



# **A STUDY ON STATE OF THE ART OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS IN LITHUANIA**

**NETWORK OF LITHUANIAN CASTLES AND MANORS ASSOCIATION**

**WP 03: MULTILATERAL BASELINE SURVEY**

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Developed by: Regina Žirgulevičienė  
Lithuanian castles and manors association  
Vilnius, Lithuania  
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## 1. Foreword: Background and aim of the local survey

Manors and castles Lithuanian territory began to settle in the thirteenth century. At the beginning of XX century there were approximately 3000 manors.

The estate consists of palaces, parks, gardens, outbuildings. They were formed as a cultural centre from the very beginning.

Villages formed around the estates. Historically, there were not so much cities and towns in the territory of Lithuania. Lithuania was the rural region, the majority of the population lived in rural areas. The manor it was a strength of village or small town. In 1941 Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Estate was nationalized immediately. It was equipped with grain or technical warehouses, residential apartments, shops, and schools sometimes. Within 50 years manors were severely destroyed or demolished at all. Thereby villages and small towns that were located around disappeared or vegetated. Since the 9-th decade of the last century the rural population began to decline, the villages were rapidly disappearing, the entire territory of Lithuania, few cities except, turned into a sparsely populated area.

Our association consists of managers or owners of about 50 castles and manors. They all are our volunteers. Each of them has set a task - to restore the heavily devastated and collapsing manor and revive cultural activities in it.

At present, only thanks to activities of volunteers through it slowly comes to life. Our goal is not only restore manor houses and other buildings and all infrastructure, if it is possible, but bring back to life heritage cultural traditions.

This will be followed by the positive trends discovered in the course of our study which justify an optimistic approach. Finally, we will provide proposals arising from the research on how to develop the existing potential and to eliminate the impeding barriers.

## 2. Methodical opening

This mini-survey is prepared using desktop research, interview, structured interview, summarizing visited material and talking with members of Lithuanian association of castles and manors - owners, and managers who are volunteers.



## 2. Current tendencies in national/regional culture policies in the field

Till ourdays there is no elaborated sustainable national heritage protection in Lithuania. Despite the fact the owners and managers try to exhaust all possibilities to restore, rebuild heritage by all means. Almos all of them are voluntarees. They started this work in various ways and continue it over many years. In many cases they are the first ones that found and disclosed beauty and attractiveness of sparsely populated areas. It's very nice thing themselves invite others to volunteer. From the very beginning they invite to take part in voluntary activities acquaintances or relatives and their family members. Step by step participants invite other participants.

As a curent tendency we find a bundle activities of work-volunteers and cultural-volunteers. There is a great tradition from soviet-times to spend a day or some days as a work-voluneer and to participate in voluntary actions doing some good works, cleaning surroundings or likewise. It was very attractive thing, everybody felt significant doing useful work. Till ourdays residents favorably dispose of work volunteers. They participate in voluntary actions with pleasure.

On another hand cultural volunteers most of all arrive from another places. In large part cultural activities for them it is a way to express themselvs. As a rule a revival of sparsely populated areas is much more sucessfull when band together work volunteers and cultural volunteers. Close integration of residents and people who arrive lets feel free all of them, lets work together, lets express themselves and lets maintain a good mood. But the greatist thing in such situation there is a willingness to stay for those who live in such sparsely populated areas and a willingness to return to this place again and again for those, who live in another place.

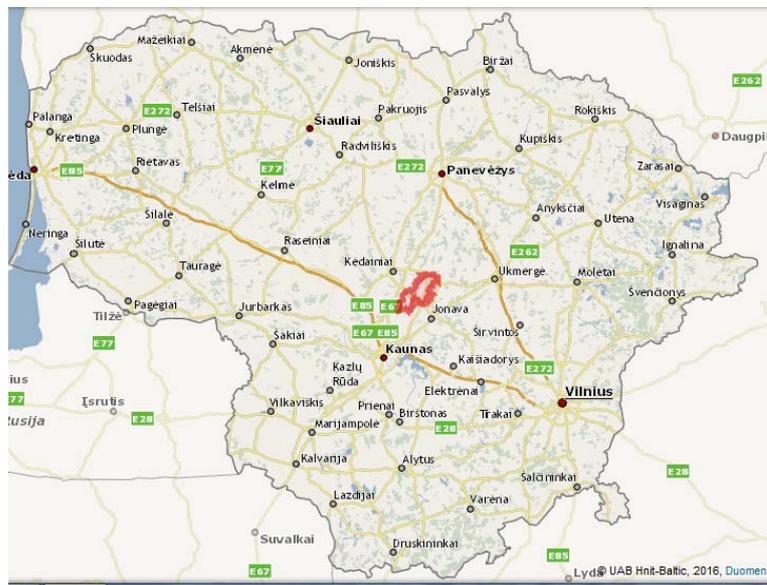
Tourist routes and paths in the area, where there are no well-known objects, is justified only in cases when there are included some cultural activities.



## 4. Representative examples of good practise

We introduce some representative examples of good practise from our network.

### 4.1. *Aikas Žado* laboratory in Žeimiai manor house



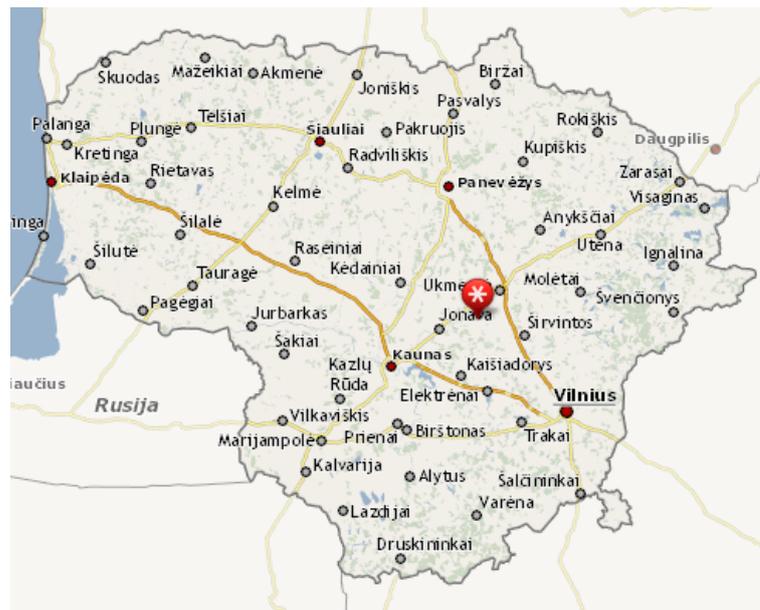
# AIKAS ŽADO LABORATORY

*Aikas Žado* laboratory is a laboratory, where *Aikas Žado* is working/performing. *Aikas Žado* is a post-resident. In the laboratory of *Aikas Žado*, Žeimiai manor house is being organized as a town of post-residents, where the possible survivors are the prodigies of observation. The main aim of the participants living in this town is to decode the same hyper:header in different time zones (psychological and real). Header is constantly following the aggregate. However, this is not a living museum anymore, where the objects of cultural heritage that have a lasting value are decoratively or formally historical reconstructions put into practise serving to increase the surplus value. It is just a space, where each time, the treatment of life itself is restructured and the heritage scenario of terrestrial globe is recreated. Earth, neither faster nor slower, is being girded with the skin of aggregate. Furthermore, the technology of metabolism is being tested in the laboratory. Participate and get to know why in the year 2016 this small city reminds of an everlasting halloween.



Meanwhile, Aikas Žado is living back in 1826 and is assisting J. Berzelius to form the first manual of organic chemistry.

#### 4.2. Slizių manor in Ukmergė district



**Slizių manor**, since 18th century, as an economic unit, once was uniting villgates and peasants from around land area of 400 ha, surviving through soviet devastation, is being reborn and regains its face again as an cultural attraction centre.

Sliziai rural community is getting stronger and is fulfilling its dreams with new impulse.

Culture – its background, all of HOW they do, act and work.

Sliziai manor and Sliziai rural community are nourishing very different activities based on voluntary work and private initiative. Citizens are invited participate in all their fiestas.

They do dream, think and act. Several but not all the activities, events, gatherings are described there.

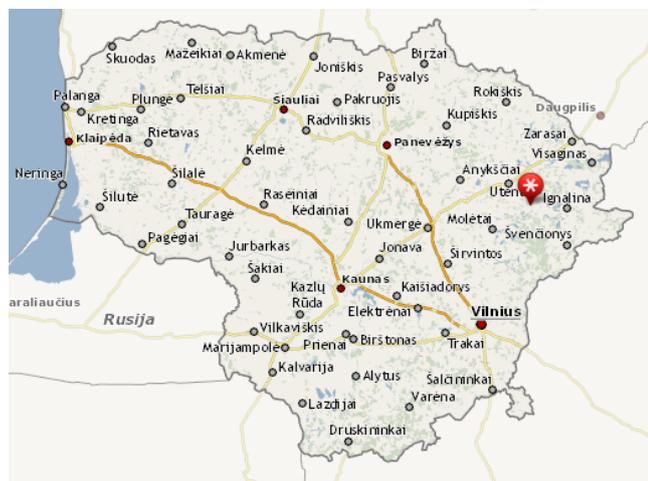
- I Celebrating year turnover into New year. For Christmas season it's prepare skating rink, do „snow art“, decorate the Christmas tree and venue hall. Ideas are born spontaneously and members all come together and make a beautiful and innovative fiesta.



- II Celebrating independence day, February 16 . Traditionally a tournament of chess, table tennis games are organized. All are in the game-young and pensionist, farmers and presidents .
- III Common work „Let’s do it“. This year there were renewed outdoor volleyball/basketball playground, renovated and keep maintained village park, restored partly park of the Manor, planted oaks in Oak street.
- IV Poetry fiesta „Cherry blossom“ each May. It is hold in the village for more than 20 years. Initiative comes from the „old times of kolchoz“. Al organisation, contest, prize establishing- by rural community.



**4.3. Saldutiškis manor in Utena district**





Saldutiskis manor together with community organize campaign – exhibitions, events, festivals.

Rural community invites everyone to join the community organized campaigns, white heart festival, sheep shearing festival, arts exhibitions.

This is what unites us, no matter how far we

Revival symbolizing holidays - Easter, International Mother Language Day and the festivals such as January 13th, February 16th and March 11<sup>th</sup> occasions, also to combine different generation for discussion of sensitive problems to our community, Saldutiskis manor invite to have a good time spending.

Community initiative festival White Heart, be a good citizen help children

Manor Rural community invites to spend two days in campaign: white heart - be a good citizen.

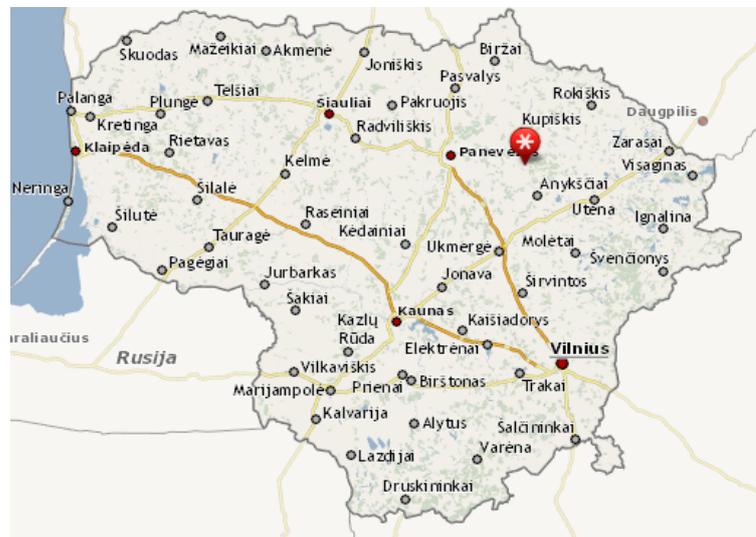
The campaign aims to point out that many children have cancers disease and need to help them. A charity activity organized in Manor Park connect people and helps to support and remember children. This will be aimed at bridging the gap between rural and urban residents of a common desire to promote citizenship and nationality initiatives, tipper understanding of different age groups of citizens to engage as civil society actors.

Tell real stories

The goal is to speak out what all are thinking, but too often remain silent. The campaign aims to point out that every third woman in the world, which is about a billion, suffer from violence. Violence against women in the family - it's all intentional physical, psychological, economic, sexual one family member, usually a man, actions against another member of the family, usually women, if these actions violate her, as a citizen and person's constitutional rights and freedoms and cause economic, physical, mental or moral harm.



#### 4.4 Akmena manor in Anykščiai district



There is a small local community in Akmena manor house. As a tradition four times a year there are organized various 2 or 3 days pleners: earthenware, paintings or some other forms. At the same time participants have another obligations or duties: to prepare meal, arrange a flower bed, make firewood or decorate a Christmas tree. Those fiestas are so attractive, that participants invite their family members and friends themselves and long after keep discussing in Facebook.



## **5. Conclusions – needs and challenges**

It is indeed extremely complicated thing to restore owing to insufficient mechanisms and other resources. We use a cultural heritage as potential for development. [Financial resources would be a point.](#) From another hand participants from towns need for better services and conveniences.

Speaking about challenges we must avoid terrible risks –various accidents. Any form of insurance would be welcome.

## **6. Recommendations for the subsequent pilot work.**

The pilot work would it be a very good acknowledgment of effectiveness of cultural *volunteers* actions. It is needed to consolidate efforts to do a promotion, because it is not enough to do something in one or another place. Our proposal - the pilot work must take part in many places at the same time. We have paid attention that it is very attractive for citizens to observe nature and landscape. Let's invite all volunteers at the same day for landscape documenting. It may be photography, video, painting or some another forms of



documenting nature or living environment in sparsely populated areas. The final part of pilot work - an exhibition of selected things. With the prizes, honouring of authors and publicizing their works. Some details would it be specified later