



Latvijas
Biozinātņu un
tehnoloģiju
universitāte



Erasmus+



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

A new master's study program "Development of Rural Communities"

The project No. 2020-1-EE01-KA203-077886 - The development of the joint master's study program "Development of Rural Communities" (ERASP12) - has been implemented since September 1, 2020. Within the framework of the project, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) in cooperation with the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Vytautas Magnus University has developed a new master's study program **"Development of Rural Communities"**. The first admission of master students is planned for 2024 /2025 academic year.

The project includes also other activities:

- two adult learning courses "Rural Sociology" and "Rural Small, Micro and Social Entrepreneurship" have been created, which will be provided through the LBTU Lifelong Learning Centre;
- an open online course (MOOC) has been created as a resource for international experience, which includes materials on social entrepreneurship and the specifics of rural community development in Romania, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

About the Master's study program "Development of Rural Communities"

What makes this program unique?

The study program will be implemented through the cooperation of three universities and the courses will be taught by the teaching staff of the universities of the participating countries. Mutual cooperation and experience of the teaching staff and local community representatives will provide future specialists with international experience and an opportunity to get acquainted with examples of good practice in neighboring countries, as well as the specifics of challenges related to the development of rural communities and possible innovative solutions. Moreover, there are no similar master's study programs in the Baltic States that combine 3 important aspects: rural sociology, social entrepreneurship issues and environmental aspects.

Duration and scope of studies - 2 years, 120 ECTS;

the specifics of the study programme - full-time attendance;

language of the program implementation: English;

degree to be obtained: Master of Social Sciences in Sociology (Mg.sc.soc.).

The aim of the study programme: to promote the preparation of specialists for the development of rural communities, who are able to contribute to the formation of social, cultural and economic well-being of communities and environmental sustainability, cooperating with representatives of local communities in a dynamic, holistic, creative and innovative way at the international level.

The target group is stakeholders in the development of rural communities:

- representatives of civil society, community leaders;
- representatives of non-governmental organizations;
- specialists of local governments;

- entrepreneurs (especially rural and social entrepreneurs), also other representatives of rural communities.

About adult learning courses

Adult learning course title: **Rural Sociology** (already available)

Language: Latvian (the course is also available in English)

Duration: 9 academic hours

Target group: Adults who are interested in learning more about the specifics of rural areas, the aspects characterizing rural environment, as well as the possibilities of rural community development.

The aim of the study course: to learn an interdisciplinary and complex approach (sociological, geographical, anthropological, rural development, environmental, etc.) to the analysis of the most current change processes of rural society.

The course content covers a conceptual review and characteristics of rural society; transformations and new challenges for rural society; the process of counter-urbanization and the potential of newcomers to the countryside; culture as a tool of sustainable rural development; the concept of smart villages, its emergence, characteristics; and relationship-based place development, social and organizational capital.

The course content:

- Rural Sociology. Conceptual review and characteristics of rural society.
- Rural transformations and new challenges for rural society.
- The process of counter-urbanization and the potential of newcomers to the countryside.
- Culture as a tool of sustainable rural development.
- Movement - concept of smart villages, its emergence, characteristics.
- Relationship-based place development, social and organizational capital.

Adult learning course title: **Rural, small, micro and social entrepreneurship** (already available)

Language: Latvian (the course is also available in English)

Duration: 9 academic hours

Target group: Adults who are interested in learning about the basics of small, micro and social entrepreneurship (these groups can be, for example, managers, entrepreneurs, representatives of non-governmental organizations, farmers, graduates of universities, etc.).

The aim of the study course: The course provides knowledge and information about the essence and basic principles of small, micro and social entrepreneurship, as well as the functions and importance of these enterprises in rural areas. The target group will gain knowledge about creating social entrepreneurship in rural areas, will be able to evaluate social and economic performance of the company, as well as better understand the rural entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The course content:

- Rural, small, micro and social entrepreneurship: a conceptual framework.
- The socio-economic situation of the entrepreneurship environment in rural areas.
- Analysis of factors affecting entrepreneurship in rural areas.
- Legal and institutional regulation of social entrepreneurship in Latvia and the European Union.

About the Open Online Course (MOOC) – Sustainable Rural Social Entrepreneurship (5 ECTS)

The Open Online Course (MOOC) provides additional educational opportunities (materials in English) for all interested

MOOC offers free and flexible access to comprehensive knowledge on specific adult education topics, as well as the additional opportunity to exchange views and experiences without formal commitment. If the participant completes the course, meeting all requirements, he/she receives a certificate, which can sometimes be equated to university credits. Even if this is not possible, the certificate is a confirmation that the specific course has been completed, knowledge of the specific topic has been increased.

The aim of the course is to provide all interested persons with an understanding of the specifics of social entrepreneurship, social enterprises and community-based social enterprises and their role in rural development.

Course content:

(52h = 12h in the form of online lectures and 44h individual work)

The course is divided into three parts:

- Social entrepreneurship in rural communities and Business Modelling for Social Enterprises in Rural Development (2 ECTS)
- Rural community based social enterprises (2 ECTS)
- Social Enterprises and community based social enterprises in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (1 ECTS).

An online course is available (by registering as a user):

<https://digicampus.fi/>



- 1) Community Based Social Enterprise
- 2) Social Enterprises in Rural Development,
- 3) Social enterprises and community based social enterprises in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

By learning various theories, research methods, as well as their application, all interested persons will acquire skills and abilities to independently analyse rural changes for the development of various proposals and solutions.