Interreg Europe

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RELiHE

Museum of Happiness in Indra

Adaptive Reuse of an Unfinished Church into a Unique Tourism Destination

Dace Strautkalne
Project manager
dace.strautkalne@zpr.gov.lv

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History and Rediscovery

- **Origins:** The building was originally designed as a Lutheran church. Construction began in 1935 but was never fully completed due to historical shifts.
- **The Problem:** For decades, the unfinished structure stood empty and deteriorating in the border town of Indra. It became a symbol of rural depopulation and secularization.
- **The Change:** In 2018 the Krāslava Municipality decided to transform the building into a unique cultural site – the Museum of Happiness.



Description of the Reuse Practice

- **Concept**: The museum is not a traditional historical museum. It is an interactive space dedicated to the feeling of "Happiness" – a theme that resonates with the building's original spiritual intent but serves a modern, secular audience.
- **Architectural Approach:** The interior design highlights the church's original verticality and light. Minimalist and bright, it creates a "sacred atmosphere" for secular activities like mental health workshops and education.
- **Main Function:** An interactive destination where visitors engage in various "happiness-inducing" tasks, promoting emotional well-being.



Resources and Investment

Total Investment: Approximately **200,000 EUR**.

Funding Sources: Primarily municipal funding from Krāslava District, supplemented by national grants and EU-funded rural development programs.

Human Resources: Strong leadership from the local municipality and creative curators who developed the "Happiness" methodology.

Operational Model: Owned and managed by the local municipality, integrated into the regional tourism network.

Evidence of Success

- **Tourism Impact:** Brought over 10,000 visitors annually to a remote location that previously had zero tourism.
- **Recognition:** Won the prestigious "Latvian Tourism Award" and has been featured as a best-practice model for rural development nationwide.
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** Provides a platform for local craftsmen and producers; the building is now fully preserved and safe.
- **Identity:** Has become a sustainable symbol of regional identity

Potential for Learning or Transfer

- **Addressing Secularization:** Highly transferable to regions facing church abandonment. It shows how the "sacred aura" can be preserved through secular functions (mental health, art).
- **Legal & Administrative:** A prime example of successfully transferring ownership from a religious organization to a municipality for public benefit.
- **Niche Branding:** Proves that a "universal theme" (Happiness) can turn a marginal, depopulated area into a must-visit destination.



Thank You!

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