

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES
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**CLIMA
RESPONSE**

ESTABLISHING DIALOGUE WITH VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND PREPARING FOR RISK

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Lääne-Harju Municipality

www.laaneharju.ee

LÄÄNE-HARJU MUNICIPALITY

- Located in northern Estonia, part of Harju County.
- It has a population of approximately **14 000**
- Area of **645.71 km²**.
- The administrative centre is in Paldiski, which serves as a port city and industrial hub.
- Known for its diverse landscape, including a scenic Baltic Sea coastline and inland forests, and it has been actively involved in sustainability initiatives.
- A green municipality in Estonia.

„Lääne-Harju is a place where opportunities and people’s heartfelt dedication naturally become part of everyday life. Each village, each path, and each community is its own little world, adding character and fresh energy to the whole region. The spirit of our municipality is shaped by its people, from their care, their courage, and their wish to make things genuinely better. From this grows a way of life and a collection of experiences that give Lääne Harju its warm, cozy and memorable character.”– Jaanus Saat, Mayor of Lääne-Harju Municipality

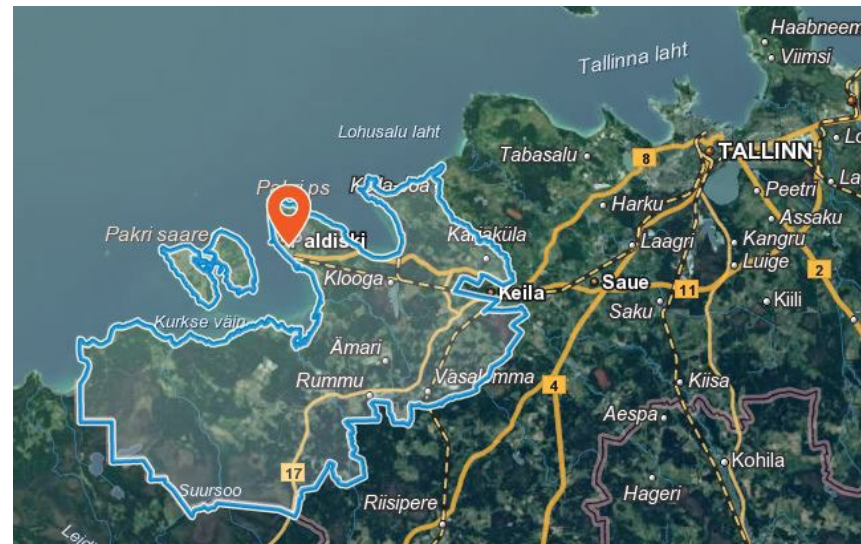


Foto: Maa-amet

Fotod: Argo Viikvald





OUR CLIMARESPONSE PROJECT PILOT GOALS:

- increasing residents' awareness of climate-related risks and preparedness for crisis situations (e.g. heavy rain/snow, drought, loss of electricity, wildfires)
- enhancing cooperation with local rescue services and stakeholders
- engaging the local community network in resilience building
- supporting the climate and energy plan through stronger local climate resilience





HOW DO WE ESTABLISH CONTACT?

- „The spirit of our municipality is shaped by its people, from their care, their courage, and their wish to make things genuinely better.”
- High participation was achieved thanks to strong communication, established trust, active community groups, and personal networks.
- Engagement happened through familiar local institutions and organizations, making it easier for people to take part



TARGET GROUPS

- **Elderly People Focus**
Older people living alone are especially vulnerable during emergencies such as power outages and heatwaves.
- **Children and Early Education**
Engaging children and kindergarten teachers builds long-term resilience by spreading knowledge early and influencing families.
- **Role of Social Institutions**
Social institutions serve as trusted intermediaries, providing direct access to vulnerable individuals during crises.

Learning point: Before the workshops, all vulnerable groups were treated as a single category. However, the process revealed important differences, for example, some older people do not see themselves as vulnerable.





Eldery citizens about preperadness and crises:

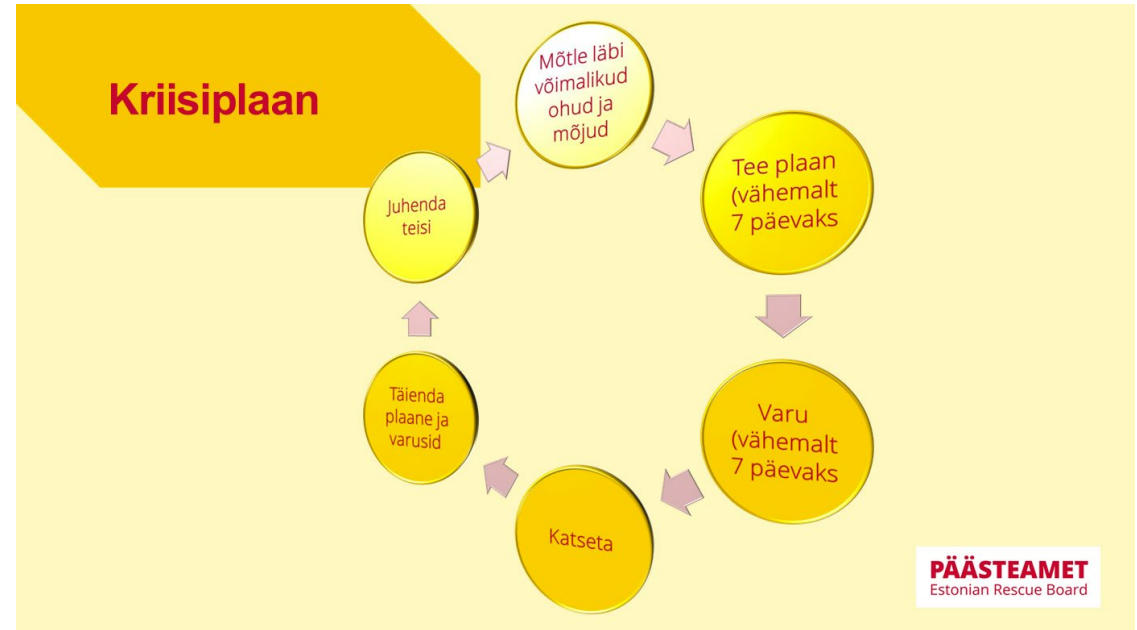
„We have lived during Soviet times, we can manage everything“

Although we tend to believe that older generations need guidance on crisis preparedness, they are actually keen to participate and share their valuable knowledge on these subjects.



APPROACH. AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN

- Approach tailored communication to each target group, avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions in community dialogue.
- Dialogue was designed to be interactive, allowing questions, shared concerns, and relating information to daily life.
- Discussions began with familiar topics to build relevance.



Learning Point: The approach worked well, as it avoided one-size-fits-all solutions. However, the method could have been more engaging and innovative for some groups. For example, a “walkshop” format - combining walking or exercise with visiting real locations—could help raise awareness in a more interactive way.

Despite this, participants were actively engaged in the awareness-raising workshops and provided valuable input for the next phase, including the development of readiness flyers for kindergartens and older people, to be tested later this year.

WHAT WORKED:

- **Personal Contacts Matter**
Invitations from trusted people make others more likely to join and take part.
- **Community Networks**
Community networks naturally spread information and encourage people to get involved together.
- **Familiar Settings**
Well-known places help people feel comfortable and open to talking.
- **Trust Over Authority**
Building trust matters more than formal roles or institutional branding.

CHALLENGES:

- **Perceived Relevance of Preparedness**

Some people did not see preparedness as relevant without recent crisis experience, leading to lower engagement. Preparedness levels also vary.

- **Crisis Fatigue**

Multiple overlapping crises cause fatigue and feelings of overwhelm, reducing motivation to participate.

- **Limited Time and Capacity**

Limited time and resources made organizing and participation more difficult.

- **Logistical Challenges**

Dispersed populations made it harder for people to access activities and take part.

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Preparedness starts with dialogue, because people engage, act, and stay prepared when they feel understood and included.



**LÄÄNE-
HARJU
VALD**