

ECFI STUDY VISIT TO LATVIA

17-22 SEPTEMBER 2018

Organized by the European Community Foundation Initiative and
Community Foundation Movement in Latvia



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- An overview of the Community Foundation Movement in Latvia, historic development and current trends is provided in a separate file. If you have any clarifying questions, do not hesitate to contact Mihaela or Ansis or raise them during the visit.
- The agenda and other documents will not be printed by organizers.

DRESS CODE

- Business casual. No meeting is planned where formal dress code would be expected. Comfort is more important than style during the study visit. Autumn starts in September, so please be ready for a combination of sunny and rainy weather, hopefully of warm days and cool/cold evenings. Please have comfortable shoes for walking outside; site visits include walking outside of towns and off the roads.
- Please bring a bathing suit for sauna on the final evening! Even if you are not sure to use it, it's better to have the option and let's talk about it during the study visit.



CURRENCY

- Latvia's currency is the euro. Credit cards (Visa, Mastercard) are widely used throughout the country.

A LAST DETAIL

- Counting floors starts from the ground in Latvia; thus, the ground floor is the 1st floor :)

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

- Ansis Bērziņš, local host +371 26136756
- Mihaela Giurgiu, coordinator +31 (0) 627 301 007



AGENDA

SUNDAY

DAY 0 SEPTEMBER 16



8 participants arrive a day before: Alejandro (ES), Danko (RS), Delphine (FR), Julia, Kirsty (UK), Mihaela, Snezhana (RU) and Sonia (UK).

Accommodation: *Bellevue Park Hotel Riga (Slokas iela 1, Rīga; +371 67069000; <http://www.hotelbellevue.lv>)*

Participants arrange and pay for their own trip to the hotel. Your transport options are:

** City bus No. 22 will take you 500m from hotel; purchase ticket in machine in airport's arrival zone (1,15 €) or from driver (2 €), bus departure – across parking lot, get off the bus stop “Daugavgrīvas iela” (see map <https://goo.gl/maps/2aa6tfCkLpn>). Buses depart every 15-20 minutes on week ends, see schedule here:*

*<https://saraksti.rigassatiksmelv/index.html#bus/22/b-a/en>.
Trip -20 min + walk 6 min.*

**Taxis are waiting in front of exit of arrival area. Price cannot be fixed, but estimated cost is ~10 €. Please check your price before trip – due to recent airport policy changes, unpleasant experiences have appeared. Trip ~20 min.*

MONDAY

DAY 1. SEPTEMBER 17

Arrival to Riga Airport

*Arrival times: 10:40 Daria (RU; flight AY1071 Helsinki)
11:40 Andreas (DE; flight BT132 Copenhagen)
12:50 Marija (RS; flight BT432 Vienna)
13:25 Mihai (RO; flight LO783 Warsaw)
13:55 Erika (HU; flight AY1073 Helsinki)
13:55 Gaetano (IT; flight BT630 Milan)*

Ansis Bērziņš (CEO of Valmiera CF) will await participants from 13:30 in the airport's arrival zone “E” (Schengen). There is small café there – let's use it as meeting spot.

14:30 Shuttle bus will depart from airport.

14:45 Shuttle bus will pick-up other participants at “Bellevue Park Hotel”. People meet in hotel's lobby. Mihaela will get status updates about arrivals and any delays.

14:45 Trip to Valmiera by shuttle bus. Informal “meet and greet” on the bus

16:45-17:30 Check-in hotel

Accommodation: *Hotel Wolmar (Tērbatas iela 16A, Valmiera; +371 64207301; <http://www.wolmar.lv>)*

17:30-19:30 **Group meeting and introductions**
Venue: hotel, meeting room “Vidzeme” (2nd floor)

19:30-21:00 Dinner.
Venue: hotel's restaurant “Agnese” (2nd floor)

AGENDA

TUESDAY

DAY 2
SEPTEMBER 18. VALMIERA



7:00-8:30 Breakfast in the hotel

8:30 Walk to the library and university
The integrated library unites all libraries of the town under one roof – for adults, for kids, and for university students. The library provides intellectual and physical space for meetings and events. By the way, the foundation's 10 year birthday party took place here!
Venue: Valmiera Integrated library (Cēsu iela 4, Valmiera)

9:00-10:00 **Country context of Latvia:** economy, welfare, social challenges; introduction to the Valmiera area and Vidzeme; differences between rural and urban environments of Latvia

Speaker: Elīna Leimane, VRCF Board member, works at Valmiera Development Agency

10:00-11:00 **Community Foundation Movement in Latvia** and brief introduction to the Valmiera Region Community Foundation

Speaker: Ansis Bērziņš, CEO of VRCF, Coordinator of CF Movement in Latvia

11:00-18:00 **Site visits, including lunch**
See detailed schedules on next pages!

Site visits will be arranged in 3 groups to be selected by participants on Monday evening. If you have clear preference earlier – do not hesitate to let us know.

Each group will have facilitator (Julia, Mihaela and Ansis) and accompanying local person from Valmiera CF.

All buses will depart from the library immediately after morning presentations.

Most of transfers will be done by bus. We will walk short distances in villages if the weather permits.

Please keep in mind that most of these conversations will take place outside. Please wear warm and comfortable clothing and shoes!

18:45 Short walk to restaurant. Meeting in hotel lobby.

19:00 Dinner with VRCF board members
Venue: restaurant "Rātes vārti" (Lāčplēša iela 1, Valmiera).

AGENDA

TUESDAY

SITE VISITS: GROUP 1

ĶOŅI AND NAUKŠĒNI (50 KM RIDE ON SHUTTLE BUS)



11:00-11:50 Bus ride Valmiera – Ķoņi

12:00-13:00 Meeting grantees: Ķoņu hill

Ķoņu hill is a very remote place near the Estonian border, historically known as a Latvian pagan holy site, but since the 20th century is a famous place for local cultural and sports events and open air parties. As with many places, the chaos after Soviet times resulted in this venue being forgotten. Over the course of 5 years, with the support of VRCF, a new stage, dance floor and other improvements have been made. This is one of the best examples of how a grassroots initiative can bring about big changes. Following VRCF's support, the municipality and other institutions created an educational path and a local entrepreneur (one of our donors) is planning to restore the holy site nearby.

13:15-14:30 Lunch in watermill of Ķoņi (“Ķoņu dzirnavas”, Naukšēnu novads)

14:45-16:00 Meeting grantees: Naukšēni Secondary school

The people of Naukšēni have been the most active grant-seekers and recipients of the foundation since 2006. The school has been (and still is) one of main agents for civic engagement. We will meet staff and students of the school to talk about their VRCF-supported initiatives. For example, parents and teachers together have produced masks for school theatre groups and soft toys for preschool kids, students have made large-sized games and a soft corner for breaks between lessons.

16:15-17:30 Meeting a donor: Wega Ltd.

Wega Ltd. has been a good donor of VRCF since 2014, pooling their money into the general grants program “Sev, tev, novadam” (*Me, you, community*). The company produces industrial furniture, mostly for restaurants, bars and shops. A vast majority of the furniture is exported to various European countries. Gatis Vēveris, carpenter and owner of the company, will meet us. He has also been on a study visit to Romanian community foundations in May 2017.

17:30-18:30 Bus ride Naukšēni – Valmiera; return to the hotel

AGENDA

TUESDAY

SITE VISITS: GROUP 2

BURTNIIEKI AND MATIŠI (20 KM RIDE ON SHUTTLE BUS)



11:00-11:30 Bus ride Valmiera – Burtnieki

11:30-12:30 Meeting grantees: association “Burtnieku kultūrvide” (*Cultural environment of Burtnieki*)

The association and its representatives, Gunta and Marika Daļeckā (mother and daughter), have been significant drivers of growth and the cultural well being of Burtnieki village. With support from VRFCF, other funders and volunteers, they have kept a historic park in good order and developed it into a wonderful wedding place, set up a rose bed at the entrance, and are building a play space that also picks up on the first Latvian rock-opera (an important event in the singing revolution of the late 1980s) that was held there.

This will be good place to talk about community workshops that the foundation hosts occasionally in villages around Valmiera.

12:30-14:15 Walk to Burtnieka Lake and open air lunch at the lake (may be changed based on weather conditions)

14:30-15:45 Meeting a donor: Sundin Mežs Ltd.

Sundin Mežs Ltd. (*Sundin Forest*) is a company with roots in Sweden, working on forest management, planting and care of forests since 2009. Growing Christmas trees is one of their niche businesses. The company has been an active donor in the Valmiera area, giving mostly for sports activities. The relationship between the foundation and company is still fresh, but with good potential. Guntis Ādamsons, CEO of the company, is a very open minded person and understands the value of civic engagement and self initiative.

16:00-17:00 Meeting grantee: association “Matīšu attīstība” (*Development of Matīši*)

The only project supported by VRFCF here involves establishing a monument for the freedom fighters of 1919, recipients of the Order of Lāčplēsis. This is symbolic project for Latvia’s 100th anniversary, but it also perfectly demonstrates grass roots initiative and collaboration among institutions.

17:00-17:30 Bus ride Matīši – Valmiera; return to the hotel

AGENDA

TUESDAY

SITE VISITS: GROUP 3

ZILAIŠKALNS, RUBENE AND KOCĒNI (20 KM RIDE ON SHUTTLE BUS)



11:00-11:20 Bus ride Valmiera – Zilaiskalns (Blue Hill)

11:20-12:40 Meeting grantees: association “Attīstība.Virzība.Izaugsme” (*Development. Drive. Growth*)

Zilaiskalns is a village that differs from the rest of the region. Despite being very near Valmiera, it is rather isolated due to its ethnic composition (the only spot in Vidzeme with a minority of Latvians) and historical development (village was built on empty fields to develop a peat factory with workers brought from other Soviet countries). Inese Stepane, leader of the association, has initiated series of small projects in the village since 2006. With the support of VRCF, they have installed a washing machine and oven for public use, together with youngsters they have set up small sports room, and they have organized various activities to promote intercultural dialogue.

13:00-14:30 Lunch in restaurant “Mazais Ansis” (Rubene, Kocēnu novads)

14:45-16:00 Meeting grantees and a donor: Book-houses
We will meet 2 people at once in Kocēni.

1) Toms Treimanis is the founder of an initiative to set up 10 book houses in Valmiera and Kocēni area. They are available 24/7 for people to exchange books or just to take books for reading. This initiative was funded during the first Giving Circle in Valmiera in December 2017. Toms is also an environmental activist and tour guide. He travelled the length of the Latvian border (1800 km) by bike in 2016.

2) Evija Nagle is both a donor (now) and grantee (in the past) of the foundation. She initiated a few community projects in nearby villages several years ago, but recently started giving money by joining the Donors' Club and Giving Circle. Evija is vice-mayor of the Kocēni municipality, and civic engagement is close to her heart.

16:15-17:30 Meeting a donor: Wunder Latvia

Wunder Latvia is an IT company that designs, builds and optimizes digital solutions for organizations around the world. It is part of the international Wunder Group, but started as a business initiative of two students in Valmiera. They have received various business awards, including recognition as a family-friendly business. Wunder has been in touch with VRCF for a while, but this autumn we are launching a new program together - the Wunder Laboratory - with a grant call for student initiatives.

17:45 Return to the hotel

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY

DAY 3 SEPTEMBER 19. VALMIERA



VALMIERAS NOVADA
FONDS

- 7:00-8:30** Breakfast in the hotel
- 8:30** Walk to the office of Valmiera Region Community Foundation
Venue: Garā iela 10, Valmiera.
- 9:00-11:00** **Valmiera Region Community Foundation**
Information about the foundation's history, vision, main programs, fundraising activities. Site visits should have given an impression of the scale and type of grants provided.
The core team (CEO, fundraising manager, youth coordinator, accountant) will be present to have an informal conversation, answer questions and follow up on presentation and site visits. Background: Valmiera (population: 30 000) is the 8th largest city in Latvia and the economic capital of Vidzeme (Northeast region). While economic indicators are good, civic engagement is rather low because of high trust in the municipality's work.
- 11:15-13:00** **Challenge** (in the office)
This session will be dedicated to "solving a challenge" of VRFCF, and should open space for everybody's participation and exchange of experiences and opinions. Brief description of the challenge: VRFCF lacks NGO partners (potential grantees) in the community to launch new programs or tackle certain issues. At the end of 2017, VRFCF started to establish the concept of "Community Card" (called the "TOGETHER card" in Latvian; community = *kopiena*, together = *kopā*). At first, we had difficulties in identifying the use of the money – where should it be spent. Second and most difficult, after the board agreed on the program's focus (education as tool for reducing unemployment and poverty, empowering people to take care of their own lives), we realized that there are no local NGO partners currently working in this field in the Valmiera area. We do not want to become an operational foundation (we define ourselves as grant makers), but we also do not expect to have enough money to build a new organization that could rely solely on funding from the "Community card". How could we move forward?
- 13:30-15:00** Lunch with VRFCF Youth Bank members and EVS volunteers
Youth Banks in Latvia are called "Laboratory of Youth Ideas". In addition to its philanthropic work, VRFCF coordinates and hosts a few European volunteers for several institutions in Valmiera.
Venue: café "Jauna saule" (Rīgas iela 10, Valmiera)
- 15:00-16:15** Leisure time. Walk back to the hotel (taxi can be arranged if needed)
- 16:15** Transfer by taxi to Valmiermuiža. Meeting in hotel lobby
- 16:30-18:30** **Reflection time for the group**
Venue: Valmiermuiža Brewery (Dzirnavu iela 2, Valmiermuiža, Burtnieku novads)
- 19:00-21:00** Dinner
Venue: restaurant "Valmiermuiža Beer Kitchen" (Valmiermuiža Brewery)
- Return to hotel by taxi will be arranged after dinner.

AGENDA

THURSDAY

DAY 4 SEPTEMBER 20. ALŪKSNE



7:00-8:30 Breakfast in the hotel and check-out

8:30-10:00 Travel by bus to Ape and Alūksne

10:00-12:00 **Site visit to Ape:** meeting with grantees of AACF

Dzintra Zvejniece, CEO of the Alūksne and Ape CF, will meet us in Ape to give a brief introduction to the foundation. The bordertown Ape (just 4 km from Estonia) is a good illustration of collaboration for common good within a community. The local NGO hosts will provide a few examples of how small grants of AACF have influenced the local community. Ape is also home to the foundation's fundraising activity "Brain Laboratory".
Venue: Culture House of Ape (Skolas iela 4, Ape)

12:15-13:20 Lunch
Venue: café "Krodziņš" (Ganību iela 4, Ape)

13:30-14:00 Travel by bus to Alūksne
Venue: office of AACF (Dārza iela 8a, Alūksne)
Luggage will be stored in office building during the meeting.

14:00-17:00 **Alūksne and Ape Community Foundation**

Information on the foundation's history, development, challenges, programs, fundraising activities. The core team will be present for conversation and to answer questions.

Background: Alūksne, located in the corner where Latvian, Estonian and Russian borders meet, is a regional town with 8000 inhabitants and has challenges typical of border towns – migration and high unemployment – but also a surprisingly high level of community belonging.

17:00-19:00 Leisure time, check-in hotels
Taxi transfers to both hotels from the office will be organized.

Accommodation:

- 1) Hotel "Benevilla" (Brūža iela 8, Alūksne; +371 61301404)
- 2) Guest house "Jaunsētas" (Alūksne; +371 28650600)

19:00 Dinner with board members and donors from AACF
Venue: Restaurant at hotel "Benevilla" (Brūža iela 8, Alūksne)

AGENDA

FRIDAY

DAY 5 SEPTEMBER 21. ALŪKSNE



- 7:00-8:45** Breakfast at the hotel
- 9:00** Taxi departures from both hotels
- 9:15-10:30** **Site visit: *Real Life Tour*** to workshop of Harijs Stradiņš
“Real Life Tours” is a fundraising initiative of AACF to introduce visitors of Alūksne with interesting locals, discover their lifestyles and work experiences or just have great conversations. We will visit Harijs Stradiņš. He is special person, a master with wood; he produces wooden furniture of natural forms. <http://www.stradinsh.com>
Venue: Jāņkalna iela 27, Alūksne
- 10:30** Walk to the town center for next meeting
Venue: Arts School of Alūksne (Ojāra Vācieša iela 2, Alūksne)
- 11:00-13:00** **Meeting with Latvian community foundations**

A few other community foundations will join us for a short meeting before lunch and in the evening. An overview of the CF Movement in Latvia is provided in the background paper.
This conversation provides an opportunity to better understand the diversity of CFs in Latvia while discovering strengths of each CF with regards to community leadership.
- 13:00-14:00** Buffet lunch at the meeting venue
- 14:00-15:00** Leisure time
- 15:00-17:30** **Final debriefing with the group**

In the meantime, Latvian CFs have separate program together with Alūksne CF.
- 17:30** Residents of hotel “Benevilla” have time to prepare for evening; other participants have some brief free time before departure
- 18:00** Boat trip from town center
Departure from island (Pils sala), near the address: Pilssalas iela 10, Alūksne
- 18:30** Cultural dinner
Board members of AACF and colleagues from other Latvian community foundations will join the dinner. A buffet dinner will be served.
The evening will provide space for some cultural activities – performance of local folk group, learning folk dances, attending traditional sauna with the assistance of a sauna master.

Venue: Guest house “Jaunsētas”

AGENDA

SATURDAY

DAY 6 SEPTEMBER 22. DEPARTURE

Morning: Breakfast at the hotel and check-out

Travel from Alūksne to Riga airport will be organized in several groups based on flight itineraries.

Departures:

06:45 car from Alūksne: 12:00 Alejandro (ES; flight BT225 Munich)

08:30 bus from Alūksne: 14:20 Erika (HU; flight AY1074 Helsinki)
14:20 Daria (RU; flight AY1074 Helsinki)
14:30 Gaetano (IT; flight FR4715 Milan/Bergamo)
16:00 Mihaela
16:00 Julia
16:25 Andreas (DE; flight BT619 Amsterdam)

Later departures – people can decide during the study visit if they prefer to sleep longer or go to Riga for sightseeing. Departure can be any time between 8:30 and 12:30.

18:00 Danko (RS; Riga Bus station)
18:30 Mihai (RO; flight LO782 Warsaw)
22:20 Sonia (UK; flight FR4097 Manchester)
22:20 Kirsty (UK; flight FR4097 Manchester)

23rd Sept. 13:00 Snezhana (RU; flight BT428 Moscow)
23rd Sept. 15:55 Delphine (FR; flight BT693 Paris)
23rd Sept. 18:05 Marija (RS; flight BT213 Berlin)

SUNDAY

DAY 7 SEPTEMBER 23. NEXT DAY DEPARTURES

*Accommodation for 3 people departing on September 23:
OK hotel (Slokas iela 12, Rīga; +371 67860050; <http://www.okhotel.lv>)*

*Participants arrange and pay for their own trip to the airport. Your transport options are:
*City bus No. 22 to airport (“Lidosta”) – bus stop “Kalnciema iela” is located in front of the hotel (see map <https://goo.gl/maps/JRLhNRcjLC22>). Purchase ticket from driver (2 €), or in advance (1,15 €) – convenience stores “Narvesen” or machines in some bus stops. Buses depart every 15 20 minutes on week ends, see schedule here: <https://saraksti.rigassatiksmel.lv/index.html#bus/22/a-b/1107/en>. Trip ~20 min.
Taxis can be arranged with hotel’s reception. Price cannot be fixed, but estimated cost is ~10 €. Trip ~20 min.