



The Livslust-Dzivesprieks' estate with its dwellings, classrooms, workshops and farming facilities is situated in the Latvian countryside 120 km west of Riga, in Aizupe in the Tukums region.

THE METHOD IS SUCCESSFUL

Livslust provides a combination of living, social rehabilitation, vocational training and production in its own workshops. Needy youngsters are sent to Livslust by institutions and social welfare offices. They stay for 2-3 years until they have completed their education and are ready to lead an independent life. Before leaving the school, they get help in finding a place to live, work or further training. The school then keeps in touch with the former students for several years in order to offer them moral support and directions, if needed. More than 80% of the former students do well and lead normal lives, something many of them never dared hope for. ■

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS

LIVSLUST-DZIVESPRIEKS IS open to boys and girls from all over Latvia. They are socially exposed in different ways and would have great difficulties to study, feel secure and develop their self-confidence elsewhere. Some of them are orphans whereas others have been taken into institutional care since their parents lost custody of them. The children have therefore

grown up in orphanages and educational institutions. When they have to leave around the age of 15, they lack a family, a place to live and vocational training. For many of them criminality and prostitution become the only way to earn their living with the entailed risk of becoming drug addicts. Livslust also takes on local day-students from families with severe social problems. ■

AT LIVSLUST THEY FOUND A FUTURE

GITA LIEPINLAUSKA CAME to Livslust from a poor family. She lived with her sister and five brothers in a dilapidated farm. Her parents were unemployed and had drinking problems. When Gita came to Livslust she decided to become a seamstress. In the beginning she was very shy and insecure, but the teachers described her as a bud that slowly started to bloom along with her growing self-esteem. She grew more confident and open and became very popular among her friends. Gita finished school, and is now working at the factory of Snickers Workwear in Tukums, where she is highly praised due to her skills

and positive attitude. Her sister Gita and brother Lauris also studied at Livslust. After leaving the school they both found a job and are doing well.

DENISS SOLOVJOVS' mother died when he was only seven and he was left on his own with his younger sister Julija. Since their father was in prison, they were taken into institutional care and placed in an orphanage in Dobele. Deniss came to Livslust after finishing ninth grade and trained to become a painter. He had problems keeping up with the theoretical studies, but managed to finish school due to his



Gita Liepinlauska



Deniss Solovjov

practical skills. Deniss is always ready to give a helping hand, an attitude that compensated for his lack of theoretical knowledge when he was taken on by the painting company Krasu Serviss in Liepaja, where he now lives.

ELINA MEKSA LIVED UNDER miserable circumstances. She ran away from home and ended up in a crisis centre in Riga, from where she came to Livslust after finishing ninth grade. At that time Livslust ran a computer class, which she completed, but then decided to try to fulfil her old dream



Elina Meksa

of becoming an artist. The students are encouraged to develop their own special interests, and once it became clear that Elina had this extraordinary talent, she was assisted in all possible ways to get started. After a lot of training, she managed to pass the tough entrance exams at an art-school in Riga. With financial support from the Livslust scholarship fund she was able to begin her studies. Elina has a bright future in front of her in the field of art and is on her way to fulfill her dream of becoming an artist.

SANDRIS IVANOVSKIS GREW up in a poor family with a violent and despotic father as well as a sickly mother. The authorities intervened and took the children into care. Sandris was placed at the Mazirbe Special School for orphans, where he stayed until he finished ninth

grade. There he came in contact with a Swedish family, who supported him and helped him come to Livslust. Here he became both happy and trusting, and took part in his training with great zest. After finishing the building construction programme, he wanted to specialize as an electrician and was admitted to the Skrunda vocational school. With the help of a scholarship from Livslust he was able to get through his studies and graduated with high marks. Today he has a job not far from the Livslust school and earns his own living. ■



Sandris Ivanovskis

SOCIAL REHABILITATION

MANY OF THE youngsters bear marks of a difficult childhood. When they arrive at the school they are lonely and insecure at their most vulnerable teenage period. Everything they own is fitted into the small suitcase or plastic bag they bring with them. At Livslust they find a secure environment with a chance of beginning to heal their wounds. This maturity process is adjusted to the individual

needs of each student. The aim is for them to recuperate, become self confident and increase their self-esteem. A psychologist and other dedicated staff are always there for them. The living at the school and the training in the workshops provide a natural form of social training and preparation for a working life. By taking care of the household as well as the garden the youngsters learn to be responsible. ■



Different sports activities are an important part of the social rehabilitation.



Nature as well as good relations with adults have a healing effect. Edijs Petersons, headmaster, together with some of the girls at a summer excursion.

DRUG PREVENTION

MOST OF THE students at Livslust have experienced the negative effects of alcoholism. As children of parents abusing drugs, they themselves are at risk of becoming addictive. In an attempt to prevent drug addiction, Livslust runs a special program providing information about drugs and teaching the youngsters how to resist temptations and group pressure. Livslust introduces healthy alternatives and offers a range of different activities within the fields of sports and culture. ■

EDUCATION

THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES run for 2-3 years and contain theoretical and practical studies with emphasis on practical training. The Livslust teachers co-operate with external vocational teachers and companies related to the trade of each programme. The companies provide financial support, expertise, raw material, trainee places and even employments of former students. Because of the students' different background, amount of schooling and level of maturity, their individual abilities vary. Some of them first finish 9th grade in a nearby school, before they start their vocational education. Some stay an extra year before they are ready to manage on their own. Those who wish to continue their training can apply for a scholarship from Livslust.

SEWING

THE STUDY PERIOD is 2 years plus 1 year of practical training. The first year is about basic sewing techniques, knowledge of materials and cutting as well as theoretical studies, including economy. The second year focuses on practical training and during the third year the students get different trainee places in factories or in Livslust's own sewing workshop.

PAINTING AND CONSTRUCTION

THE STUDY PERIOD is 2 years plus 1 year of practical training. Here the



students are taught painting and other finishing techniques and how to construct walls and floors. The theoretical part is about methods and materials. The students get practical training at external construction and painting companies as well as by renovating and maintaining the school buildings.

KITCHEN AND RESTAURANT

THE STUDY PERIOD is 2 years and contains cooking, all kinds of kitchen work and serving at tables. The theoretical part is about food products, economy etc. When leaving the school, the students are able to work as waitresses, waiters or kitchen assistants. They get their practical training by cooking all the meals at the school, handling different events and by practical training at restaurants.

JOINERY

THE STUDY PERIOD is 2 years plus 1 year. The programme combines theoretical and practical studies, including calculation methods, knowledge of materials etc. Except for the objects made during the basic training, the students make furniture and details for the school-

buildings as well as different products for sale. Livslust has a well-equipped joinery.

FARMING

LIVSLUST RUNS A farm of almost 300 hectares (740 acres), of which 200 hectares (490 acres) are owned by the school. From time to time Livslust is able to offer training and practice within the agricultural field for its students. The main crops are corn and rape, the surplus of which provides to the running of the school. The farm also grows vegetables and potatoes for the school kitchen, where all the students assist in the weeding and harvesting.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE, USE OF COMPUTERS AND HOME ECONOMICS

EVERYBODY MUST LEARN English and how to use a computer and all the students take part in the household work. Those who are about to leave the school get a special "leaver's course" with additional information about hygiene, cooking, household work, private economy and how society functions. They are also taught about human relations and family life. ■



A former Livslust student, Laura Moiseja, with her little son Davis. The training she got during her stay at Livslust enables her to give her son a better start in life than she got.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF LIVSLUST-DZIVESPRIEKS

"EVERY PERSON HAS the right to a secure and meaningful existence. But lacking family, a place to live, education or money, the prospects of success are very bleak. Livslust is the living proof that it is possible also for young people with mental scars and no hope, to become hale and hearty grown-ups, able to crea-

te a meaningful life for themselves. In our opinion vocational training is the gateway to this. Therefore the backbone of the Livslust activities is social rehabilitation and vocational training." ■

Kerstin Nordin

Founder of the Livslust Foundation

THE ORGANISATION

STIFTELSEN LIVSLUST (The Livslust Foundation) was founded in Stockholm in 1994. The Latvian sister organisation Asociacija Dzivesprieks was founded in the same year. ("Livslust" and "Dzivesprieks" are the Swedish and Latvian words for "zest for life".) In Latvia Dzivesprieks is responsible for the running of the school, employment of

the staff and is also the owner of the buildings and the land. The staff and the teachers of the school in Aizupe are all Latvians. Most of them come from the municipality of Vane, where the school is situated. The Livslust Foundation in Stockholm has the overall responsibility for the financing and the running of the school. ■



H. R. H. Queen Silvia of Sweden, patron of Livslust, together with students in folk costumes at the 10th anniversary of Livslust-Dzivesprieks in May, 2006.

HELP US TO HELP - SUPPORT OUR WORK

OUR GOAL IS to give as many exposed youngsters as possible a chance of a worthy life. Every contribution, large or small, helps us to ensure the existence of the school. In Sweden, the foundation is controlled by SFI, which

supervise fund-raising organizations. For donations please find bank details below. You can also buy products made at the school. For more information read about us at www.livslust.com or contact us by phone or mail, see details below. ■

FINANCING

THE ACTIVITIES ARE financed mainly by gifts and donations from companies, organisations, the EU Structural Funds and private persons. The support comes in different forms like long-term commitment as a collaboration partner; single or periodical payments; in-kind contributions of products or services. Auditing, financial and legal advice as well as office premises, printed matters and advertising are provided free of charge. Considerable voluntary work helps to keep the administrative costs at a low level. The school's workshops manufacture and sell products of Livslust's own design as well as specific products ordered by customers. The school also offers conference facilities and meals for external clients. And there is the income from the farm. The surplus contributes to the financing of the school.

Our goal is to minimize the need for external sponsoring by increasing the self-financing and getting regular support from the Latvian government. Since it will take time to reach this goal there is a continuous need of gifts and donations.

It is only thanks to the generous support from collaboration partners, sponsors and other contributors that Livslust is able to continue its work for exposed youngsters. ■

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