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Project “Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City”

Project news

May 18, 2021

Information for the media

The Nature House invites You to get to know the birds

One of the first heralds of spring is birds that travel through or return home to start nesting. This time the birds have also arrived at the Nature House of the Science and Education Innovation Center (ZIIC) of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department. This spring, the Nature House houses the traveling exhibitions “Let's Get to Know the Birds” and “Beaks, Wings, Feathers” from the Talsi Regional Museum, as well as large-format games from the “Latvian Ornithological Society”.

Considering the restrictions set in the country and the epidemiological situation, the exhibition is placed in the spacious windows of the Nature House, which also provides visitors of Horse Island with the opportunity to get acquainted with the diversity of birds when going for a walk. The exhibition tells about the nesting sites of birds, the feeding net, bird eggs, the types of their feathers and much more. To make exhibitions more interactive, they are supplemented with QR codes, in which everybody can find not only some educational games, but also listen to the voices of some of the most common birds.

In addition, the first interest education program “Environmental Management” is being implemented in the Nature House, in which one of the lessons is being developed on birds - “Bird Researcher”. The aim of the lesson is to stimulate students' interest in STEM and environmental sciences and to motivate them to choose a career in environmental and other natural sciences. That is why all those interested are invited to look at the Instagram account of ZIIC Nature House (@ziic_dabasmaja), which shows a conversation with an ornithologist about birds, as well as other useful information.

The Nature House on Horse Island is located in a specially protected nature territory, which was originally established as an ornithological reserve for the protection of nesting and migratory birds. Liepaja lake is an important place to provide an important resting, feeding, nesting and feathering place for waterfowl during spring and autumn migration. It is also a place to protect specially protected bird species in Latvia and the European Union. Therefore, everyone is invited to watch the birds on Horse Island, to hear the beautiful nature singers through QR codes, as well as to learn something new about them.

The project "Development of the Innovation Centre in Liepaja City" is funded by the EEA/N grant programme "Research and Education". Its total cost is EUR 986 049.00, of which EUR 754 327.40 is co-financing of the Norwegian Financial Instrument, EUR 133 116.60 is co-financed by the State budget of Latvia and EUR 98 605.00 by Liepaja City Municipality.

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May 5, 2021

Information for the media

The first installation “Ant House” opens the exhibition of the Nature House

At the end of April, the first installation “Ant House” was placed in the co-creation space Nature House of the Science and Education Innovation Center (ZIIC) of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department. The installation has been developed within the Norwegian (EEA / N) grant project "Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City".

The installation displays a live ant nest that houses a tropical species of Australian weaver ants with their mother, males and working ants. In the "Ant House" anybody can observe life, natural diversity and natural processes such as the insect's developmental phases, feeding, habitat building, colony organization, etc. It also represents the Madagascar hissing cockroach family, as cockroaches are an integral part of the ant feeding process. The aim of the installation is to allow visitors to understand the importance of nature conservation, revealing how amazing different species are, how delicate work is invested in creating each habitat.

"Ant House" is not only a part of the exhibition, but it will also be used for demonstration in workshops, for educating preschool, primary and secondary school children, pedagogues of educational institutions. The study process includes a licensed lesson about ants “Ant Researcher”, which involves teachers' stories, visual demonstrations, creative tasks, interactive games, thus supplementing the content of the school program. The aim of the lesson is to stimulate students' interest in STEM and environmental sciences, as well as to motivate them to choose a career in environmental and other natural sciences.

The lesson “Ant Researcher” is intended for children and students of two age stages: preschool groups and 1st grade students, as well as 2nd – 4th grade students. In this lesson, students gain knowledge about the structure, appearance, food, habitat, the role of ants in maintaining a healthy ecosystem and their mutual hierarchy. Children have the opportunity to watch the ant nest online in real time, watch close-up video clips of the ant nest and participate in interactive activities to gain new knowledge creatively and with satisfaction.

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April 28, 2021

Information for the media

The license is granted to the interest educational program “Environmental Management”

On April 13, the interest education program “Environmental Management” for students in the age group 5 - 10 years obtained a license. The program has been developed within the Norwegian (EEA / N) grant project "Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City" by the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZIIC) of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department.

Seven different lessons have been included in the program. “Ant Researcher” is one of the first lessons that schools from different regions of Latvia are actively studying online. Other classes "Protected Nature Areas", "Quality of water", "Young Botanist", "Young Eco-technologist", "Bird Researcher", "Young Geographer" are planned to be implemented over the course of the project. Thus, in the co-creation space Nature House on Horse Island, as well as now - during the communication restrictions, licensed interest education lessons will be available online for students and preschool children.

"Our main goal is to stimulate students' interest in the STEM and environmental sciences, to motivate them to research and study about natural sciences with creative and innovative teaching methods, as well as to understand their importance in human life," emphasizes ZIIC methodologist Laura Poruka. The interest educational program has been developed with the participation of ZIIC environmental science expert Sniedze Vise, developed in cooperation with the experts of the Faculty of Science and Engineering of the University of Liepaja Roberts Jurmaliētis and Ance Elstina, as well as with Norwegian partners from the Jaermuseet Regional Museum.

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April 7, 2021

Information for the media

It is possible to apply for free lessons on Ants at the Nature House

On April 7, the Nature House of the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZIIC) of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department has announced an application for online remote learning for all educational institutions throughout Latvia. All lessons are implemented using the ZOOM platform.

The Nature House offers online lessons for children and students:

- "Ant researcher" for preschool groups (age group: 5-6 years) and 1st grade students. Duration: 20 minutes. It is possible to apply for lessons on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 - 9:50, 10:10 - 10:30, 10:50 - 11:10, 11:30 - 11:50.
- "Ant researcher" for 2nd - 4th grade students. Duration: 40 minutes. It is possible to apply for lessons on Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:20 - 10:00, 10:10 - 10:50, 11:20 - 12:00, 12:10 - 12:50.

The class will be divided in half, so for one full class (30 children) it is necessary to reserve two times. Lessons for 2nd - 4th grade students will start on April 14, but for preschool groups and 1st grade students - on April 15.

To apply for a lesson:

- Write the application email to the address dabasmaja@liepaja.edu.lv;
- The e-mail must indicate the educational institution, class or group name, number of children, teacher, teacher's contact phone number and e-mail to which we will be able to send the ZOOM access link;
- The representative of ZIIC will contact each teacher individually about the approved lesson application by calling the contact telephone number indicated in the e-mail;
- If the educational institution does not have the technical equipment for communication in the online lesson (microphone and / or camera), please inform the representative of ZIIC by e-mail or telephone.

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March 17, 2021

Information for the media

Experts from the Trondheim Science Center share experiences with partners from Liepaja

On March 10th and 15th, 2021, employees of the Science and Education Innovation Center (ZIIC), project management of the University of Liepaja, as well as representatives of the Daugavpils Innovation Center met online with Norwegian partners from the Trondheim Science Center.

Innovation, research, education and competitiveness are the priorities of the Norwegian (EEA/N) grant project "Development of the Innovation Centre in Liepaja City". In order to develop the message of the project "Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe", it is important to strengthen partnerships with professionals in the field.

Since 1988, the Trondheim Science Center has been promoting public curiosity and creativity by offering exciting activities, experiments, a 3D planetarium, a 360-degree space journey and other interactive installations for the whole family. Martin Kulhawczuk, head of exposition and development, presented interactive installations and emphasized the importance of science capital in modern society. This applies to the aggregation of all science-related knowledge, attitudes and resources that a person accumulates throughout his or her lifetime.

Anna Priedola, project manager of the University of Liepaja, presented installations that are being created in cooperation with ZIIC science and environmental experts: aquaponics system, bird development, nature and biodiversity, underwater world research. On the other hand, scientific expert Reinis Balodis demonstrated one of multimedia installations - kaleidoscope. It is planned to exhibit all installations in the Nature House, Zirgu sala 2, Liepaja.

At the second meeting, partners from Daugavpils Innovation Center joined and it was jointly decided to organize a study visit to Trondheim Science Centre at the end of 2021. If there are still restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, team members of the project will transfer training process on effective integration of installations and study programs online.

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March 1, 2021

Information for the media

The Science and Innovation Centre meets online with Norwegian partners

In order to promote fellowship, discuss the progress of the project, and share experiences, employees of the Norwegian (EEA / N) grant project "Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja city" of Liepaja Municipal Education Department organized a meeting with Norwegian partners from the Jaermuseet Regional Museum through the Zoom platform on February 25th, 2021.

As the project provides development and implementation of educational programs at the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZIIC)- purchase of the equipment for the co-creation space development at Autoru Street, as well as for the development of installations intended for the Nature house, the Norwegian partner's experience is influential.

At the beginning of the meeting Kristine Niedre-Lathere, Head of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department, emphasized the importance of partnership in the development of education sector. Project manager Laura Grundmane, environmental science expert Sniedze Vise, educational methodologist Laura Poruka and expert Kitija Kuduma presented the current progress of the project and vision for the future. In addition, project manager Magne Hognestad and his colleagues represented The Jaermuseet Regional Museum. In order to involve everybody in a passionate teaching performance of mathematics, participants of the meeting played the game "Magic Mathematics".

This meeting is significant for the implementation of the project, because the Norwegian experts' experience will be considered when developing effective educational programs, and co-creation spaces of the Innovation Center in Liepaja. As well as dialogue will help to find solutions to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to promote students' interest of the STEM and environmental sciences, ZIIC is planning to transfer a part of the learning process online.

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January 27, 2021

Information for the media

Young people discuss environmental career choices

On January 27th, 2021, a youth discussion on the choice of career in environmental areas and its perspectives was held by the Nature House of The Science and Education Innovation Centre of the Liepaja Municipal Education Department. The debate was organized through the Zoom platform in cooperation with the Centre for Debate. Sixteen young people from four schools in Liepaja (Oskars Kalpaks Liepaja Secondary School No 15, Friendly Invitation Liepaja Secondary School No 5, Janis Cakste Secondary School No 10, and Liepaja State Gymnasium 1) attended the discussion.

In order to support students with training for the debate, four professionals were attracted – Gunta Sneidere (Gunta Šneidere) (chemist - technologist at "Liepajas Udens" Ltd), Laima Lapina (Laima Lapiņa) (environmental manager specialist at "Liepajas RAS" Ltd), Andra Bekere (Andra Beķere) (geographical system information specialist at Rural Support Service), and Ilze Elbere (Ilze Elbere) (researcher and head of the Student Council of the Latvian Centre for Biomedical Studies). These specialists are educated in one of the environmental areas, and they practically work in positions in accordance with the acquired profession. The role of experts in the discussion was to support young people with their practical experience in the field.

The focus of the debate was on career choices in environmental fields, encouraging students to think about whether they have a perspective on their careers and what the motivation could be. In addition, we encourage debaters to think about how global processes such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid technological and scientific development, the economic and political situation in the world, etc. affect young people's career choices, especially in environmental professions.

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October 14, 2020

Information for the media

The Science and Education Innovation Centre signs an agreement on cooperation with Liepaja University

This year on October 15 at 4pm in the Nature house Kristīne Niedre-Lathere, Head of Liepaja Municipal Education Department, and Dace Markus, Rector of Liepaja University are going to sign the Partnership Agreement on implementation of the activities planned by the European Economic Area and Norway (EEA / N) grant project "Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City" in the Nature House and Co-creation Room on Auru Street.

The project envisages development and implementation of educational programmes at the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZEIC)- purchase of the equipment for the co-creation space development at Auru Street, as well as for the development of installations intended for the Nature House.

The Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences and Arts of Liepaja University will develop the content of digital installations within the framework of cooperation, also an exhibit that will be on display at the Nature house. In its turn, the Faculty of Science and Engineering together with the ZEIC experts will work out 5 exciting educational programmes for children aged from 5 to 10 and youngsters aged from 11-18 in the STEM (science, technologies, engineering and mathematics) and environmental sciences, including a non-formal education programme for teachers.

Similarly, within the framework of cooperation, students of Liepaja University will be offered opportunities to do student internships in the Nature house and co-creation space, as well as activities of experience and skills development and masterclasses. Thus, there will be a possibility to apply the ZEIC technological provision, where students will be able to create real, applicable solutions – installations with sound, audio-visual or animation elements, including participation in creative classes and other activities directed towards the target group. Right now, cooperating with the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the classes "Life in Water" are being held in the Nature house within the framework of student internships.

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October 8, 2020



In the Nature house an interactive travelling exhibition “Nature healing – swamp” has been opened

Today on October 8 an interactive travelling exhibition “Nature healing – swamp” has been opened, which has arrived from the Regional Administration of Nature Conservation Agency Nature Education Centre “Forest House.” The exhibition tells us in an exciting way about the swamp from an unusual angle – how the swamp and its resources serve for human health rehabilitation and recreation.

The air of the swamp is free from dust and flue gas, and it has got antibacterial features, which emerge from substances excreted by the swamp plants – phytoncides. Even though the variety of the swamp nature is comparatively small, every part of it serves for our health. Swamp animal watching can become a healthy and soothing way of recreation. Lots of people have heard that healing sulphur waters are formed under the swamps of Ķemeri National Park. Both the water itself and the peat sludge enriched with it are traditionally used in medicine. The exhibition provides interesting information on the healing properties of the swamp.

An interactive class, accompanied by teachers, is also included in the visit to the exhibition. Groups of pre-school, schools and individual visitors are kindly invited to see the exhibition. On October 15 specialists from the Nature Conservation Agency are going to arrive in order to conduct masterclasses for four groups of pupils and pre-schools.

Visitors can attend the exhibition in the Nature house of the Science and Innovations Centre at 2 Zirgu sala (Horse Island), Liepaja till December 15. Visits should be arranged in advance by calling 26644834 or writing an email to: dabasmaja@liepaja.edu.lv.

The time for pre-school and pupils' group visits: on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays at 9:30am and 11:30am. The time for individuals and groups: on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays at 2pm and 4pm, also on Saturdays at 11:30am, 2pm and 4pm.

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August 27, 2020



In Liepaja the Nature house has been opened in a Festive Occasion

In order to promote public interest in environmental science and nature studies, on Thursday, August 27 the Nature house on the Zirgu sala (Horse island) was opened in a festive occasion in the presence of the Minister of Education and Science, management of Liepaja City Council, project partners and specialists in the field of education.

In this place during the following three years an interactive exposition of environmental sciences will be created and a laboratory opened in which the inhabitants of Liepaja and its guests will be able to explore natural processes in an exciting way. During the next 36 months it has been planned to make 15 interactive installations, equip the laboratory of environmental sciences, develop new educational programmes for pupils and teachers, also arrange various masterclasses.

The visit to the Nature house during the project has been planned for free of charge, and it will be possible to apply for free classes and training as well.

"I am convinced that the visit to the Nature house for the young inhabitants of Liepaja and city guests, will be a once in a-lifetime experience, in which they will be able to acquire new knowledge and complement their existing knowledge through a completely different competency approach to learning. The unwritten purpose of this new place is to be close to nature, explore it and at the same time to become more knowledgeable. Today we have laid an important foundation for the growth of the new generation," emphasized Jānis Vilnītis, the Chairman of Liepaja City Council.

The Nature house is just one of the places where during the following years educational programmes related to environmental science are planned to be implemented – there is a plan to create a co-creation space at 4/6 Avotu Street, which will supplement the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZIIC) with state-of-the-art exhibits, technologies and equipment, as well as with new interest-related educational programmes. "We are proud that we together with our cooperation partners have managed to combine smartly such important things for Liepaja – nature and science. May this place be for all of us as a source of inspiration, where the people of Liepaja and city guests can get to know the versatile environmental science, enhance our knowledge and awareness of what is happening around us," said Kristīne Pujāte, Head of the ZIIC and the Nature house.

It is planned to implement the project in three years in order to promote development of pre-school children, pupils and teachers' knowledge in STEM (science, technologies, engineering and mathematics) and environmental areas.

Development of educational programmes and installations will start in the nearest months. However, it is possible to apply for a visit to the Nature house right now by calling or writing to the ZIIC.

Even though the exposition is merely in the development stage and the first exhibits are planned to be displayed in spring next year, currently in the Nature house it is possible to see the exhibits created by the ZIIC's specialists' and cooperation partners which is like a little glimpse into the envisaged. Visitors will be able to get familiar with the invasive species of Latvia till September 29, attending the exhibition of the Latvian Museum of Natural History "Strangers in Our Nature." Visits should be arranged in advance, the first visit for individual visitors has been planned at 4pm on August 28.

In its turn, starting from September, individual visitors can apply for visits from Wednesday to Saturday at 2pm and 4pm, on Saturdays at 11.30am. Groups of pupils will be offered visits in the morning hours. You can apply for classes by contacting ZIIC specialists – email: ziic@liepaja.edu.lv, phone: 26644834, more information: www.facebook.com/LiepajaZIIC

The exposition of the Nature House will be created within the framework of the EEA / N grant program "Research and Education" financed by the project "Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City." Its total cost is 986 049 EUR, out of which 754 327 EUR is co – financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, 133 116 EUR is co-financed by the Latvia State Budget, but 98 605 EUR is co-financed by the Liepaja City Municipality.

The building of the Nature house was created with the support of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), within the framework of the event "Implementation of Community-led Local Development Strategies," the total costs of the building and environmental improvement is 458 703,65 EUR, out of which 270 000 EUR is from the EMFF and 188 703, 65 EUR from the Liepaja City Municipality.

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July 23, 2020

The Science and Education Innovation Centre of Liepaja launches a new development project

On July 23 Dita Traidās, Director of the State Education Development Agency (SEDA) and Inga Ekuze, the acting director of Liepaja Municipal Education Department signed an agreement on the implementation of the European Economic Area and Norway (EEA/N) grant project “Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City” in order to modernize the Science and Education Innovation Centre (ZIIC) in Liepaja.

The project envisages improvement of the Nature house and development of co-creation space which will supplement the ZIIC with modern exhibits, technologies and equipment, as well as new interest-related educational programmes. “It is important that we create new possibilities in regions of Latvia for a modern learning and co-creation environment development, which is going to be filled up with exciting educational programmes and classes for children and youngsters in the STEM (science, technologies, engineering and mathematics) areas. At the same time development of such innovation centres open up new cooperation forms between the comprehensive education, higher education and scientific institutions in Latvia and Norway,” emphasizes Dita Traidās, Director of the SEDA.

It is planned to implement the project in three years in order to promote development of the pre-school children, pupils and teachers’ knowledge in the STEM and environmental areas. It is planned to create co-creation space in the centre, also make an exposition in the Nature house. Development of the innovation centre will create new, modern and educational programmes both for youngsters and teachers about the STEM and environmental areas in order to change the stereotypes and concepts about the complex and serious nature of science and technologies. “Due to the project implementation, we will create opportunities for Liepaja residents and city guests to study environmental science in the Nature house, as well as acquire knowledge and skills in design thinking, implementing technically creative work. We are convinced that the project will promote development of the education sector in the city, exciting and contemporarily equipped learning environment will be as a foundation for pupils and also teachers in the development of their knowledge and skills,” mentions Inga Ekuze, the acting director of Liepaja Municipal Education Department. The project “Development of the Innovation Center in Liepaja City” is financed by the EEA / N grant program “Research and Education”. Its total costs are 986 049.00 EUR, out of which 754 327.40 EUR is co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, 133 116.60 EUR is co-financed by the Latvia State Budget, but 98 605.00 EUR is co-financed by the Liepaja City Municipality. The Liepaja City Municipality is going to implement the project in close cooperation with the partners involved in the project - Trondheim Science Centre, Jærmuseet Regional Museum in Norway and Liepaja University, as well as other science and innovation centres in Latvia.

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