challenging for small communities to hold many narratives simultaneously. It is hard to juggle different narratives, and people often lean towards choosing one and emphasising that, which can mean that other narratives and, thus, other groups may be left out – both socially and economically. This is often the case with post-industrial areas in rural surroundings. Can the place celebrate its industry and, at the same time, be looking towards future sustainability? This can be an excellent opportunity for the inhabitants and the private sector to create this positive strategy and discuss values and the future rather than simplified branding directions. Ideally, a manifesto could be produced, upon which everyone can agree and can be used in future conflict resolution.

However, there is a risk of excluding parts of society in this process, creating a strategy or a town *brand* that locals don't identify with. In this case, the municipality is working against itself. Two places have a specific branding strategy. Līgatne – the place of slowness and calmness. Billund municipality – the capital of children with play and creativity as core values (ref. Billund's Legoland). In Grindsted, there is also an idea to call it *the green capital*, which is an exciting flip and a vision for the future since there is an ongoing long-term pollution hazard in the area because of 1970s industrial activity. While in Papilė, communication is based mostly on the cultural heritage – the connection to the prominent cultural figure of Simonas Daukantas (1<sup>st</sup> part of XIX century), during the mapping process the importance of the Jurassic period for the local landscape, industry, identity and activities was found.

Interestingly culture and tourism departments can often operate under the same roof in small towns. In the case of Līgatne, one municipal body was taking care of both, and therefore the income from tourism can fund the local cultural activities. Employees of both are more involved in both activities, and resources needed for both, such as stage lights, microphones, and projectors, can be shared. When developing the *RuralCulturalPlanning* project in Līgatne, it was not so obvious to locals and the municipality which sector this activity could be part of. The municipality was convinced that it is more tourism than culture. The *UrbCulturalPlanning* project showed that the cultural planning processes could occur in the realm of cultural, social, planning or culture departments - as long as it is carried out by trustworthy actors in the community and with a cross-sectorial approach.

In Lithuania, the neoliberal economy-driven processes of reducing local public stakeholders, such as the local and regional park administration, weaken local tourism. The trend of centralisation makes it more challenging to run site-specific projects and strategies based on the sense of place. Local actors in Papilė, who run tours and have prepared several excur-

sions in cooperation with the direction of the local and regional park, perceive this trend as a challenge for further development. It must be added that for local tourism, the development of public transport is essential as it grants accessibility of the local sites for various groups.

In Līgatne and Papilē historical narrative seemed to be held by a few people, either the municipality or the tourism office. These institutions are suspicious of other actors telling different stories and memories or visioning different narratives. Ownership over one true historical narrative of the area was observed, challenging the cultural planning process. The opportunity is to create a process where both the correct historical narrative is discussed and confirmed, but also a layer of emotional and intimate narrative can be explored in a way that they don't compete or conflict.

#### **6.4. Social dynamics**

In small towns, the *us vs them* attitude is highly developed organically due to a smaller and less diverse population. Additionally, one must be aware that in Latvia and Lithuania, levels of trust are lower towards one another and the public sector than in Denmark. However, it differs from place to place, as, for example, in Papilē, they have seen a high level of cooperation between local public and private sectors with municipality and eldership. Therefore, cultural planning processes can take longer, and the goals must be communicated clearly. Regardless of the scale of the community, no false promises should be made, and small urban-rural communities can be additionally prone to feeling like this process is either an unwelcome intruder or, on the other hand – a long-awaited saviour coming to solve deep-rooted structural issues.

#### **Generational questions**

The generational gap is more evident in urban-rural than densely populated urban areas. Because of the lack of competition for skilled workers, people in leading positions often fill the seats for an extended period. This creates a dynamic where it is hard to change the usual ways of working, and it is harder for newcomers to change anything and for youngsters to get the mandate to do what they want. This is another reason why in urban-rural areas, it is essential to place the cultural planning process within the municipality.

Small towns, understandably, are often looking towards youth as the future. Families with young children increasingly seek unspoiled nature to raise their children. However, often they wish to keep proximity to urban centres as well as look for possible job opportunities locally. The area has to be safe for children, yet nature should be unspoiled, and there should be activities for children. Finding a location with all these aspects might take a lot of work. Smaller towns have to balance between development and preserving their “rural idyllic” feeling. The existing values of smaller towns need to be maintained while looking for sustainable economic development models. Something like the future Līgatne paper mill quarter can also be potentially a threat to this rural idyllic and needs to be carefully planned out.

An urban-rural specific is the involvement of youngsters in agriculture and farming. In rural areas, a higher percentage of children drop out of school, which to an extent, is due to the need and possibility of helping in the family's agricultural business.

#### ***Life on stage***

The built environment contributes to the sense of *living on the stage*. Many people involved

in the process mentioned that the town's newcomers felt watched and like they were being talked about. Some noted that there is *no place to hide*. This aspect is challenging for newcomers. However, also locals experience this. Some cultural sector workers mention that experimental activities are not popular as people are aware of how they are perceived in the community and are afraid to *misstep*.

Therefore trusted cultural workers in the community have the power to engage people in certain activities individually.

### **Conflicts**

In small towns where the flow of people is limited, conflicts, if not resolved, can become generational and eventually split communities. Therefore it is important in small towns to have an official or unofficial mediator who knows the conflicts and everyone's needs and keeps an open communication. Cultural institutions have the potential to be mediators in these small communities. In this case, the variable is the type of self-organisation the community has. If the community is meeting often to discuss issues, the more there is a chance for conflict resolution. The cultural planning process in urban-rural communities has to consider the informal networks and hierarchies that traditional communities often might have. In Lithuania, elderships are built around the concept of the elder, a person who is elected from the community as the most active and representative.

### **The collective**

Close networks and resource sharing is a much more recent past in urban-rural towns. In Līgatne, some houses share outdoor toilets to this day. Sharing the sauna, the gardens and other resources can come more naturally for the urban-rural communities. However, unresolved conflicts and distrust in newcomers can impede this dynamic. A sense of community is essential for the quality of life in rural communities, and the role of political structures supporting community interest is critical.

### **Integration**

Similarly to some dense urban neighbourhoods, questions of integration were present in Līgatne and Grindsted. An essential aspect of urban-rural towns is the integration of new inhabitants and especially inhabitants with migrant backgrounds. Compared to larger cities – the smaller towns' inhabitants have closer social links, and it is more difficult to relocate. Finding people with the same interests and background is harder than in larger urban centres. This is prevalent in Līgatne, which has been historically and geographically isolated. Compared to larger cities, people with migrant backgrounds struggle to integrate into smaller towns. These questions are also in focus in Denmark.

## **6.5. Cultural landscapes**

Compared to urban settings, landscape plays a more critical role in rural and urban-rural areas. The cultural mapping process organically introduced more questions and findings about natural resources and, most interestingly, cultural activities in the context of the landscape(s) as the common framing of rural life. This is an opportunity for the cultural planning process to create narratives and cultural activities in relation to the landscapes, as they often present a variety of memories and cultural and social activities. E.g., in Līgatne, the five hills the town is built on are the basis for an annual hill festival, each year hosted by different hill's inhabitants. The landscape presents strong cultural traditions spanning centuries, often around the calendar

year, based on the harvesting and hunting cycles. One of the main events in Papile is a hunting festival.

The history of the landscape also presents a range of possible cultural interventions. The cultural sites of rural areas are often not cultural institutions but rather natural cultural sites - excavation areas, memorial sites, ancient burial sites, and natural wonders. One has the opportunity to work with these more actively than is done at present. The concept of the *scarred landscape* (for example, trenches or burial sites) can present a platform to talk about ecology, social justice, and other contemporary topics.

## **6.6. Cultural institutions**

Urban-rural-specifics can also be viewed through the cultural sector. While in urban centres, cultural industry is diverse, and each inhabitant has a multitude of choices, in small towns, the only actors are often the municipal cultural institutions – most likely, these are libraries, culture centres, or museums. Within the cultural planning process, this puts pressure to work either with the only cultural institution or all, as conflict can arise otherwise. This needs to be considered. In Latvia and Lithuania, the heritage typology of cultural houses is still prevalent. Hundreds of small towns have grand, often still active culture houses left over from the Soviet occupation period agricultural collectives or industrial enterprises. In small communities, these grand buildings can be a financial burden.

In Latvia and Lithuania, the municipal cultural sector must not generate profit, which means it is harder to do strategic long-term planning. It is not the case, however, in Denmark. In urban areas, alternative structures are easier to establish.

Additionally, municipalities often fail to acknowledge that local cultural centres have a broader role and also can play an important social role – social support for seniors and people receiving social welfare, after-school educational help for children, life-long learning platforms and other functions. Interestingly new hybrid cultural institutions are developing in Līgatne. The cultural centre also houses the library. In Papile, the local memorial museum of S. Daukantas is increasingly becoming a platform for social gatherings as there are no other places to meet in Papile. The museum director in Papile noted a shift in how these small museums are governed and that they are used to safeguard specific stories and items. These places are becoming more active and open. However, since the museum cannot sell coffee, the director notes that it is hard for her to keep up the much-needed social place for Papile. Mark Museum in Grindsted is a municipal museum but can fundraise independently. They are also committed to playing the role of future visioners involving the community, which is something the municipality should be actively involved in.

This project proves that it is advisable to have the cultural planning process engage through a municipal cultural institution in the town as the only actor with roots in the local community, remaining in the local community after the project, is the Mark Museum. It is essential to be located within the community for the cultural planning process to be anchored there.

## **6.7. Linking local to global**

In urban-rural areas introducing global problematics and ideas might be more challenging.

For example, green and sustainable thinking might seem too extreme for smaller communities, but these ideas are more commonly discussed in urban contexts. However, in many ways, urban-rural communities are much more green, sustainable, resourceful, and resilient, often, without conceptualising it. There is an opportunity to work with this notion.

### **6.8. Ageing society**

Ageing society is a central theme across all of rural Europe. Older people are the group that could gain from cultural planning the most. They are the ones who often need social engagement, as well as the ones who can tell stories and share memories of the place. There is an unused opportunity to develop a silver economy, higher engagement in public sector activities, and potential for volunteerism. Due to the lack of resources and centralisation of health services, the elderly are often pushed out of their lifelong environments.

### **6.9. Seasonality**

Tourism and multi locality (people having multiple homes) create contrasting dynamics in the towns in different seasons. This can have its benefits, as well as drawbacks. The fluctuating population doesn't have as high interest and a sense of ownership towards the place. Additionally, there is increased pressure on the shared infrastructure. Often this would mean that the term infrastructure is expanded (hotels, cafes, parking spaces, etc.) to accommodate the influx. Still, after the high season, this infrastructure might be left empty, creating a sense of abandonment and emptiness in the area. The high prices during peak season or the noise and busyness might even push some people out. Such situations must be managed carefully, and various strategies can be created to benefit the local community. In the case of Līgatne, they are in a position where the tourism expansion needs to be rethought since the area is becoming the opposite of its tourism slogan, *the slow and calm Līgatne*, and they need to define what kind of tourism they concentrate on.

In Papilē, seasonality expresses more through the harvesting seasons, so most people are out of town during the peak harvest time. Papilē's residents noted that school teachers also leave the town to visit their summer houses in nearby villages.

### **6.10. Competition among towns in urban-rural**

A competition for infrastructure among neighbouring towns of similar size can be noticed in Latvia. For example, Līgatne and Augšlīgatne, which are only 7 km apart, must share infrastructure for children and cultural activities. This is an understandable dynamic. However, one must be aware that such a fight for resources can leave the two communities in conflict.

In Billund and Grindsted, there is an unresolved conflict between the two towns, which the interviewees mentioned a lot.

### **6.11. Mapping**

An observation from the mapping process in Līgatne shows that the process needs to be considerably more in-depth than in urban areas. One must aim to include all of the actors without exception. For example, if a chef is mentioned from one restaurant, the other chefs should

also be mentioned. Otherwise, a question arises – *why are you mentioning this but not that?* In Līgatne, after reading a book about Līgatne and referencing it, the feedback from the community was: *Why was this book mentioned, but not the article I wrote in the local paper?*

The same situation can take place in the initial interviewing process – trying to involve as many people as possible are essential. Even though 30 people from a 1000-person community seems like a good percentage, the locals will view it as minimal coverage in such a small community. In this case, there needs to be strong reasoning as to why one thing is done and not the other. Still, ideally, the local partner needs to be very trustworthy and respected, as in the case of Līgatne, the mapping process was carried out from the *outside* and mostly is received with criticism, except by the newcomers in Līgatne.

## 6.12. Data

In urban settings, municipalities often take it upon themselves to have detailed data about their neighbourhoods. However, that is not always the case for urban-rural settings. Unlike Denmark - Latvia, Lithuania doesn't have detailed and comprehensive data about each geo-location. It was not possible to get the statistics of ownership, age, marital status, employment, income, education and other factors for Līgatne, for example. In Denmark, the tool *Conzoom* helps get all this data at a 100m x 100m square precision. This allows planning to be much more precise and agile. Cultural planning can provide soft data. However, the lack of *hard data* makes the process slower and less accurate.



Activity with local school children in Papile. Photo: Ugnė Pališaitytė

## 7. Cultural mappings

### Līgatne

As part of this project, a booklet called *Līgatne culture map* was created. This summarises the 27 interviews, discussions and researched material collected during the mapping process. This was created as an ongoing platform, where the author Līva Kreislere is, communicating it back to the contributors multiple times and then communicating it to the larger local audience. Within the booklet are mappings of natural resources, protected and heritage areas, cultural landscapes and [social network map](#). The booklet is a communication tool to inform and inspire locals and municipalities and get more views and comments. It is then further communicated to the municipality.

The initial findings were presented at the Līgatne paper mill festival, where Līva was invited to speak about the first view on Līgatne. This talk opened new channels of communication with the local community.

Afterwards, an interview with Līva was published in the [local newspaper](#) with the title *Developing while keeping the identity*.

The cultural map booklet was received with both – interest and also suspicion. It was hard for locals to understand the aim of the process, and the fact, that the process is the aim. It was also hard for people to acknowledge that the map can be edited, that it is acceptable if there are differences of opinion and that participants are encouraged to make amendments. Some residents, who were not interviewed initially, viewed the booklet with suspicion, which confirms the need to carefully think of the selection of people to involve in the first round of discussions. The open call process was initiated by the original project collaborator, the tourism centre (which was then dissolved in the reformation process). However, this was not executed the way it should have been in a relatively closed community – with individual invitations and assurances. Some interviewees mainly used the open-call sign-up approach to come to the interviews and complain about specific infrastructural issues. This shows that the local collaborator couldn't clearly communicate the nature of the process.

It was challenging for people to understand that they could make amendments in the booklet if something they think is invalid. Instead, they would take a protective stance. Some interviewees did not want their names and quotes used as they feared backlash from the community. Some local entrepreneurs received it with interest as it offered a lens to learn more about the area. Līgatne paper mill's new owners now use the booklet to train their guides about the area and strategise the development process. Līva also gave a lecture for the designers working with the paper mill's visual identity.

In part, the local cultural institutions were not interested in getting involved with the process because the tourism centre started it and didn't feel ownership. They also found it hard to understand whether it is a cultural activity or a process that is tended towards tourism. It is important to note that the cultural institutions were also in the middle of restructuring. Even though the local school is positioning itself as innovative, they were not interested in hosting a workshop created for children with the cultural mapping process. The workshop





## **Grindsted**

In Billund, the mapping process was based on existing mapping activities which are ongoing and managed by MARK, Billund Museum and are user based, and they were then targeted and linked to the project. These included a series of workshops with students from the Grindsted Academy who were invited to make comments on various aspects of the quality of life in Grindsted, Billund and also to make future-orientated observations. The research was integrated into a simple set of box /cube designs and placed at the museum entrance for the season 2022/23. Visitors to the museum could access these modules and make their own comments. The experience is now being assessed as to how this might be developed in the project's next phase.

The main mapping project has been based on selecting 12 key persons and in-depth interviews. All with significant networks and deep knowledge of Grindsted/Billund but from different perspectives. The conversations have been individually channelled to cover many aspects of the local community and were structured around a simple SWOT format analysis, i.e. strength, weakness, possibility, and threats. The interviews were conducted in January/ February 2023, and the material is documented (32 pages) as personal/individual narratives and thematically. An internal seminar was held to evaluate, document, and develop the themes.

The resulting mappings are being presented to the board of the Museum, The local authority, the Billund Academy, the Regional Tourism Board, the Cultural Association of Billund and the Dpt. of Development/Culture of Billund Kommune.

The mappings are now being translated and reformatted into a series of public walks dealing with some of these issues. These walks will generate another series of observations from the local participants in the coming season. This model can thus be repeated, and the outreach expanded to specific target groups and the general public and is an exercise in collective mapping, which will be formed as a participatory installation in the museum.

The mappings have also been presented to the board of MARK. They are now an integral part of the strategic development plan for the new museum, which is the project's main focus: to test and scope the possibility of developing a new museum which, in many ways, breaks with museum tradition.

The mapping supported and underlined the need to expand the social connectivity and relevance of the museum and to use local issues and experiences in the context of a larger/ national/ global agenda where issues of environment, biodiversity, sustainable communities, addressing industrial pollution etc. which are all an integral part of the history of Grindsted/Billund could be addressed as well as the positive experiences /narratives of Billund, e.g. design, play and creativity which has been fuelled by the role of Lego in the area and which is being harnessed to develop a brand for the city.

By using the specific local experiences in the formatting of the museum, which connects the past and the future, revolving around key issues which everyone can both understand and relate to, MARK can act as a connector and mediator for many different social groups and also serve as a space of creative learning for the local community and also for visitors.

## Papilė

In the Lithuanian case, the mapping phase was organically accompanied by practical workshops involving both public and private stakeholders, the results of which are:

- 1) communication tool for activities in Papilė;
- 2) new walking cultural routes, the game *Reimagine Jurassic Period* that promotes exploration of Papilė for families and kids;
- 3) identification of the places and routes of young people in Papilė for further co-development.

These activities addressed the challenges identified by the representatives of the public and private sectors during the very first focus group and then detailed during the following meetings. In Papilė's case, it was not only the local eldership and municipality which represented the public sector but also the local gymnasium (which is going to be reduced to a 10-grade education school starting from 2023) and local museum, as well as Venta's regional park administration (which was reduced from 2022 to 2023 due to the reformation of Lithuanian parks). During the implementation of the cultural planning approach, the reduction of the public sector was obvious in the Lithuanian case, strengthening the trend of centralisation of many levels (only bigger cities get gymnasiums, and only central cities get administration units for the national and regional parks).

The mappings by urban games and research LAB *Laimikis.It* was done using a variety of methods:

- desk research exploring stakeholders and cultural activities in Papilė;
- guided tour in Papilė led by an elderly person (Pranciškus, 66) and young person (Ugnė, 22) to learn about the local narratives and local routes, important sites in Papilė;
- guided tour in Papilė and around by a professional guide (Rita) to learn about the narratives presented for tourist groups about Papilė;
- freely structured interviews with local key active people (Ugnė, Steponas, Filomena, Gražvyda, Elena) to learn about the challenges of living and working in Papilė and local initiatives of strengthening Papilė's identity;
- focus group with public and private stakeholders, including vice-mayor of Akmenė district, chief of the eldership, member of the districts' council, representatives of the administration of the regional park, tourism departments, museum, school, local communities and enterprises (13 persons), collecting materials for the SWOT analysis, identifying needs and potential.

During the focus group, it became evident that the mapping phase must be accompanied by cooperative actions, reacting towards the local challenges (similar to *Laimikis'* experience in cultural mapping in different locations). *Laimikis.It* says: *people want actions*. The main directions for further actions were identified:

- a) consolidation of the local resources into scenarios for a 1-2 days visit – for sufficient communication of Papilė;
- b) strengthening the narrative of the Jurassic period in Papilė, which is quite invisible at the moment;

c) identification of the sites and needs of youngsters and children in Papilė – to prepare for further co-development.

For each of the directions *Laimikis.It* team has developed a solution, which was presented and tested with the community members.

As for strategic communication format, the district's municipality has shown interest.

1) field research, learning about the activities and involvement of the local communities in the cultural life of Papilė and the district. There is an impressive number of local communities from local villages and Papilė itself (around 15 communities) who can consolidate their efforts and resources into creative, attractive unique events;

2) meetings of the core group (*Laimikis* + *Ugnė*) to develop walking routes in Papilė and to map the gaps for future development of the routes;

3) online round tables with the participants of the focus group, presenting and discussing the results of the mapping and capacity building – and presenting the format for communication of Papilė's activities and resources;

4) online focus group with the teachers of *Simonas Daukantas* gymnasium to learn about the methods of active learning and research about Papilė's landscape (cultural, natural and industrial). Teachers expressed their willingness to help organise mapping workshops with gymnasium pupils;

5) online round table with several teachers of *Simonas Daukantas* gymnasium;

6) two workshops with pupils of the gymnasium (4<sup>th</sup> and 5-9<sup>th</sup> grades classes) – *Reimagining Jurassic Period* (several 4<sup>th</sup>-grade classes) and *Youth sites mapping and future scenarios* (5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade classes), during which pupils mapped their places of interest and had discussions in groups where they shared ideas and things they thing want to change on sites. These workshops made an additional layer to Papilė mapping and allowed the organisation to see the town through the eyes of the youth. For further co-design workshops, possibilities for funding will be explored.

On the base of this research-and-actions process, *Laimikis.It* found that Papilė has huge multidimensional potential, in the activation of which the members of the local community take an active part. Both the Jurassic layer in Papilė and its cultural history need a creative approach to activate them, and a consolidation of the local resources is needed to strengthen the identity of Papilė. The town's natural, industrial and historical sites, the Memorial Museum of *Simonas Daukantas*, and tourist activities are why to spend a weekend in Papilė for families and active hikers. However, a strategic plan for developing tourism infrastructure and communication is needed. There are challenges connected to the national trend of centralisation and reduction of the local public bodies – schools, parks directions, and transport system. Cultural planning can only address the threats coming from this trend.

## 8. Capacity building activities reaching stakeholders

### 8.1. Latvia

- Engagement of the *Vidzeme planning region* in the process of cultural mapping resulted in a better understanding of the method as well as the challenges it can take upon. Vidzeme planning region took upon themselves to create [the policy recommendation document for municipalities](#). Vidzeme planning region also organised a lecture/ seminare for local interested parties from the planning levels of Vidzeme region municipalities. Līva Kreislere gave a lecture, which is recorded and is used to further spread information about the method. This material is cited in other academic materials on Cultural planning. It was overall received with a lot of interest from the participants.
- Līgatne culture map was received with a lot of interest from the Līgatne paper mill owners and developers. Material is used to educate local guides and to strategise the development process. Also a talk was given by Līva at the paper mill festival in August 2022 regarding the findings in the cultural mapping process in Līgatne. Another talk was given to the graphic designers working with the Līgatne paper mill graphic identity.
- Līgatne culture map was distributed to another private entity in Līgatne interested in developing a public project. This material can be beneficial as an introduction to the area for anyone planning an intervention in the area.
- Generally the local public sector representatives were challenged to think about which department could potentially a cultural planning activity fall into and therefore funded from.
- Outside the Rural Cultural planning project activities - Līva is a mentor for a MA thesis project in Saldus on the theme of cultural planning, a mid-scale town in Latvia. The material and methodology created were of great use to the student. In August 2023, Līva is presenting the method of cultural planning and the approach of cultural mapping in the rural-urban context in a summer school organised by the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Present at the summer school will be artists, curators, and local municipality representatives. It is taking place in Smiltene - another mid-scale town in Latvia.

## **8.2. Denmark**

- The mapping will be extended to engage more stakeholders and key persons in the community.
- A program of walks in the neighbourhood to engage the local community with some of the participants' ideas/narratives/ thoughts can potentially deliver a strong and valuable "community" platform, which can indeed be integrated into the design spec for the new museum.
- The participation model practised at the Museum could be expanded and developed into a community action group with a larger mandate.
- The role of the Museum as a collective think tank for the future and a collective memory archive for the community would extend the notion of participatory planning.

### 8.3. Lithuania

During the mapping research-and-action process, *Laimikis.lt.* has identified three directions of capacity building, where cultural planning can be instrumental, developed and tested pilot solutions. Their keyword here is *networks*, as capacity can be built by combining the knowledge, skills and resources of the local stakeholders and the place itself:

- Consolidating the local public and private resources strengthens Papilė's identity and communication. By mapping the main actors in the area, a good balance and sense of cooperation between enterprises and the public sector was found. Kayaks rent, bees therapy, and guided tours are accompanied by activities proposed by the Memorial Museum of Simonas Daukantas, activities planned by a regional park of Venta (the administration was reduced from 2022 to 2023), activities of local communities and other cultural organisations in the district. A strong attraction can be formed by bringing these activities together to the shared scenarios that embrace local activities performed by public and private actors. Sometimes the combination of the existing small resources is the answer to the lack of financing. The formats/communication tools were presented to the local private and public stakeholders and have received positive feedback and interest from the district's municipality.
- Development of the sites and routes with young people of Papilė. This direction was identified during the focus groups with the local stakeholders and corresponded to the threat of the smaller towns – the loss of population, especially young inhabitants. To strengthen ownership of the sites in the small town and to make the sites more attractive to the needs of young people, three creative formats for the workshops with young people were developed, all of them presented to the teachers of Simonas Daukantas gymnasium, and two of them were conducted (with the third method delayed for the future workshops). The sites and routes of young people, the scenarios of leisure time are collected, and the ideas of what to change in Papilė from the perspective of young people were documented. Based on these ideas, further actions will be taken (funds for this direction will be explored). *Laimikis.lt* finding: Young people in rural areas are eager to walk with friends rather than just stay in one place, while the requests for site changes are quite simple and pragmatic. For the walking routes, young people have original suggestions for creating interesting stops on the way. By presenting the findings to the vice-mayor, chief of the eldership, gymnasium and other stakeholders and co-shaping further actions, *Laimikis.lt* contributes to the capacity of the local stakeholders in cooperating with young people, strengthening the potential of this town, villages around and the whole district.
- Jurassic period is an important yet invisible part of the identity. During the mapping process, *Laimikis.lt* has identified several local initiatives developed by persons to promote this geologic period. It will strengthen its identity and communication by consolidating the activities and attracting the local gymnasium and municipality Papilė (which is the scientific name of several ammonites found here). *Laimikis.lt* has developed the format for the Jurassic route in Papilė, involving local initiatives (for example, the one developed by resident Steponas), presented it to the local stakeholder and also developed and tested [Jurassic Period Walk/Reimagine Jurassic Period in Papilė](#) with the pupils of the gymnasium. Jurassic-based routes

are an input in the capacity development of local tourism.

During this project, connections between local organisations and the partners, acting in Līgatne and Grindsted, were established, and this network contributed to the local capacity building providing ground for further cooperation.

Activity with local school children. Photo: Ugnė Pališaitytė



## 9. Future projects

The mapping of themes for the possible future project considers the activities' scalability, replicability and relevance for Baltic Sea Region countries.

**It also considers the previously mapped-out cultural planning specifics in urban-rural areas. To sum up the urban-rural specific aspects – the most important challenges in such areas are:**

- Labour shortages and problems of attracting the right competencies to provide the services (Especially prevalent in Līgatne and Papile);
- Demographic changes (more elderly and fewer young people);
- Lack of housing to attract and welcome new inhabitants;
- Lack of public sector funds to cover essential services, for example, health and transportation services;
- Growing needs and resources to mitigate the effects of climate change; (Especially prevalent in Līgatne and Papile);
- Public authorities lack digital competencies, which affects the uptake and spread of digital solutions, which would help with service provision (Prevalent in Līgatne and Papile);
- Pressure on digitalisation can entail a risk of excluding certain inhabitants;
- Challenges in terms of developing good location-specific services, including child care, health centres, schools which are increasingly centralised;
- Increased bureaucracy and administration that burdens public officials;
- High levels of dependency on individuals and volunteering;
- Tourism as pressure on service facilities and infrastructure during peak season.

**The most significant opportunities in the urban-rural areas are:**

- Recognising the potential of the silver economy and seniors as active parts of society. This requires adjustment of facilities and concrete opportunities and perhaps branding;
- Acknowledging the functions fulfilled by different existing public and private organisations might be operating outside their usual fields. Municipalities of rural areas often need to be aware of how many different roles specific organisations and/or persons have. For example, a library could also be a social centre. In Līgatne - a private cafe also acts as an after-school care for children, but the tourism centre is also a help centre for seniors. In Papile, the museum is also playing the role of a gathering place for the youth. Therefore – seeing cultural actors as not only cultural product providers but gaining a wider understanding of the economic and social roles the sector can play. This requires a “creative bureaucracy”;
- Small municipalities provide opportunities to create more sustainable social communities due to close contact and active dialogue. This can increase cooperation between public, private and civil society actors;
- Increasing location sensitivity of service delivery by going beyond permanent inhabitant's statistical thresholds. (For example, by using cultural mapping);
- They are creating policy innovations adapted to urban-rural areas by cross-learning and using networks, such as remote learning, co-working, and living spaces for digital nomads.

These are created in part with the knowledge gathered from the [Nordregio report 2023:2](#)



## 9.1. Themes of potential explorations in urban-rural contexts

Looking more specifically at thematics which might be explored as an outcome of this pre-project, the following issues seem to be relevant:

- Population decline and school closures open up for potential innovations around empty space (e.g. co-working spaces, municipality-funded residencies in exchange for involvement in the community etc.). Remote work and multilocality have been surging since the pandemic in Līgatne. This can be considered a source of new opportunities to utilise part-time residents and attract new permanent ones. The movement of digital nomads is often introduced in the communities by opening up co-working spaces and giving residencies to remote workers. The nomads must return something to the community during their visit. Some examples of this can be seen in Denmark, sponsored by Nordic funding. Distance learning is another tool introduced to lessen the small towns' brain drain. For instance, in Denmark, universities are opening options for people to take fully remote courses. In a more specific cultural direction, examples of artists/ cultural activation of isolated buildings as spots of activation along routes or creative clusters around specific cores places to generate micro creative centres.

- Hybrid institution models where functions are mixed under one roof would be relevant if local authorities would test such a model over a period, e.g. one year. This could involve different typologies of spatial adaptation and creative management solutions.

- The silver economy is an obvious and promising focus.

*Delegating more flexible funds to create a new category of socially viable work-volunteering, which could give more opportunities, responsibility and cohesion to the community and support facilities and social and economic investment (reference from interviews carried out in Grindsted).*

- The school system and children as a focus where visioning the future with children would take a central role. Further, explore embedding cultural planning practices in the school system and links to place-based projects giving a sense of belonging and social cohesion and reaching out into the community.

- The memorial museum focus as a platform for a broader idea of common and collective memory as well as future visioning. This can be aligned with the concept of *scarred landscapes* and is based on the themes explored by Mark Museum. Mark Museum sees itself in future as a strongly anchored museum in the local community with an open mindset. They are willing to collaborate and co-create with different target groups and want to have a strong potential to become driving forces in urban areas. They are planning to focus on climate change while creating an outlet, especially for young people who are emotionally challenged by the constant flow of information about climate change. -

- Re-mapping. Using the experiences of cultural mapping as an active narrative and active re-coding of places, there is an obvious potential to create collective maps of places which can include local resources, unknown stories, resources, and mapping as a tool to connect

the *local* community is a common expression but also to bridge to municipalities and to visitors and thus create a new soft branding.

- Decoding landscapes as a common thread and focussing on relationships between humans/nature in complex situations where we now have to find another ecological balance which also addresses not only the protection of natural landscapes but the many landscapes which are rural and urban. This includes excavations for raw materials/mines, polluted and contaminated /scarred landscapes and cultural landscapes developed for tourists and recreation. An eco-critical approach to collective and creative actions



Quarry in Papilė. Photo: Līva Kreislere

**Authors:** Līva Kreislere and Trevor Davies

**Contributions:** Jekaterina Lavrinec, Julius Narkunas, Mai Kofoed Lauritsen, Emīls Rode, Zane Kaķe, Eva Meijere

**Layout and design:** Līva Kreislere

**Cover photo:** Līgatne, Līva Kreislere

**Further info:**

[Cultural Planning Policy Guidelines](#)

Created within *RuralCulturalPlanning* project

Communication web-page for cultural planning projects in the BSR

<https://urbcultural.eu/>

UrbCulturalPlanning project documentation

<https://www.urbdocs.eu/>

Urban toolkit for cultural planners

<http://urbantoolkit.eu/>



Partners meeting in Billund

Supported by



Project Support Facility