



## Designing LEADER for the future

# LEADER case study LAG animation academy in Poland

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### Which specific approach did you apply to/with LEADER in this programming period and what were the most important achievements?

LAGs in Poland are facing excessive bureaucracy. They have limited staff overloaded with procedures and documents – as a consequence, they do not have the capacity to support local development through animation. LAGs have moved away from the LEADER approach.

The idea of the ‘LGD Animator Academy of Skills’ implemented by the Polish Rural Forum (PRF) in 2018 was to return to LEADER’s original values and bring the LAG closer to the community and their needs. The aim of the project was to improve the competence of LAG employees and partners in the field of local animation and to prepare 60 animators to initiate activities in local communities.

This activity aimed at supporting small and overloaded LAG teams, and showing them how to animate local stakeholders to develop local actions based on the local context and how to assess the needs of the community using participatory methods.

The project involved 60 people from all over Poland (representatives of LAG employees and members, local partners). Through four parallel training cycles in four parts of the country, the participants learned about the role of animation in the LAG, needs assessment and analysis of local resources, mobilising communities, communication, building partnerships, implementation of social projects and project management using ICT.

In addition to training, homework was also planned, which served to apply the acquired knowledge in practice (diagnosis of community resources, planning and conducting a local initiative using animation skills). Finally, the programme included study visits and a competition to nominate the most creative approach to present the experience from animation activities. Out of 19 initiatives, 11 were awarded. An example of competition entries is available at: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AsgXy3aYqYVYhbo5SivKUE8LuHTpmw>

A final project conference was organised at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Through the project, the participants gained new knowledge and skills, and strongly connected with each other - this was the added value of the project. They described their experience of participating in the project as follows: “I did something important for myself, I could look at many things that I do from a different perspective”; “During the training I learned about new methods of working with people, motivating them and stimulating action. So, I decided to boost the activities of our local association”; “After participating in the project, I perceive my role as a ‘base’ - an information hub, a network of contacts and connections - the link between ideas and people”.

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