

Report

PROVINCE LAB

10th - 15th March 2020

Project by

Netzwerk Kultur & Heimat Hildesheimer Land e.V.

in co-operation with the

Bidding office European Capital of Culture Hi2025

Province Lab
10.-15.3.2020

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Province Lab

About the project

Hildesheim is one of the German candidate cities for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2025. In December 2019 Hildesheim was shortlisted. This project is part of the bidding process. The association Netzwerk Kultur & Heimat Hildesheimer Land e. V. developed, organized and conducted this project in co-operation with the bidding office Hi2025. Netzwerk Kultur & Heimat is an umbrella organisation for the independent cultural scene in the Hildesheim region.

If the provincial is the boring, then we want to be the capital of it. We will explore and exchange the existing potentials in order to develop ideas for the future that can only be found outside the metropolises. The Hildesheim region is similar to many other provincial cities and regions in Europe. Therefore, our questions and experiments here will have an impact on the entire European continent and we will develop role-model (cultural) processes for the region that at the same time have a European dimension. We are working on impulses that can be transferred to many other similar regions. We have the chance to provide answers to future challenges such as climate, technology, social integration, etc., which are not easily dealt with in larger (metropolitan) contexts. We have short distances, sustainable and direct connections, a manageable size, mobilization capacity, space for experimentation. We can offer cultural ideas and an artistic laboratory for many fundamental questions about the future. Not despite being provincial, but for that very reason.

We invited 10 European experts from different sectors (e.g. arts and culture, tourism, philosophy, agriculture...).

They worked together in a team with selected partners from the region of Hildesheim to solve a specific local problem. It was an exchange of ideas and experiences. New inputs, new paths and creations, and even solutions were found. But whatever the outcome was, the project offered a close view on today's Europe, on similarities and differences. Thus, we built a network, with the possible prospect of a return visit, and created European exchange and curiosity for each other.

Our guests opened the event with their Pecha Kucha presentations about their feelings, belongings, thoughts and experiences coming from the European hinterland. A firework of eight* interesting, diverse presentations that went far beyond boring.

Of course, we also gave our guests an impression of our own province. We went on a bus tour through the region and showed some of our villages, towns, landscapes, initiatives, people and hidden treasures.

Two evenings gave the opportunity to get in touch with stakeholders and interested parties to talk about personal experiences and to network.

*Because of the Corona Pandemic two of the invited experts unfortunately couldn't come to Hildesheim to join our laboratory.

Schedule

Tuesday, 10th March, 7 pm – Pecha-Kucha-Vol. IV „European Hinterland-Stories“ - Our 10 European guests report on their views on the province, on the opportunities and challenges beyond the metropolis in the context of our project "Province Lab". - public event, Ratskeller Hildesheim, no entrance fees

Wednesday, 11th March, 10 am – Short internal briefing of all guests, bidding office
KULTURHAUPTSTADT Hi2025

Wednesday, 11th March, 11 am – 5 pm – Bus tour through the region within the "Province Lab" - we show what we mean when we speak of province - open also for guests - tour via Heersum, Derneburg, Henneckenrode, Bad Salzdetfurth to Woltershausen, Lunch at Restaurant Zum braunen Hirsch – via Sack to Alfeld, Fagus Factory, short visit - then Brunottescher Hof Wallenstedt with coffeebreak – continue via Burgstemmen, Heyersum, Nordstemmen, Sarstedt, Harsum back to Hildesheim

Wednesday, 11th March, 7.45 pm – Round Table Culture at Roemer-Pelizaeus-Museum, open evening for interested people, our 10 experts explain in short table talks what they do, where they come from, and exchange with the local cultural workers

Thursday, 12th March - Saturday, 14th of March – during the day the guests are on the road/in exchange/meetings with their local partners

Thursday, 12th March – internal appointment, dinner together with Hi2025 team

Saturday, 14th of March – (publicly planned but then due to corona pandemic) internal presentation of the results of the project "Province Lab", Ratskeller Hildesheim

Sunday, 15th of March – departure

Our Guests

- Jaana Viilo, Culture and Arts - Ikaalinen, (Region of Tampere), Finland
- Christine Sell, Member of Deveron Projects – Huntly, Scotland, Great Britain
- Igor F. Petković, artist, researcher, philosopher – Graz, Austria
- Špela Težak, Youth Worker - Ptuj, Slovenia
- Omar Rajeh, artist - Beirut, Lebanon, now Lyon, France
- Anastasia Pashikhina, Agritourism – Barcelona, Spain
- Froukje de Jong-Krap, Project Leader of Potatoes go wild - Leeuwarden, Netherlands
- Viktoras Bachmetjevas, Philosopher, cultural advisor - Kaunas, Lithuania

Joint Actions

Bus trip



During a bus trip on the second day of our laboratory experiment we started for a small sightseeing tour through the Hildesheim region. The tour was also open to guests, a total of 31 people took part.

We showed some of our treasures and demonstrated our region's many contrasts. Beside the absolutely flat Hildesheimer Börde we also drove through the romantic hilly landscape of the Seven Mountains, our smallest villages like Woltershausen with 50 inhabitants (1) were just as much a topic as the cities Bad Salzdetfurth, Alfeld and Sarstedt. We visited the UNESCO World Heritage Site Fagus (2), but also the oldest half-timbered

farmhouse in the region, the Brunottescher Hof (3). And alongside some castles we also passed several so called "sugar beet fortresses," villa-like farmhouses. Not to forget our rich cultural scene - the underground stations run by the Forum für Kunst und Kultur Heersum, for example, or the Hall Art Foundation.

Round Table on Culture



The cultural scene of the city and region of Hildesheim meets every two months for exchange and joint work at the Round Table on Culture.

The last round table was used to involve the international guests. This announcement also attracted cultural practitioners who had never been to a Round Table on Culture before. The atmosphere was extremely good; all local guests were very interested in the international guests. After a short introduction, the participants had the

opportunity to have some conversations with the guest of their choice. In a relaxed atmosphere there was a short exchange, discussions and comparisons between working approaches in different countries. The exchange was very productive considering the short time. After this round there was a short summary all together in one big circle, followed by individual personal talks.

Individual Actions

Jaana Viilo - Ikaalinen, Finland

Municipality Bad Salzdetfurth, Hildesheim + Municipality Nordstemmen

Jaana's passions are culture and positive projects. Following a newspaper and radio career, she is now the director of an artistic association in Ikaalinen (Tampere region), the leader of a Finnish Centre Party and also the leader of an association for the disabled. And Jaana Viilo is also a part-time artist.

Bad Salzdetfurth – meeting with Lara Feigs (Jugendarbeit Stadt Bad Salzdetfurth) and Birgit Rottmann (Leader public library, Kulturbahnhof)



Bad Salzdetfurth is an old, historically grown, highly picturesque salt-mining town near Hildesheim. The spa culture has a long tradition there. It is very easily accessible for a one-day visit. The spas with their unique outdoor salt waterfall constructions, that can be visited without charge, are really valuable for advertising.

Lara Feigs and her colleague Birgit Rottmann presented the town of Bad Salzdetfurth, took a tour around and exchanged with Jaana about event

formats in the two towns of Bad Salzdetfurth and Ikaalinen.

L. Feigs and B. Rottmann stated the Philosophy Festival and Sauna Festival as the strongest inputs from Finland.

Jaana believes, that Bad Salzdetfurth is great for day tourists – this aspect should be developed much more. The long saltmining history of Bad Salzdetfurth leads to great potentials for the future: Salty products, an ecologic spa-product brand, a Saltfestival, salty breads, sweets and bagels etc. even salt sculpture-competitions are possible.

An Ikaalinen Art Association, called Ikaalisten Taideyhdistys Taikary (similar to the Atelier Wilderers) would be interested in an Art-Exchange-Project with Bad Salzdetfurth. They have a very similar situation in their town (Ikaalinen).

Radio Tonkuhle, Hildesheim – meeting with Redakteur Felix Oelmann and team members

Presentation of the radio station and exchange about work in Finland.

Idea from Jaana for Radio Tonkuhle: Podcast Courses for young people (very popular)

Nordstemmen – meeting with Kim-Denise Uhe and Britta Nickel-Uhe, Kunsthaus Nordstemmen



The Kunsthaus Nordstemmen is an art association that runs an old timbered house in Nordstemmen. They offer a very ambitious program all year long with a lot of art courses for non-professionals.

Jaana, Kim-Denise and Britta had a very lively exchange and mutual input, but also compared the regional differences.

As input from Finland there are actions by artists in vacant buildings, empty business premises and shopping malls with art lending there.

Jaana suggested to start a cooperation with Marienburg Castle for larger art exhibitions.

Another suggestion was to implement an Artist-grandfather for school children (older artist tells children low-threshold about art).

As input from Finland a special format could work: Copy Art - copying and interpreting the work of important artists.

The contact between both should be maintained.

Christine Sell - Huntly, Scotland (UK)

Municipality of Freden

Christine is a teacher and also a board member of Deveron Projects in Huntly, a small town in Scotland, where she has lived and worked in for over 25 years. Huntly's motto is Room to Roam and it's a role model for development through arts and culture together with people from the community.

Freden – meeting with Aline and Silke Faass, Hans-Georg Fellner, Dorle and Werner Meyer (the Mayor was absent due to illness)

Freden is a village of 3.500 inhabitants. In former days the glas industry (black glas) was very important.

Nowadays Freden has a lot of empty buildings, but an International music festival for one week in July. Then, many musicians from all over the world come to Freden and to the "Zehntscheune", a barn in the middle of the village. Other interesting places are the open-air swimming pool and the river Leine. The community of Freden is very engaged, they run a nonprofit shop for the village, which is a meeting point, too.

There exist many ideas, but often people are struggling with regulations.

The three days were filled with a common sense for rural issues and lively discussions.



Freden has beautiful landscape, little tourism and no accommodation - the guests (on Saturday several Lab experts were guests beside Christine) were surprised that the area is not overpopulated by tourists.

The local partners get to know some of their own potentials only through the eyes of their guest.

There was a lot of brainstorming and ideas for community building.

The stories of Freden must be preserved, including the stories that shape the place and its appearance - from a flourishing industrial town to sleeping beauty.

One of the inputs from Huntly is to set up a library in Freden as a meeting place.

Also tours and routes could be created and signposted around Freden - themed around the town. This could be a Renewable energy route - former windmill, solar panels, hydroelectric power station, forest, gas station with a stop on the way for real "refueling" drinks etc. or an Industrial route - sand, salt, glass etc., castle path (many castles and castle ruins) and other even more rural paths.

There is currently too little infrastructure to supply the tourists. This could be solved with "Call for a coffee". There is a list of locals who are already offering guests a coffee in their kitchen, apartment. There could be also a telephone list which is public.

The contact with each other is maintained, and the first joint project ideas have already been developed.

On Friday, Christine was invited for dinner on an organic farm in Everode. It happens once per month, 20 people are hosted, the food is produced on the farm (one of the 3 best farms in Germany awarded at the Grüne Woche in Berlin).

Igor F. Petković - Graz, Austria

Municipality of Holle, Henneckenrode

Igor Friedrich Petković is a universal creator, concept and visual artist, author, cultural manager, researcher, eutopist and peace activist. Born in the Austrian Alps he studied slavistics, cultural science and photography in Graz, Belgrade, Novi Sad and Ljubljana; participates in international solo and group exhibitions and realize international interdisciplinary projects and intercultural manifestations; Winner of the Outstanding Artist Award 2015 - by Bundeskanzleramt Austria; Environmental Photographer of the Year Selection / Royal Geographic Society London; 2013.

Henneckenrode – meeting with Petra Senholdt, Local care taker



Very concrete work was done on the local situation. Henneckenrode is a village of 45 inhabitants with a renaissance castle in the middle of the village. Henneckenrode Castle has formerly been an orphanage settled by an Aristocrat, later it was run by Catholic nuns and was last under the care of the Caritas. The children have now moved out, the land and building belong to the diocese and were for sale for a long time (because of the price of 1.6 Million Euros they did not find a new owner).

The place has always been dependent on the castle and the infrastructure there. So far there has been mutual benefit, the children were very welcome in the village, gym and children's playground in the castle were used by the locals.

Igor has given numerous suggestions for the subsequent use of the castle, many different versions were played through together.

For example:

- Workshops for artists possibly also organized cooperatively
- adventure spaces for children (understanding the world - ideas of time and space...) - crowdfunding about former residents (orphans)
- Children's art museum and much more

According to the local care taker, the time spent together was used very intensively to also immerse into the world of art (-production) and to awaken a mutual understanding for each other.

Špela Težak - Ptuj, Slovenia

Hildesheim

Špela Težak is a youth worker (at CET Platform Society) and NGO development expert.

The most important finding from the Round Table Culture is that youth work in Slovenia is quite different from that in Germany – Slovenian youth work preferably is with 20-30 year old or even older in order to get them into work and to professionalize them. It's also about changing mindset about cultural professions. Cultural work is a „real“ profession (not only a hobby or done for fun). Projects in Slovenia don't address the underaged.

Go20Spielmobil and Faserwerk – meeting with Siggi Stern and Amelie Vogel

On this day Špela had the opportunity to get to know typical youth work in Germany. The Go20Spielmobil is for the 6-12 year old children. Špela visited the Go20 centre and the current Spielmobil exhibition there. They talked about the difficulty of taking pictures of offers / workshops in child and youth work, where the atmosphere and theme have to be presented in the picture, but no children are allowed to be depicted in a recognisable way. Špela found the selection of photos in the exhibition quite successful.

In the afternoon Špela was present at the Spielmobil on Ottoplatz. Together with some children they searched for Slovenia on the world map, which was quite difficult, because few of them were able to (already) read the map. Špela led two group games in English, which were played with some children and a district father: Fruit salad and atom/molecule game. These games are played in the same way in Germany.

There was also a meeting about networking and district work. There are very similar ideas and approaches regarding network and district work as well as cultural education.

Cluster Sozialagentur – meeting with Anke Persson and Florian Wiechmann

Cluster is a 10-year-old social agency, that started with a staff of 3 people, now they have 70 employees, more than 50 of them are working in the youth aid sector, the others in developing and managing projects. Both in the youth aid and in project work the methodical focus is on participation. They run a youth community gym "Fitness im Viertel", a reverse mentor project in rural areas and an open to all studio. The approach is: When people can take part in decision-making, they start to actively create their own living environment. Then there are mentors who help and give advice.

Špela was enthusiastic about the reverse-mentor program - younger ones train the older ones, e.g. the company cannot find a trainee, the young people look at the tender and give feedback why it does not work with the applicants.

Cluster would like to start an international cooperation project, but has too little knowledge about the requirements of international cooperation projects - Ptuj is very interested in sustainable exchange of staff.

Hi2025 – meeting with Rahel Tiemeyer

Rahel and Špela exchanged about a concrete project for Ptuj 2025:

- cooperation with art festivals, work experience for young people during the festivals
- accompanying workshops to learn about (cultural) project management
- groups for the workshops not only by age (18-29 and 30-40), but by same work experience and field
- target group: mostly unemployed, socially disadvantaged young people, not only from Ptuj or Slovenia but all over Europe as the festivals and workshops will be in English (even though, in case of over-application, young people from Ptuj will be priority)
- education, formation and professional training as a sustainable fund to involve young people and to make them stay and find work in the region, change of mind regarding cultural professions
- project will take place even if Ptuj won't get the title, found-raising to get the money, government eventually supports the project because of aspects of fighting against unemployment

Cooperation between Hildesheim and Ptuj: exchange in work camps? What about the target group regarding different understanding?

Youth budget (Hildesheim) could be a really sustainable project, because it teaches the youngsters to manage money and to learn about cultural management, to learn democracy, to take responsibility

The main questions of such a project cooperation are: How old is the target group? How to create a jury to manage the money? 10-20 young people – or are these too many to get good results? How to involve every youth community?

Meeting with Rafael Meyer, Walter-Gropius-Schule

This meeting couldn't take place due to illness, Rafael is desperate to make a contact.

Omar Rajeh - Beirut, Lebanon, now Lyon, France **Hildesheim**

Omar Rajeh, a critically acclaimed choreographer and dancer, is a leading figure of contemporary dance in the Arab World. Cut from the fabric of Lebanese culture, Rajeh has spent over 18 years weaving, exploring and refining his choreographic language by questioning the notion and zeitgeist of the contemporary body. His works expose a rawness and intuitive dramaturgy surrounding the idea of body-plurality, asking of both the performer and audience to question and break the perception of oneness and singularity. We are not just one body, we are many and all. Omar Rajeh | Maqamat has performed over 20 choreographic works in major regional and international theatres and festivals. Seeking an extraordinary physical presence through vigorous movements with strong socio-political connections, Rajeh's choreographies leave a powerful imprint on the audience. His work has made a significant change and an essential contribution to the establishment of a contemporary dance scene in Lebanon. Rajeh is the founder of BIPOD-Beirut International Platform of Dance, one of the richest and most important contemporary dance festivals in the Arab Countries. He is a co-founder of Masahat Dance Network, a regional contemporary dance network across Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan. In addition, he is the founder of Moultaqa Leymoun, a platform to showcase and develop the work of young and established Arab artists.

Before Omar came to Hildesheim he was wondering about how the lab would come out to be. The energy of the people, Hildesheim, and the countryside made him go along and stop thinking. The bus tour was very important for him to get an understanding of the region and its variety.

He suggested to install sculptures in the countryside (made during a sculptor's symposium), sculptures as landmarks on the hills, an understanding to see the whole region as a gallery. He also liked the area of the Hildesheim harbor.

Omar pointed out that Hildesheim should not forget, "that you are a part of a wider network, a bigger thing, the world."

In general, he suggested to not only talk about the city, but the region and Europe. It is interesting to think of Hildesheim with a global view.

A very interesting existing project of Omar was: he invited 50 people to answer one question – "What gives you the motivation to get up in the morning?" The invitation went to many different people from various professions such as people from the embassy, craftsmen, ...

Hildesheim – meeting with Daniel Gad (University of Hildesheim), Stefan Könneke (Kulturfabrik Löseke), Nouhad Khalifa, Mr. Köster (Administration City of Hildesheim)

The discussion focused on "public space" and urban squares. What functions can and should these places fulfill? What significance do they have in a tense and heterogeneous development of urban society? How have they changed in recent decades and what needs to be done to reactivate them in their original function of facilitating encounter and exchange? What new approaches and possibilities are there for the use of public space by the citizens of the city?

On one hand there is the section of the arts. The works of artists create possibilities to trigger feelings and thoughts, to question them, show or let them foreshadow the basis for new paths ... (Power of Arts).

And parallel to the arts there is the perspective from socio-culture, which deals with the question of what conditions must be created in order to enable people (not only the 2% culture enthusiasts) to venture into this daring terrain and make their feelings and thoughts accessible.

The main outcome of the meeting was: Only the interaction of these two perspectives makes a (community-oriented) sense in the sense of a cultural city.

Approaches that have been discussed:

- Art and artistic approaches and approaches at the center, trust in art
- bring diverse groups together
- create curiosity
- Attraction through opposites
- lift up previously hidden special features and treasures
- Internationalization quite casually, but basically as a clear baseline / background noise unspoken
- abolish national affiliations and thus stigmas: among other things also through an International Artist Passport (of the United Nations) instead of a Lebanese, French, German passport, or the place of registration of an artist collective

- Co-production (artists, state and private institutions and residents)
- Projects must be in the interest of the residents. This is achieved through partnership and workshops.
- Generate sustainability of the commitment, participation and integration as well as the involvement of the residents. This is not only limited to the time of the festival or project, but also continues in the time after
- These are processes. For this, interest and infrastructures of networking are needed.
- Institution must establish trust in artists
- Cooperation between administration, church, artists, cultural actors, cultural mediators, cultural workers, politicians and residents was highlighted
- Education and civil society are two pillars of culture to enable artistic and cultural participation
- Transcultural perspective is of great relevance

A Note from Omar: Where are the artistic places (theatre, experimental scene)?

Stefan Könneke and Daniel Gad showed some of the places in Hildesheim, there has also been a visit of Kulturfabrik Löseke, Faserwerk, Ottoplatz and various other squares and industrial wastelands in the city.

Anastasia Pashikhina - Barcelona, Spain

Municipality of Sarstedt + Hildesheim + Municipality of Harsum, Asel

Anastasia is from Russia, but she now is based in Barcelona. Travelling is an important part of her life (she has visited over 60 countries and lived in Russia, Spain, Canada, Argentina and Italy). She has studied and worked in different areas of tourism, but her biggest passion is Rural and community-based tourism.

While visiting the city, Anastasia missed notice signs, explanations and signposts in English language. Hildesheim does have information signs, but they were in German. It is important for tourism and for the Capital of Culture 2025 and other city and region events to have signs in English too, it makes people coming from elsewhere feel more welcome.

What she missed most, was that many events (cultural or not, in Hildesheim or not) seem to be not related with the tourism office. It could be a good idea to collaborate. Normally a destination needs a point of contact, which makes it easier to reach all the providers and which makes everything work in a more organised way, normally this is the tourism office.

One of her suggestions is to provide the companies of tourist bus tours in Hildesheim with a complete offer of what the region has (accommodations, hiking/biking trails, restaurants, events etc). That way they can adjust the routes they have and create new ones.

Hildesheim is a perfect weekend destination for the residents from bigger cities, that are quite close to Hildesheim (Hannover, Frankfurt, even Berlin etc.), and also for visitors from other countries visiting these big cities. Later on, when this is more stable, when people get to know that Hildesheim has much more to offer, they would start coming for longer periods and marking lower seasonality.

For her, Hildesheim county currently has more opportunities to develop local, regional, national tourism and through this move towards international exposure.

(from the report with ROSEN&RÜBEN-team) Anastasia was impressed by the variety of cultural offerings in the region, even in small villages (impressions from visiting the Kulturfabrik Löseke, Hi2025, Bad Salzdetfurth, bus tour). The cultural diversity in this region is something explicitly special, that nobody else has. Also, the rural population is well attuned to cultural participation, they were impressed that whole villages join in and the people have a great acceptance and openness towards cultural productions to a large extent or participate or produce themselves.

It is absolutely not boring here. Besides culture, the region has many possibilities like hiking, cycling, rivers and beauty; this should be bundled and offered. Cycling and hiking routes should be better and more uniformly signposted.

Sarstedt – meeting with City manager Andrea Satli



Sarstedt is the largest town in the district of Hildesheim, besides Hildesheim. Beautifully and quietly situated on the river Innerste, between lakes and the foothills of the Leinebergland. Six villages (Giften, Gödringen, Heisede, Hotteln, Ruthe and Schliekum) are settled around the town.

Located between the major cities of Hildesheim and Hannover, it is the ideal starting point for excursions in the regions. Four supra-regional long-distance cycle paths lead through the city.

For hiking, guests can explore the area on a total of five hiking routes around Sarstedt. You can also be active at the Giftener Seen in the Giften neighborhood.

Andrea Satli took Anastasia for a ride through Sarstedt and Gödringen, one of the city parts of Sarstedt to visit historical buildings that play a major cultural role in

the city. The idea of exploring the area on an e-bike unfortunately had to be dropped due to weather conditions.

The most impressive place for Anastasia was the old water mill Mühle Maltzfeld from the 14th century. Today, the site is home to a hydroelectric power plant and many imposing industrial buildings that house many companies, as well as a small museum about the history of the mill. The area is used for music events in summer, it is an extremely interesting building.

Afterwards they went on to the Sarstedt Cultural Community, in the “Haus am Junkerhof”. In addition to the exhibition on the 200-year-old pharmacy, there are many traditional aspects of the history of the town to visit, for instance the former Voss works. In addition, the “Haus am Junkerhof” is used throughout the year as an event centre for literature, cabaret, jazz and classical music.

At the end both visited the St. Nicolai church in Gödringen. The church was built in the 12th century. Among the special features are a baptismal angel and a richly painted nave ceiling, which has been uncovered and restored in recent years.

Sarstedt has grown steadily in recent years, especially families prefer the excellent location, the good infrastructure and living in green surroundings. The economy plays an important role for the city. This year, the city of Sarstedt is planning an open day of the industrial park to make the local economy known. Anastasia suggests to install self-guided tours, similar to an open-air event, with a map that indicates all the companies opening their doors, food stops and other interesting events (like music, markets etc) that can be organised in between.

Sarstedt is predestined for cycling tours and also day round trips. The villages around are really interesting and offer a lot of attractions. According to the guest, the tourist promotion of these possibilities could be much more energetic, because Sarstedt has a great potential due to the variety of offers.

Hildesheim – meeting with Katrin Morgenroth and Alix Einfeldt, ROSEN&RÜBEN

Anastasia still sees development potential in agritourism. For example, there is no cross-regional structure in the district. She recommends closer cooperation with Hildesheim Marketing in order to establish itself as a brand; ROSEN&RÜBEN should make an appointment here and also inform about meal times. Also, with the other tourism professionals who are working on the same subjects as Alfeld / Wanderbares Deutschland or nice innermost, more contact or cooperation should take place.

She understands that roses and beets are a real feature of the region. As they are therefore also reflected in HI 2025 is cool and can be developed further.

What you have, you can see better through the eyes of a stranger: In other countries there is a direct pick up of tourists from tour operators, who proudly and with lots of photos invite tourists to sightseeing, excursion destinations. Also, accommodation providers, hotels, hostels or private providers make more to tourism. While elsewhere it is a matter of course that the reception of an accommodation provider knows about all local sights and connections / local transport possibilities or alternatively is prepared to obtain information, here there is often only limited commitment to bring people closer to the region. Why is this so badly anchored here?

It takes time, money and personnel to build up agritourism!

Asel – meeting with Martin, Hazel S/W



Hazel is a small co-working space with a small community garden and vine yard. They are starting to settle a café with accommodation possibilities.

Anastasia and Martin started with a common breakfast in the greenhouse, visited the mill in Asel and also the potato grower in Harsum. Martin explained the ideas of Hazel.

Anastasia contributed her experience and gave important remarks on marketing, especially for cycle and agritourism tourists. The owners of Hazel should make the place visible and think beyond the main project. Hazel could be a good stopping point for cycle tours and should be interesting for local tourists. Anastasia gave advice to start a cooperation with the tourist office.

The unique selling points want to be more oriented towards international tourism. According to Anastasia, this could be quite possible within the part of the project, in which they want volunteers to come for a longer period of time (a couple of months or even more) to work on Hazel's farm. There are special websites, that help people publish and find these kind of volunteering projects.

With a possible return visit to Spain Martin and Anastasia bid farewell in Hildesheim.

Froukje de Jong-Krap - Leeuwarden, Netherlands

Municipality of Holle, Heersum + Municipality of Schellerten, Garmissen

Together with her husband and two of their three sons Froukje runs a farm in Leeuwarden.

She works part time in the oldest still working planetarium in the world: The Eise Eisinga Planetarium and Museum and is part time project manager of a Leader Exchange between young farming families in the province of Leeuwarden and County Cork, Ireland.

Froukje was the director of Potatoes go Wild. This was the first bottom-up project that combined agriculture with art in a European Capital of Culture.

Furthermore, she is chairman of the foundation Bildtse Aardappelweken. For 12 years she has worked with many national and international artists. She is very interested in art and culture and has worked with many different people and organizations during these years.

Since October 2019 she has been the volunteer chair of an umbrella organization of 70 smaller tourist businesses in the region and since 2012 Froukje has been the chair of an umbrella organization of organizations that work professionally and/or voluntarily with the Frisian language and regional languages and with several organizations in the field of culture and regional development.

In general, Froukje pointed out that Hildesheim needs the villages as much as the villages need Hildesheim now. She noticed that different people (groups) have different opinions about Hildesheim and the relations towards it.

Heersum – meeting with Jürgen Zinke from Forum für Kunst und Kultur Heersum (landscape theatre)



The Forum Heersum has been working in the region of Hildesheim for over 30 years. Every year, they have a theatre play (in former times in Heersum, now in changing places in the region). They work together with professional actors and amateurs. The Forum Heersum plays are very famous and attract about 4.000 visitors every year. Jürgen has been working with villagers for a long time, always with humor and pieces of real stories and fake.

The Forum Heersum is installing a “U-Bahn”-network (Underground network) in the whole region of Hildesheim - in every village they have performed their theatre play. The “U” stands not for “Underground” but for the German word “Unterhaltung” (entertainment).

Jürgen and Froukje had a very interesting lively day featuring a ride through fields of sugar beet and waiting for the subway. But they also discussed a lot of ideas. And of course, they had a tour through the costume collection. Froukje was very impressed that they keep every costume they ever produced and reuse whatever they can.

The project Poetic Potatoes in Leeuwarden together with Malta encouraged Jürgen to poetically hairdress our beets as well. He plans to ask the Cane-Sugar-Colleagues in Guadeloupe about a cooperation in the near future. And he and his fellows from the theatre also want to take a closer look at what else is in the beet. Froukje reported about glue and shampoo. And she suspects that there is at least as much energy in the sugar beet as in the potato starch.

Forum Heersum has also made a firm decision to reopen the old distillery in Astenbeck (near Heersum) by 2025. Until then, the beet-brandy "RübeNull" will be distilled here again as an identity-creating force for the region. They want to learn from alcohol experts from all over Europe to create a stuff that really hits.

Schellerten – meeting with Landfrauen and Landvolk

Froukje and the 14 women from the above-mentioned organizations had a very lively discussion with lots of ideas and creativity. There is an interest in the partner ECoC-country Slovenia. And there is also an interest to start a partnership or network with young farmers in Leeuwarden.

The group also talked about land art projects or huge party games like in Leeuwarden 2018. A concern of the farmers is to visualize the daily loss of surface area. This same fact happens in the Netherlands and other countries. And there are other issues like the bad image that farming families suffer from in these days - a huge difference between producer and consumer. This is one of the issues of the exchange between Friesland and Cork, perhaps this is interesting for Schellerten and the region of Hildesheim as well.

Possible products of the beet could be a marzipan rose & beet or a beet-beer (there already exists a brewery nearby.) Another product could be soap. A networking project with the landscape theatre Forum für Kunst und Kultur Heersum could be started (see above).

The understanding of each other must grow (villages of Sibbesse and Garmissen). To get smaller villages to loose their suspicion Viktoras Bachmetjevas talked about an idea of Kaunas for Vilnius that could work here, too. The idea of Kaunas was to give a present to their neighbour Vilnius on their anniversary. It was a happy birthday present from Kaunas, a present for a day, a free visit of Kaunas - free busses, free entrance for people from Vilnius. This idea lead to a full city for one day. It is about fighting against animosity, but it must be in an honest way, to do something nice for each other.

Garmissen – meeting with a group of people interested in culture, from Garmissen, Ahstedt, Garbolzum

This group was talking about different small projects. First of all, the group was talking about the questions "Is there a border to the province?" and "Is the countryside the building yard of the city?"

There are a lot of ideas, the group decided to start with some small ideas.

Froukje intends to come back after Corona crisis.

Viktoras Bachmetjevas - Kaunas, Lithuania **Municipality of Sibbesse**

Viktoras Bachmetjevas is a philosopher and publisher from Vilnius, Lithuania. Also, he used to work in advertising and marketing, and even more recently he served as an advisor to the Minister of Culture of Lithuania. As an advisor to the minister he has visited quite a few cultural centres all across Lithuania and has some experience of both the limitations and possibilities that lie in front of rural cultural initiatives.

General remarks by Viktoras:

Hildesheim should think about offering a culture bus to bring village people to events and back home again, with babysitters for the locals.

People in the region feel forgotten – the system of Hildesheim and its communities looks like a snowflake but is better seen as a nervous system – Hildesheim should care for not losing the links.

Sibbesse – meeting with Sabine Hartmann and people from the community, from the museum, from association Autorenkreis “Wort für Wort” and Augenzeugen-Projekt

First of all, the locals showed their guest the village of Sibbesse and 6 of the 12 surrounding villages with its treasures like Wrisbergholzen and its Castle and former fayence factory and Wernershöhe with the Kulturherberge and other places of interest. Viktoras was impressed by all the unique places with history and stories. But of course, Sibbesse has to tackle some obstacles. In the two new housing estates there are people who seem to come to Sibbesse only to sleep, but do not participate in the activities in the village.

He wondered about the village of Sibbesse which at first sight is dominated by a main road going straight through. Everything seems to be made for cars but not for people.

The locals take care about their Heimatstube (a small exhibition concerning life in the village). Sibbesse also has a publishing house and an eye-whitness project.



in the year ...?

The Heimatstube was the first thing the group was working on.

Until now it is according to the expert a random collection of things. BUT it could serve as THE example of how a modern museum of local history has to look like today. Question: Is perhaps the very fact that Sibbesse is so normal exciting? Generally valid for Europe? THE pattern for the typical village life

Viktoras suggested to consult THE external expert for museums in Europe for advice and to use modern museum technology, too. If so, Sibbesse could be a role model museum of local history.

For a renewing the locals should ask themselves about the story and narrative behind the exhibition, a guide(-line), the design of the exhibition and what is worth to be shown and why.

It could be a link to the project „Augenzeugen“ (eye witnesses), it should be possible to use and try out the shown tools, every day there should be action, not the display mannequins should be wearing the exhibited cloth but the guides in the museum. The museum could be a meeting place, a studio, a kitchen, an event location. And of course, it should be visible outside for example through an extension or better promotion of the existing QR Code guidance through Sibbesse.

The second idea for Sibbesse is to deal with all the (true) stories they have. Sibbesse should install a Story Festival together with the regional publisher in Sibbesse and the eyewitness project. It should not be a high literature festival, but about Sibbesse history and stories, at different places in the municipality (Wrisbergholzen Castle, Kulturherberge Wernershöhe, ...). This is 100% like Sibbesse, it's a unique point, it highlights Sibbesse.

Viktoras promised to come back – Kaunas as European Capital of Culture does storytelling in 2022, Sibbesse will be invited if HI will be ECoC 2025, they could learn and follow in 2025.

Remarks and Outcomes

Face to face meetings are extremely important for an exchange. For some of our guests our project was not imaginable before it started.

Many opportunities and treasures already exist in our region which our local partners are not aware of.

Our projects are carried out with a matter of course that does not exist in other countries.

We like to experiment and trust in our networks - this open-ended approach is unknown in some countries. The openness of the process and the laboratory character of the project made it possible for all participants to enter into a thinking process without pressure and with curiosity.

The international or at least European view beyond the own garden fence is still missing in our district. As Omar Rajeh said: Do not forget that you are a part of a wider network, a bigger thing, the world.

There is general lack of knowledge and uncertainty about the possibilities for international cooperation in Hildesheim.

Each of our local partners was extremely hospitable!!! This is an intangible treasure we have.

Very personal contacts were established, in many cases there is interest in keeping them alive. Some further visits are already planned.

The Province Lab has shown us in many ways that the term "province" covers a very wide range in Europe. Just as the term "city" can mean a smaller one as well as a metropolis, the term "province" unites many different aspects.

It has been shown that the province is a lively place, characterized by diversity, small-scale and above all the dedication of the people who live here. The beat of the clocks does not slow down here, only it strikes in a different melody. The challenges here are different from those in the city, but the great human issues are addressed equally by both.