

RURAL BEST



2011

Facts about the Swedish Rural Network:

Is operating within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and will strengthen its implementation.

Gathers authorities and organizations involved in the development of the Swedish countryside.

Is a forum for exchange of information, experiences and methods between stakeholders, authorities and experts at local, national and international level.

Collects, analyzes and disseminates information about the situation on the countryside and the opportunities offered within the Rural Development Programme

Is led by a steering group which allocates funds to activities within the network.

Is the Contact Point for Leader groups in Sweden.

All the texts in the booklet is written by Agneta Borgström.



The winners of the Rural Awards will be honoured with a wool-ram of cast iron. Price conveys weight and tradition but it is also playful with a game ball in a glass! It is the Swedish artist and multi active Peter Gadh who designed the prize.



It's time for the third annual Ull-bagge awards. Our goal is to highlight and promote the best ventures within the 2007 – 2013 Swedish Rural Development Programme.

The Rural Development Programme is intended to promote growth, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, as well as local development projects.

In this brochure, we present the 2011 finalists in eight different categories. These projects are the gems of the programme, and will help us develop the Swedish countryside.

It has been an incredibly enjoyable, and also difficult, task to choose amongst all the interesting suggestions sent to us by the Swedish Forest Agency, the Sami Parliament, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the county administrative boards, and all the Leader groups.

Despite the financial crisis and the recession, there's no lack of ambition or ideas in our country. This year's nominees demonstrate our country's diversity and determination when it comes to making a better life for oneself, for the future, and for society as a whole. We want to make the most of this strength.

The Rural Development Programme creates prerequisites for living and working in the countryside, side by side with the city, and promotes job opportunities throughout the country. Our entrepreneurs are great examples of this work, and should serve as role models and an inspiration to others. By sharing this information about the current development in the countryside, we have also demonstrated that the countryside is full of knowledge, ideas and creativity.

There shouldn't be any opposition between city and countryside; instead, we should view them both as an opportunity for people to realize their dreams. That is what our programme is all about.


I'm proud to present these fine examples of the Swedish countryside's future, which have helped the countryside develop and contribute to a strong financial development in Sweden.

Peter Melin
Chairman, The Swedish Rural Network Steering Group





Photo: Lennart Forssén



An historical nature trail takes you up steep cliffs, through spruce forests, and past mesmerizing bays. On the 100-kilometre-long world heritage trail through Höga Kusten, there's always a new experience just around the corner. Since the path was restored, unity and solidarity in Nordingrå has become increasingly stronger, which has led to everything from actions to save a local school to broadband projects.

Project/company name:

The world heritage trail

Owner of project/company:

Nordingrå Business Association, a non-profit organization

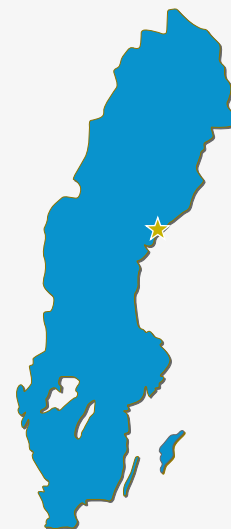
Contact person: Ingrid Viklands

Contact information: viklands@telia.com, +46 (0)70-5599483

Project period: June 2009–August 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 450,000

For more information: www.nordingra.nu and click on "Göra i Nordingrå"



On the right path

“Our initial goal for the path was to create an infrastructure to promote tourism and local businesses. Tourism businesses would be able to arrange activities along the path,” says project manager Ingrid Viklands.

The idea to reunite towns by restoring old roads and paths and joining them into one long nature trail came up during a brainstorming meeting between Nordingrå locals and associations from the parish. The Rural Development Programme funded the project, which was led by the local business association. The project has had many positive effects, Viklands tells us:

“We have heard from local bed and breakfasts and travel agencies that many people are walking the trail. Last year we sent out 1,200 information brochures about the nature trail. In addition, we have sent out 500 brochures and maps so far this year.”

But most of all, she has noticed a growing sense of community in the parish. Unity is much stronger than before. It's so strong that people are helping each other out with all kinds of things.

“A couple of years ago the local gas station was closed down, but a couple of companies and the church have worked together to open

up a new gas station in Nordingrå. We are currently mobilizing to save the local school, which is at risk of being closed down. Also, we are cooperating on a large broadband project.”

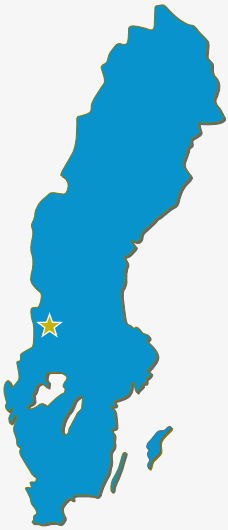
According to Viklands, the reason behind all these efforts in the parish is probably the fact that the project is based on a bottom-up perspective. The people in charge of the project visited and contacted all 230 landowners to sign contracts in order to be able to use their land.

“That created a feeling that it's a common project,” Viklands says.

The strong entrepreneurial spirit in Nordingrå has been a great asset to the project, and has probably also created benefits for the local tourism companies that specialize in guided tours and walks, for example.

How will you manage future maintenance of the trail?

“We have put a working team in charge of this. Our plan is that the profits from map sales will cover the maintenance costs,” Viklands tells us.



Project/company name: Riddarordern Jamtlandicum More and better horse-based nature and cultural experiences based on Nordic traditions and history.

Project/company owner: The Riddarordern Jamtlandicum association

Contact person: Alf and Maria Kjellström

Contact information:
marion@jamtlandicum.com,
maria@ekoturism.org

Project period: November 2009–March 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 300,000

Lance meets lance as the knights' horses gallop towards each other. Tournaments and other horse events have attracted people's attention to northern Swedish horses, as well as to a new form of horse tourism, all thanks to Riddarordern Jamtlandicum.

All-inclusive horse riding tourism helps promote Jämtland

The northern Swedish draft horse has been misunderstood and forgotten. Everyone's seen them on the horse track, but never known that they have other qualities as well. A couple of horse lovers in Riddarordern Jamtlandicum wanted to set the record straight. They were granted funding from the Rural Development Programme to sell Nordic horse experiences such as tournaments, champagne gallop and other horse and nature based experiences. There, the horses' qualities would be able to shine, project manager Maria Kjellström thought.

"These powerful and flexible horses would be perfect for occasions such as a tournament," says Maria Kjellström.

The purpose of the project was to develop a business model for horse events, horse tourism and training courses, based on three existing companies in Jämtland, in order to spur interest in the county's historical traditions. Around 50 different courses for up to 50 participants have been held in Vängen in Jämtland, covering everything from horse events for track personnel to champagne gallop and marketing courses in horse experiences. In addition, they have tried a number of different horse experiences and large events.

"For example, last summer we held a tournament on Riddarholmen in Stockholm with 26,000 people in attendance. And we have sold the same event to Trondheim," Kjellström says, adding:

"We have developed a business development method between entrepreneurs and the association where we have outlined and organized courses and event methods, and taken them through a quality assurance process."

This well-documented model is easy for others to copy as it includes pedagogy and a list of instructors, depending on the type of horse event you wish to organize. However, the three companies and the association have had to chip in with a lot of their own money – SEK 300,000 to be precise. On the other hand, they will likely benefit from an increase in tourism.

"We promoted our products at one of the world's largest horse trade shows in Verona, which led to around ten horse tourism agents having their eyes opened to Jämtland as a horse tourism destination.


NOMINATED FOR RURAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Together, people can make a difference. That's the motto of the Collaboration project, which has helped people join forces to restore natural pastures, among other things. So far, fifteen groups have advanced from the planning stage to implementation, and 200 hectares of land have been worked on.

Project/company name: Collaboration

Project/company owner: The county administrative board

Contact person: Lars Johansson

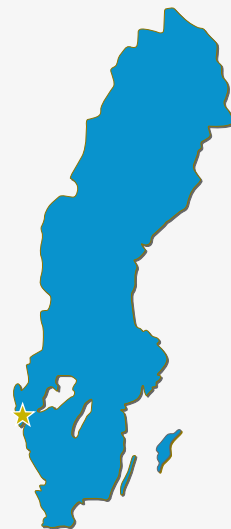
Contact information:

lars.johansson@lansstyrelsen.se

Project period: July 2009–June 2012

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 1,306,715



Collaboration opens up the landscape

“Groups and people should be able to find each other, find a way to cooperate, find common goals and then put them into practice. These four steps are equally important,” says project manager Lars Johansson, describing the Collaboration project led by the county administrative board with funding from the Rural Development Programme.

A couple of employees at the government agency started to think about trying out a full-scale version of a working method that had been tested in a pilot project in ten municipalities in northern Bohuslän and Dalsland. The model would be polished in a new project in order to get animal breeders, landowners, entrepreneurs, associations and government agencies to be able to get in touch with one another. The structured model works as follows: groups find common values and beliefs, then they set up goals and find ways to achieve them.

“So far we’ve gotten several projects started; at least 15 of the 25 projects are in the implementation stage. Many of the projects concern clearing natural pastures or hayfields, which has been our main focus.” In fact, around 200 hectares of land is being worked on, and

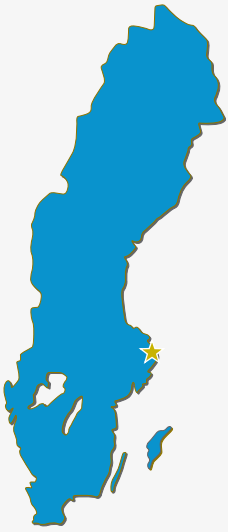
246 countryside entrepreneurs and animal breeders have become involved in the project.

An additional ten projects are under way. The special cooperation model, which has led to a more attractive landscape in western Sweden, has proven to be effective when it comes to implementing projects that depend on several people agreeing on a common goal. In addition, part two of the project has resulted in better cooperation between the county administrative board and the Swedish Forest Agency, among others.

“Traditionally, all employees at the different government agencies have been so busy that they haven’t had time to help other agencies, or present all available options. Stress and key figures have become a problem”, Lars Johansson explains.

However, one group has been missing in the collaboration. There have been very few women.

“But that’s because there aren’t many female landowners, animal breeders or machine entrepreneurs. Most women who have been asked to participate have joined the project.”



Project/company name: Torneå
Project/company owner: Non-profit association Torneå Production
Contact person: AnneLee Vikner
Contact information:
info@torneaproductions.se
Project period: May 2010–July 2010
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 91,379
For more information:
www.torneaproductions.se

Out in the woods, in a tall old paintball tower, children are treated to theatrical performances. This odd theatre in Almunge will live on after the curtain falls for the project. New plays are scheduled for the autumn season, and there are discussions about opening an adventure park.

Children lend their ear to theatre tower

The timbered tower looks like something out of a Robin Hood film. But in the autumn of 2009, some actors had the idea of turning it into a children's stage. A culture association was founded and sought funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme.

"During the course of the project we have had more than 1,200 visitors, of which 900 were children from schools in Uppsala and other nearby places. For three seasons we have performed the play "The Tower", which is about anti-bullying. The lead of this chivalric saga is the bullied hip hop girl Yersona, who sets things right in the woods. After the play is finished, the children can climb the tower and play in the woods," says AnneLee Vikner, actress and one of the people in charge of Torneå Productions. The theme has caught the attention of many primary school classes, as well as some preschool classes. AnneLee Vikner believes that the project has given rise to a real rural development, as many inner-city children have been given the chance to experience nature and culture.

"There are so many who have never even petted a horse or been deep into the woods. It feels like we have taken a small step towards a big change."

In addition, collaborations with other local organizations like Uppsala Municipality are also under way.

"We have received funding from the municipality for a cultural summer camp for teens," says AnneLee Vikner, who is currently rehearsing for this autumn's play Riddare Pappiljott.

There are discussions about opening an adventure park in the future, but this would require additional funding. She believes that the project is commercially viable:

"We started on a small scale and our project is growing rapidly and successfully, but without funding and sponsors it won't be easy. We need to expand our business in order to become commercially viable in the future."

Do you now have a more permanent organizational structure that can continue the project?

"Yes, the board of the association is determined to develop and broaden our activities. We're looking ahead. Just the other day we entered into a collaboration with the Study Promotion Association."

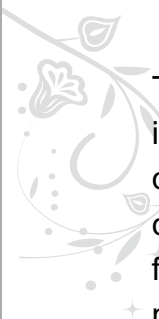
NOMINATED FOR RURAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Photo: Lennart Forssén



These days, the milk from the small farm in Västra Selet is used to make creamy ice cream with flavours such as Västerbotten cheese and cloudberry caramel. Funding from the Rural Development Programme made it possible for 'The Ice Cream Farmer' to turn their premises into a production kitchen.

Project/company name:

The Ice Cream Farmer

Project/company owner:

The Ice Cream Farmer

Contact person: Helena and Tomas Ågren

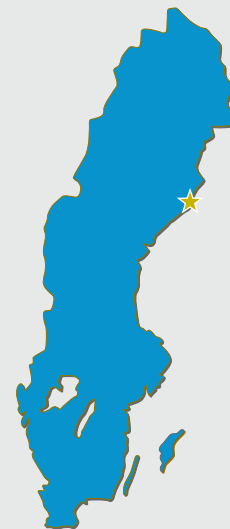
Contact: info@glassbonden.se

Project period: December 2009–June 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 358,625

For more information:

www.glassbonden.se



Farmer bought ice cream machine

“We had to rebuild our premises to make it suitable for ice cream production,” says Helena Ågren, who owns the company along with Tomas Ågren.

In order to make this possible, they sought help from the Rural Development Programme and were granted funding to hire workmen and buy ice cream machines. It was actually the mountain cows at the farm who made production possible.

“We wanted to preserve an old native breed and process the milk into delicious ice cream with local and global flavours.”

Production of the ice cream inspired by Italy is now underway, and is delivered to four shops in the Umeå region – a number that will be twice as high by autumn. In addition, they deliver ice cream to two restaurants and, of course, to their own ice cream parlour which is about to open. Their hard-serve ice cream with flavours such as blueberry, violet, wild meadowsweet, and the famous local cheese ice cream, attracts tourists from all around the country.

“Even though we haven’t really opened yet, we have already gotten great feedback. We also have an ice cream menu which includes pop-

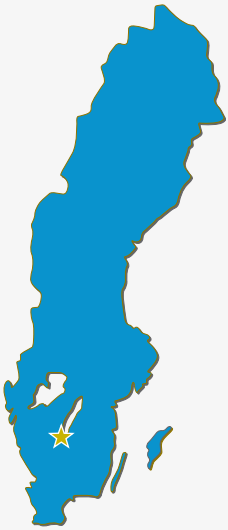
corn ice cream and the snattermyra, a speciality with cloudberry,” Ågren says.

The company, which has been up and running since autumn 2010, aims to grow their operation so that the couple can make a living off of it. The plan is to produce 30,000 litres of ice cream per year, and to increase their number of buyers substantially. As soon as they have sorted out certain problems that have halted production, they will start expanding.

“The freezer room turned out to be incorrectly installed, and didn’t pass inspection. We had to hire a different firm to sort everything out,” she says.

Ågren believes that their company is good for the countryside, due to the seasonal employment and tourism it generates. Furthermore, The Ice Cream Farmer has been contacted by a relatively large number of local networks interested in collaborating.

“The network has many entrepreneurs in industries such as snow mobile rides, Icelandic horses and food production.”



Project/company name: Kärnekulla Lamm
Project/company owner: Kärnekulla Lamm
Contact person: Tarja Lindecrona Albertsson
Contact information:
tarja_albertsson@hotmail.com
Project period:
September 2009–August 2010
Business subsidy payments: February 2010
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 194,978
For more information:
www.karnekuallagard.se

Thorough capacity estimates were made before the relaunch. Farmer Tarja Lindecrona Albertsson and her daughter Anna decided to switch to lamb production. Today, Kärnekulla Lamm in Habo has around 700 sheep which are delivered to top restaurants.

Milk farmer turned sheep farmer

Sheep are grazing the meadow around Kärnekulla farm, two kilometres south of Habo. However, only a couple of years ago these meadows were roamed by dairy cows. After Tarja Lindecrona Albertsson's husband's untimely death, she had to change her business entirely and started outlining a completely new sheep breeding venture, after several calculations of the farm's capacity.

"My daughter Anna and I wanted to keep our family farm alive, so we decided against investments in milk production and instead went with lamb production," Albertsson says.

She received funding from the Rural Development Programme for the construction of a sheep stable of 400 square metres, to be used for the actual sheep breeding. They have expanded rapidly. She bought 90 ewes and a couple of rams at the start of 2009, which have now grown to 700 sheep and lambs.

"That's a lot in a short period of time. But as the saying goes: no pain, no gain. We are constantly acquiring new knowledge of what to do, it's a continuous learning process. My daughter Anna works here

and is very good with animals, which is both positive and necessary," she explains.

Their goal is to expand their lamb production to the extent that they can make a living from it.

"I hope that everything will become like a self-playing piano," says the farmer, who still has her permanent job with the municipality.

The farm delivers lamb to butchers all year round, which leads to higher profits. In addition, they do special deliveries directly to restaurants, often prime cuts, as it has better profit margins. The meat is always delivered according to the customers' requests; uncut, prime cuts, fine cuts, etc.

What role have your educational backgrounds played in this venture?

"Anna has an education in agriculture and worked at the farm with her dad for many years. I have my own job and have worked at other places for more than 20 years, but I have a good understanding of the business after having been married to a farmer for over 40 years."

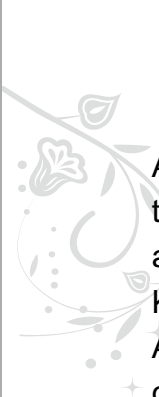
NOMINATED FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Photo: Lennart Forssén



A half kilometre long, mesmerizing path through the woods and a coffee shop for all ages. Those are examples of what Källarbackens Saga in Sidensjö offers. Alongside the fairytale environments is an old 19th-century farm that gives children a natural understanding of agriculture.

Project/company name: Källarbackens saga
Project/company owner: Källarbackens saga
Contact person: Sofia Olsson
Contact information:
bynot@telia.com, +46 (0)70-272 50 82
Project period: October 2008–October 2010
Business subsidy payments:
September 2010
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 675,000
For more information:
www.kallarbackenssaga.se



Fairytale world

teaches kids about the countryside

“I came up with the idea of a fairytale path through the woods because I wanted more people to experience the woods, the fields and the stories in a family friendly environment. It was important for me to show this,” says Sofia Olsson, who is the founder of Källarbackens Saga.

She runs a farm with 23 suckler cows in Sidensjö, outside Örnsköldsvik. In order to make use of the farm’s resources as an attraction, she sought business subsidies from the Rural Development Programme for a side business. The county administrative board granted the funding.

“So I cleared up to the woods along the animal paths and had ideas about stories for the different sections, where visitors could experience familiar and unfamiliar fairy tales,” says Olsson.

In the woods there are no limits for her ingenuity, as elves and other figures are peeking out along the path. The stories came naturally to her in the different forest environments. For example, Goldilocks and the three bears live among the pine trees and the three Billy Goats Gruff live down in an old rocky pit. Thanks to the funding,

she also renovated a cottage and turned it into a fairy tale café, and the upstairs was turned into shops.

“I wanted children and adults to be able to experience agriculture and forestry in a fun and easygoing way, and to give them an understanding of nature and animals, which so many people never get to see,” Olsson says.

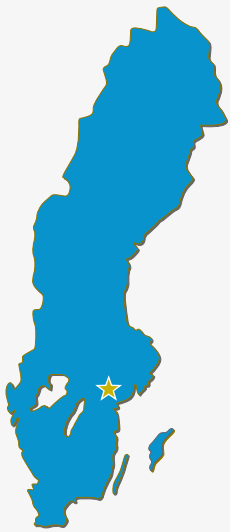
She charges SEK 40 for children and SEK 60 for grown-ups. During the first summer in 2010, around 3,500 visitors came during an eight-week period, and this summer there were probably more. She hasn’t had the time to analyse the attendance data yet, but she tells us that “substantially more people came”.

“It’s shocking, there are so many tourists and foreign visitors.”

The fairytale world has become an important complement to the farming.

What do you consider the company’s most important achievement?

“Our community has seen an increase in the number of visitors, and I love telling others about the farm. Also, this project is helping me financially.”



Project/company name: Jord på trynet

Project/company owner:

Non-profit association Jord på trynet

Contact person: Mats Schörling

Contact information:

mats.schorling@bredband.net

Project period: March 2010–March 2013

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 1,350,000

For more information: www.jordpatrynet.se
which will be launched at the beginning of
next year

Farmer initiatives and a sales tour to several supermarket chains has led to a growing interest among consumers. Marketing of Swedish KRAV-labelled pork production is stronger due to support for the *Jord på trynet* association. An industry previously rocked to its foundation is recovering.

The tide turned in favour of KRAV-labelled industry

“We are developing a website with recipes and farm information in order to further market KRAV-labelled pork,” says Mats Schörling, head of the Jord på trynet association.

The new information channel, developed with project funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme, is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. Behind all this is the non-profit association Jord på trynet, a group of 24 KRAV-certified pork producers who have also invested in public promotional activities.

“We set up ‘supermarket farmer’ activities and barbecues, and during the summer we organized family days in the pasture,” says Schörling.

In fact, it was probably the ambitious marketing, which the association initiated three years ago, that turned the tide for organic pork production – an industry previously headed for disaster. As pork prices dropped lower and lower, farmers went out of business one after the other. In the end, some pig farmers in eastern Sweden started thinking more in terms of PR.

“We contacted grocery chains such as ICA, Coop and Axfood in order to highlight the entire value chain and to promote our product

alongside the Swedish Ecological Farmers association,” Schörling says.

A possible effect of this work is that the producer price of pork has now climbed substantially. He can’t say by how much, however, as the contracts are confidential.

Is making money important?

“Yes, it’s very important. Otherwise, countryside farmers won’t be able to make a living,” Schörling says.

New pig farmers have entered the once-shrinking market. The close-knit association of farmers is another factor in the project he wants to highlight, one which has had many effects. According to him, the best outcome is that farmers have started to focus on the entire value chain, from producer to supermarkets and consumers.

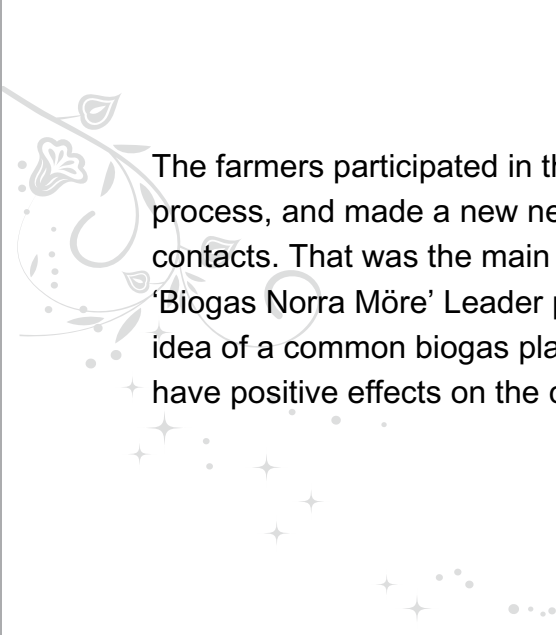
“This is something new. Traditionally, farmers have been in closer contact with the butchers than with the shops,” he says, who now “think a lot more about what the consumers want.”



Photo: Lennart Forssén

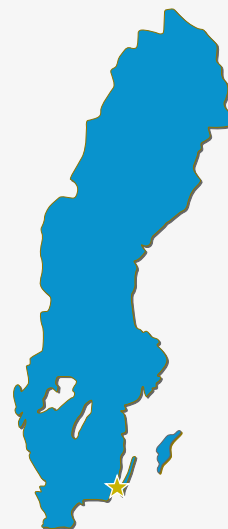


Photo: Lennart Forssén



The farmers participated in the entire process, and made a new network of contacts. That was the main outcome of the 'Biogas Norra Møre' Leader project, whose idea of a common biogas plant will likely have positive effects on the climate.

Project/company name: Biogas Norra Møre
Project/company owner: LRF Sydost
Contact person: Lennart Svenzén
Contact: ingela.nilsson-nachtweij@lrf.se
Project period: April 2009–April 2011
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 626,975
For more information: www.lrf.se click on Region Sydost and then on Projekt



Farmers set up biogas company

Merely spreading out manure on the fields felt like a waste to a couple of Småland farmers north of Kalmar. Instead, they began discussing the possibility of using the energy rich substance to produce biogas for vehicles. Rotting the manure does not only result in less emissions of methane gas into the atmosphere, but it also provide nourishment for the crops when returned to the fields. With the help of funding from the Rural Development Programme, eighteen farmers joined forces to investigate the possibility of a large-scale biogas plant.

“They realized that it was better to invest in a common plant, with professional management and supervision, than to have their own installations at the farms,” says project manager Ingela Nilsson-Nachtweij, project owner representative from LRF Konsult.

After the pre-study, the farmers formed their own company, More Biogas Kalmar AB, which along with Läckeby Water AB planned and invested in the construction. The plan is to start building in 2012.

“The project is based on a new way of thinking. Many calculations brought us to the conclusion that it would be better to transport the

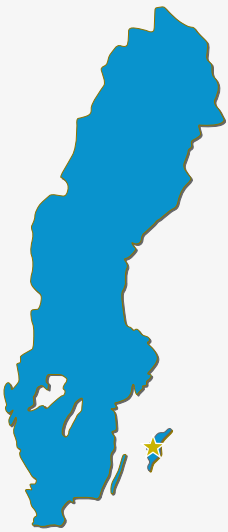
substratum than to transport the gas. Also, the bio-manure will be drained so that the farmers don't have to drive a lot of water back to their farms,” says Ingela Nilsson-Nachtweij.

It was LRF Sydost, the south-eastern section of the Federation of Swedish Farmers, that applied for funding from Leader KalmarÖland, whose LAG group greenlighted the project. Ingela Nilsson-Nachtweij thinks that the Leader model was perfect for the project. According to her, the most important outcome of the project are the future environmental benefits and that the farmers were as active as they were in the process.

“They really came together and cooperated. They are now working together in other areas, such as land-use,” she tells us.

Such collaborations lead to more revenues and job openings, making it a win-win project. In addition, the project has been the source of many new experiences.

“Holding all those structured meeting with the farmers is what finally led to a breakthrough, which resulted in a common plan.”



Project/company name: Skinnriket – Export of lambskin products from Gotland

Project/company owner: Hushållningssällskapet Gotland

Contact person: Mats Pettersson

Contact: mats.pettersson@hushallningssallsskapet.se

Project period: February 2009–December 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,799,000

For more information: www.skinnriket.se

Exclusive sheepskins are sold for SEK 5,000-7,000 apiece in exclusive London and Helsinki shops. Dream has become reality for the 'Skinnriket' Leader project, which wants to sell designer skins far beyond the borders of Gotland. In addition, they have started an education course in skin sewing.

Designer sheepskin is hitting the export market

“We have started to sell overseas, albeit still in small volumes. We managed to get our product into the Stockmann department store in Helsinki and a couple of shops in London. It’s a niche market as we only sell our finest skins abroad,” says Mats Pettersson, who is the project manager of Skinnriket, an economic association for 75 lamb farmers on Gotland.

A couple of farmers in the association, which has been around for three years, came up with the idea of further refining the skins and selling them overseas. Although there was a high demand for lambskins from Stockholmers on holiday on the island, the lamb producers knew that the only long-term strategy would be focusing on exports, achieving even greater quality and investing in marketing. A project between the farmers’ association and the local agricultural society was granted funding from Leader Gotland and the Rural Development Programme. They also set up a one-year cutting edge education course in skin sewing and skin design.

“We have now finished the first year, which had 18 participants,” says Mats Pettersson.

The next step for the project was to establish a confirming house for their export. A steering group with representatives from agencies such as the Swedish Trade Council and Almi Företagspartner met regularly to discuss different strategies.

“Last winter we sold sixteen skins in Helsinki. We haven’t sold a lot yet, but we have established new channels,” says Mats Pettersson, who tells us that they have signed on five British shops.

He believes that they have led the way for many lamb producers, who have had a real confidence boost and who are now selling increasingly more on their own websites or farm shops. Many have realized that one fourth of all customers are foreign. In addition, he is convinced that the leader method, which the local sheep farmers and craftsmen have used, can also be used in other places and in other industries.


“A steering group of local and external parties, working groups that come up with ideas for different areas, and a work committee has been a successful combination.”



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Photo: Lennart Forssén



The small harbour house became the beating heart of the village. A renovation project gave the house a new toilet and kitchen, and it gave the town a greater sense of community. Associations began working together, new projects were started, and people got engaged in their neighbourhood.

Project/company name:
Tosteberga harbour house

Project/company owner:
Tosteberga Village Community

Contact person: Yvonne Kievad

Contact: yvonne@kievad.se

Project period: March 2009–December 2009

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 383,390

For more information: www.tosteberga.se



Harbour house boosted village confidence

In the small fishing village of Tosteberga, located at the edge of the Scanian archipelago, stands a white polished harbour house. With the help of Leader funding, the village community's board and other residents have renovated the house and installed new showers, toilets and a kitchen. The renovation became an emotional process for all 120 residents in the seemingly idle coastal community.

"We have gotten to know each other much better after having worked together on the house. The harbour house project gave us a greater sense of belonging and it had a positive effect on cooperation between local associations. The harbour has always been a place where people would meet," says Yvonne Kievad, project manager and vice-chairman of the village community.

"Every winter we are frequented by troops of birdwatchers, who come to watch the sea eagles," says Yvonne Kievad. However, she doesn't have any numbers on how many people are using the house.

According to her, the most important outcome of the project is that the harbour house ignited a great deal of devotion to the village.

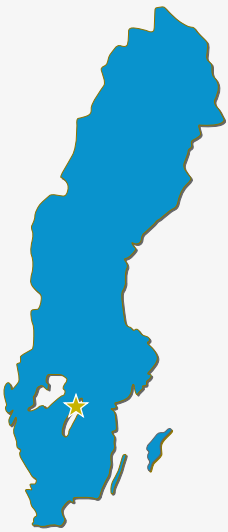
The sports association, which had experienced a negative couple of years, was able to get back on its feet. A new Leader project would soon follow the first one.

"We received funding to build a nature playground. By the summer of 2011 logs, rocks, windbreak and camping ground were all in place."

Furthermore, the cooperation amongst the locals has led to a common village development plan, which extends over many years to come. The plan includes a number of goals, some of which are being realized. The municipality has sponsored a kitchen for a club house at the sports ground, and a couple of local associations have donated money to a common storage house that is being built.

Could your village survive without funding?

"No, not yet. The roads in the village are a mess, and are burdened by the growing number of visitors. The village would never be able to finance the reconstruction all by itself. Also, we don't have any public transportation. The buses stopped running many years ago."



Project/company name: Eat and meet along the Göta Canal

Project/company owner: Economic association "Experience Göta Canal West"

Contact person: Jan Dahlqvist

Contact: jan.dahlqvist@karlsborgsturism.se, jan@fireflash.nu

Project period: June 2008–August 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 838,416

During the course of the project "Eat and meet along the Göta Canal", the number of online visitors increased by 20 percent to 1.5 million. Five new companies were started in the wake of the Leader project, which an association of local food producers initiated.

Culinary experiences **increased** canal tourism

The project sought to make use of current food trends to revitalize and bring some added value to the area around the Göta Canal. They needed the number of tourists to increase – mainly those over 40, but younger visitors as well. Delicious scents of local delicacies help achieve this goal.

"We sensed the food trend would be around for at least five more years. In addition, we noticed that the area had a lot of small-scale food producers who cultivate some fantastic crops, such as really fine asparagus. Also, we didn't really have a habit of eating locally grown food, as they do in Italy or Greece, or of promoting Don Fredo's tomatoes, for example, or the local bakery," says Jan Dahlqvist, project manager for the 'Experience Göta Canal West' economic association.

'Eat and meet along the Göta Canal' took shape in collaboration with Töreboda, Karlsborg and Mariestad municipalities, and received funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme, among others. Local food producers were to be in charge of the work and to market the region under the header "eat and meet". Tourist organizations and restaurateurs started selling all-inclusive trips based around

concepts such as crayfish parties, coffee klatsches, and locally grown/organic food. They received help from the local TV4 editorial office to spread their message.

"If we are given the chance to use Tilde de Paula and have her promote the food, then that's much better than us doing it ourselves." After the ads hit the airwaves, the word started to spread online. "Everything seems to indicate that 1-1.5 million people have visited our page in the last three years – a 20 percent increase," he says.

More than a hundred companies organized their own activities, and five new food companies were started. Even though the project has ended, new food meetings have been arranged, the number of all-inclusive tour bookings has increased and a local coffee shop has opened.

Have you created a new culinary region?


"The network that we created will live on, and the restaurants will make use of more locally grown products. The food events will also live on, as will the interest in locally grown products."



Photo: Lennart Forssén



Photo: Mälarens avlopp i kretslopp



The new work method is called the Södertälje model. The method involves the municipality and the Federation of Swedish Farmers working together to make property owners invest in modern sustainable systems, where wastewater is brought back to the farms. The project “Sustainable drainage in Mälardalen” is the ignition key.

Project/company name:

Sustainable drainage in Mälardalen

Project/company owner:

LRF Mälardalen/Lantbrukarnas ekonomi AB

Contact person:

Gösta Andersson, jonas.bergblind@lrf.se

Contact information:

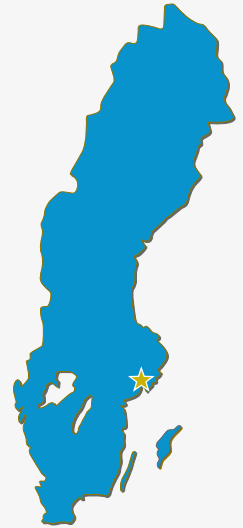
gosta.andersson@japas.se

Project period: May 2009–September 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 680,536

For more information: www.lrf.se, click on Mälardalen and then on Project.



Work model turns blackwater into plant nutrition

Funding from the Rural Development Programme made it possible for the Federation of Swedish Farmers to hire consultant and project manager Gösta Andersson to implement the environmental work. The first task was to inform various authorities about the poor quality of today's sewage system.

“We currently have 900,000 individual drains, and 40-50 percent of them are actually polluting our drinking water and our environment. But this substratum has some amazing uses when used correctly,” says Gösta Andersson.

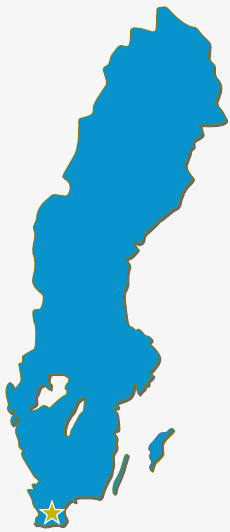
The purpose of the project was to find clever, useful and sustainable solutions for blackwater to be used as manure in the agriculture sector, as long as it is “separated at source”, doesn't contain too much water and has added urea in order to remove contaminants. The technology is already available through eco-friendly toilets or vacuum toilets, which require a minimum amount of water. They soon found out that Södertälje was the right municipality for their change-implementing project. It was probably by the waterside of the eutrophicated Kyrksjön lake that local politicians became aware of the situation, after a lot of lobbying efforts.

“In the spring of 2010, Södertälje Municipality passed a new water and sewage policy, which meant that toilets with a maximum use of 0.6 litres of water per flush would be chosen for all new constructions and renovations.

The blackwater is collected in a closed container on the property. “By using this solution, we get blackwater that can be used by farmers after it has been sanitized,” says Gösta Andersson.

The Södertälje model was made possible by a collaboration between interested parties, politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs, the Federation of Swedish Farmers and a number of interested property owners. The turning point for the project came when local politicians raised the bar with their policy change, which a municipal project group could then inform property owners about. A treatment plant is being planned. Farmers collect treated water and funding is given to those who invest in sustainable toilet systems.

“The county administrative board will grant SEK 9,000 to the first 100 individuals or properties.”



Project/company name: Nature conservation in a lightly broken-up landscape

Project/company owner: Gösta, Lisbeth and Pierre Andersson

Contact person: Gösta Andersson

Contact information: +46 (0)70-393 94 72

Project period: February 2008–June 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 75,240 in 2009 and 2010, SEK 75,168 in 2008 and SEK 35,496 in 2007

For more information: Schedule a field trip

Drivers on the E4 motorway are now able to gaze at the open, tended oak landscape in Toftaholm. Once again, the locals can experience biodiversity on the pastures. The Andersson family are environment protection entrepreneurs who restored 21 hectares of land.

Pastures and other cultural values once again in Toftaholm

“Our family has restored pastures since 1992. We wanted to preserve the beautiful oak landscape,” says landowner Gösta Andersson, whose family has received funding from the Rural Development Programme for their environmental work for some years now.

Here, in the picturesque scenery with 500-year old oaks, the family runs an organic meat farm, with 500 grazing Angus and Hereford cows and steers. In total, the company looks after 300 hectares of pasture, of which they have restored around half with their own money. They received funding in order to reach the pasture environmental goal for 20.88 hectares, after contacts with administrators at the Kronoberg County Administrative Board.

“We thought a lot about which parts to keep. We decided on the oaks, because this has been an oak landscape since the late middle ages. It is said that King Gustav Vasa might have been the one who planted them. But we also decided to keep other deciduous trees such as linden, elm and beech,” says Gustav Andersson, who has some

undertakings from the ‘Restoring of selected environments’ project financed by the Rural Development Programme.

The positive environmental effects are of course one of the most important parts of the work. Biodiversity and other aspects of the environment have been promoted. For example, the rare hermit beetle has returned. Locals, birdwatchers and other nature lovers are able to walk around on newly laid paths that lead to a nearby nature reserve. As there are now more pastures, the family has been able to increase their stock by 100 animals since 2005.

“This has made things a lot easier for us financially,” says Gösta Andersson, who often accommodates field trips from agriculture schools, beef associations, and the Lantmännen farming association.

The family has also restored older pastures, always with a focus on natural and cultural values. Finally, the family has also increased the amount of dead wood in the area, which will benefit lichens, insects and mushrooms.

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Åsa Andreasson



Photo: Emma Lundin

A collaboration between different types of producers has resulted in added economic value and sustainable production. This is the story of collaboration between a vegetable producer, a beef producer and a sweets producer in Habo.

Project/company name: Biogas and waste heat - collaboration for conventional meat production and organic vegetable cultivation

Project/company owner:

The Jönköping County Administrative Board

Contact persons: Marcus Söderlind/
Dan Waldemarsson

Contact information: soderlind.marcus@telia.com/
dan.w@haboft.se

Project period: July 2010–December 2012

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 600,000
and SEK 1,600,000, respectively



Sweets, manure and neighbourliness turn into green energy and vegetables

A biogas plant has just been completed at Dan and Marika Waldemarsson's farm in Långhult outside Habo, where they produce beef the conventional way. A couple of hundred meters away their neighbours Marcus Söderlind and Emma Lundin grow organic tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers in their greenhouse. The biogas plant was built in order to expand their businesses. The plant produces methane gas, which is used to power an internal combustion engine (a Cheva V8), which in turn powers generators. The heat generated from engines and exhaust fumes are recycled and used to heat the greenhouse, which prolongs the crop season. In total, the plant generates 400,000 kilowatts of electricity and 600,000 kilowatt-hours of heat every year. The investment has increased the profits of both companies.

"It's really exciting! There aren't many greenhouse crop producers who collaborate with farmers, but we benefit so much when different types of businesses work together. It's a win-win situation! There is

a lot of potential waiting for those who dare go against the norm," says Marcus Söderlind.

Manure from the farm animals as well as animals from a neighbouring farm is used, but also waste from sweets producer Toms-Webes i Habo. They expect to deliver 250 tonnes of sweets to the plant.

"We drive past the sweets factory every day. Out of the blue, I realized that the factory must have a lot of waste that Dan could use in the biogas plant."

The neighbours started to think about this collaboration one winter, after Söderlind's and Lundin's first greenhouse collapsed under the weight of the snow. One third of their investment was funded by the Swedish Rural Development Programme.

"It wouldn't have been possible without the funding. It would have taken too long before we would see any return on our investment," Dan Waldemarsson concludes.

**Project/company name:**

Miljöinvestering våtmark, Frövisjön

Project/company owner: The Västmanland County Administrative Board

Contact persons: Bengt Pettersson

Contact information:

bengt@pe-te.se, +46 (0)70-795 04 57

Project period:

December 2007–December 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 3,652,055

For decades there had been talks about recreating the old bird lake south of Skultuna. Now, the Frövik lake has been resurrected after 85 hectares of wetland were restored through a project by the landowners and the county administrative board. Several environmental goals have already been reached.

Bird lake restored by landowners

Seven landowners joined forces in order to tidy up the wetlands around the lake. It is a time-consuming endeavour to clear out the lake, chop down trees in the water, remove all brushwood and reeds, and create pastures around the waterside. Wetland entrepreneur Bengt Pettersson was charged by the landowners with leading the restoration and to seek funding from the Rural Development Programme.

“So many more species of bird have found their way to the lake now. Also, the wetlands absorb phosphorus and nitrogen from the fields,” says Bengt Pettersson, who was consulted by the county administrative board.

Dunlins, godwits and hawks are just some of the species that can now be observed around the Västmanland lake, which has become frequented by ornithologist and outdoor lovers. In addition, it has become a completely new environment, with plants and species emerging. The animals are now able to graze the waterside pastures, according to Bengt Pettersson. Lars Andersson from Förvi farm is one of the landowners in the project.

“This is a good fit for my steer breeding. The beef animals graze by the lake, as well as on a neighbouring farm where new pastures have been established. But the greatest value of the restoration is of course the environmental benefits,” Lars Andersson adds.

According to Robert Ström, administrator at the county administrative board, it is of great relevance that the landowners see financial benefits from the project, although he believes that the main goal is to achieve environmental benefits. Several environmental goals have been reached, including increased biodiversity. Bengt Pettersson describes in positive terms the method used in the clearing work, which was started during a low-water period. Walls were set up around the lake, which was then filled with water from a nearby pond that had been dammed up.

“After that, they installed a “doughnut” in the wall so that the water level could be adjusted, which caused the vegetation below the water surface to diminish.”

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Before



After

Photo: projektet Miljöinvestering i våtmark, Frövisjön.



Photo: Emilie Öberg

They call themselves a small culture house with big possibilities. The People's house in Söråker has invited immigrants to their premises with cinema groups for youth, picture dictionaries, recording studios and guided tours of the library. Old habits are broken down in this industrial community in Medelpad.

Project/company name:

Meetings in Söråker and the world

Project/company owner:

The People's House in Söråker

Contact person: Christina J Thonman

Contact information:

info@sorakersfolketshus.se

Project period: March 2010–December 2012

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 350,000

For more information:

www.sorakersfolketshus.se



People's House

opened up the

community

“Two years ago people of foreign descent started coming to the town. And we thought to ourselves, ‘How can we make them enjoy Söråker and want to stay?’ We realized that we could use the new technology in our digital house,” says Christina J Thonman, project manager of “Meetings in Söråker and the world” and head of the People's House.

The newly built digital house, with its modern, surround sound cinema, has been the main attraction for young people. She believes in the positive effects of culture; mainly film, opera and music, as these are limitless in their potential. By working intensely with immigrant groups who visit the culture house almost every night for things like the cinema group and the recording studio group, this small community has experienced many improvements.

“It's very calm here, there isn't any hostility. Those who were the toughest before are the ones who are soft now,” says the project manager, who has previously defused many fights between various groupings.

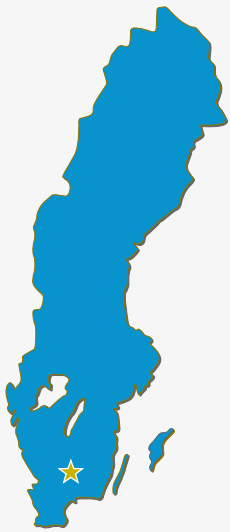
The project originated at a regular association meeting at the People's House, where everyone realized that a project could help pro-

mote integration and create understanding between different groups of people. The project was started with funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme, and is mainly based on creative groups of 10-15 young people each. The work is based on the “self-management” model, meaning that every activity is important. One example is the library guide group, which organizes the books. Another group takes care of the plants.

“Potted plants are also a responsibility. This is a way of getting people to understand that everything here is common property, and it's a way to get people engaged in society.”

In addition to youth groups, all families who have recently moved in are given a guided tour and free opera tickets to the culture house. There are also visiting activities. The expression “Everyone's the same, but different” appears in the organization, but the question is what effect this insight has had.

“The expression is written on the walls here, it has probably always been part of the organization. It doesn't matter what you look like or what you do. Here, everyone has equal value.”



Project/company name: Introduction course for immigrants in green enterprise

Project/company owner:
The Macken economic association

Contact person: Karin Borgenvall

Contact information: karin@arabymacken.se

Project period: June 2010–December 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 108,780

For more information: www.arabymacken.se, and click on Utbildningar

Unemployed immigrants get their foot in the door in green jobs. Outside Växjö, eight people are currently receiving seven months of training in agriculture, forestry, and gardening. The educational project listened and learned from other projects in order to create the best fast track to the labour market.

From school desks to green jobs

Many immigrants have experience in agriculture, herding, or gardening, and some have also been farmers in their home countries. Despite their knowledge and skills, however, many remain unemployed in Sweden. The founders of the ‘Macken i Araby’ economic association thought long and hard about this dilemma before seeking funding from the Rural Development Programme for a new training model. Karin Borgenvall, who is very experienced in farming issues, was hired to lead the work on a pre-study for a training programme.

“A steering group was formed within the project to bounce ideas off one another. We also looked at previous attempts at similar programmes. We found a two-year education in Östergötland from which we learned a lot.”

However, the people participating in that programme thought two years was too long, as they were also educated in civics, computer science and other “supplementary subjects”, according to Karin Borgenvall. A seven-month training programme in agriculture, forestry, zoo-keeping, gardening and Swedish language studies was therefore more focussed.

“Our point of reference was the demand for labour in the countryside, which was mainly for animal keepers and clearance work in the

forest. We also observed a growing demand for locally grown vegetables and root crops.”

New funding from the Rural Development Programme is now financing the training programme, which has reached the half-way mark with eight students.

“We see motivated and happy people. They are laughing and having fun.” The goal is for them to get employed or start their own businesses after the course is completed.

It was originally planned that 16 students would be accepted. However, recruiting took longer than expected and spring tillage was just around the corner, so the county administration board greenlit the start of the course.

It was a conscious decision to locate the programme in the local agricultural secondary school in Ingelstad, which is in the countryside just south of Växjö. And it has had many positive effects.

“The school has previously had some hostility towards immigrants. These days we are greatly appreciated at the school and we’re trying to find ways to increase the contact between the school’s pupils and ours,” Borgenvall concludes.



Photo:Karin Borgenvall



Photo: Annika Thorvaldsson

Somalians growing carrots and Iraqis looking after dairy cows. Borlänge Municipality's collaboration with local farmers gave five immigrants work experience at farms. The project "A multicultural countryside" used a "dating method" between farmers and immigrants.

Project/company name:

A multicultural countryside

Project/company owner: Borlänge Municipality

Contact person: Valbone Shala

Contact information:

valbone.shala@borlange.se

Project period: April 2010–September 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 512,000



Job openings for immigrants made possible by matchmaking

"The project has shown great results. The participants have been very motivated and worked really hard at the farms," says project manager Valbone Shala, who led the work along with Borlänge Municipality, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Federation of Swedish Farmers and local farm owners.

Over the course of one year, five refugees from Somalia, Iraq, Kosovo, Azerbaijan and Chechnya worked for three days a week as part of the work experience programme. Days in the stable or on the field were necessary in order to get hands-on experience and be able to carry out chores, as a supplement to academic learning. Although several of the immigrants already had solid knowledge of farming, their knowledge had to be adapted to Swedish conditions. By working at the farms, they got a leg up in the labour market.

"Our evaluations show that the farm owners are very positive towards the idea of hiring people with an immigrant background. Moreover, half of the farms tell us that they are in need of workers. However, I don't know whether anyone has been hired yet." "Borlänge Municipality is eager to follow up on both the participants and the farmers," says Valbone Shala, who has also noticed that many of the immigrants want to set up their own business.

The deciding factor has been the active matchmaking system between farms and immigrants. Farms have been matched with each individual's personal needs, and interviews with farm owners have been conducted in the same individual manner. In addition, the farms have been paid, through project funding, to instruct and direct the immigrant workers.

"When a workplace is allowed to plan the work experience, something interesting happens." The project has led to a curiosity about other cultures. Farmers are now discussing genital mutilation, veils and stoning.

Borlänge takes in around 400 refugees every year, but many of them do not become a part of society. A change to how we view and approach one another is probably what's needed in order to achieve change, Valbone Shala believes, who also thinks that this project has contributed to such a change to some extent.

"I have noticed how the Public Employment Service and the municipality are eager to bring this model to other areas and industries."



Project/company name:
Development through integration

Project/company owner:
The Kalle Kamel Company

Contact person: Inger Haglund

Contact information: +46 (0)587-70040,
gamlastugan@telia.com

Project period: April 2008–December 2010

Business subsidy payments:
December 2010

**Funding from the Swedish Rural
Development Programme:** SEK 56,400

For more information: www.kallekamel.se

Camels are roaming an 18th-century farm in Bergslagen Forest. Visitors are able to ride the camels and get a taste of East African culture. The family company Kalle Kamel in Gamla Viker never knew what insights into integration their rides would bring.

Cross-cultural camels

“We didn’t even think about integration when we started. Our family bought the camels as an experience type thing, after having received help from a trainer at Kolmården Zoo. But it wasn’t until we hired Ali that things started to happen,” says Inger Haglund, who runs the farm together with Per-Ola Magnusson.

At this point, they had already received funding from the Rural Development Programme for their company, in order to build a home for their stately pets Karlsson, Anna and Kalle. The money was used to revamp the barn into a camel stable and to build a new camel station. In addition, they invested some of the money in counselling and marketing for the new camel-based experience. They then spent a lot of time looking for a camel trainer, and finally found Ali Hassan, who was just cut out for the task.

“He could train the animals by using special halters, for example. He would pack them and teach them to walk in a caravan,” says Inger Haglund, whose interest in camels goes way back.

“They seemed to cuddly, so thoughtful and calm.”

The shaggy, exotic camels are an odd contrast to the 18th-century surroundings, with a bakery, blacksmith’s workshop and other out-buildings. For over a year, the farm has offered various experience packages with these camels as part of a year-round business. Usually people come here for half a day, which includes coffee and ‘camel cake’ as well as packing of the camels, a ride and a Somalian dinner afterwards. According to Inger Haglund, Ali’s cooking with vegetables, lamb and exciting herb blends gives many people an ‘aha’ experience.

“These meals are all so exciting. I have noticed how the cooking really adds a lot to the experience, and it helps promote integration.”
How so?

“I think our work shows that it is possible to do things in new ways by bringing in people from other cultures, who do things differently. It’s all about daring to see the individual. Ali’s

knowledge from Somalia has proven to be a perfect fit for our culture house and our pets.”

NOMINATED FOR INTEGRATION EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo:Företaget Kalle Kamel



Photo: Knutpunkt Skärgård

Last spring a call centre was opened on Möja, an island far out in the Stockholm archipelago. The Swedish company Knutpunkt skärgård AB created three new positions in booking and information services there, and has also found unique strengths and knowledge among the local female population.

Project/company name: Knutpunkt skärgård
Project/company owner: Knutpunkt Skärgård AB
Contact person: Bisse Alm
Contact information: bisse@visitskargarden.se
Project period: March 2010–December 2011
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 61,327



Archipelago call centre makes use of women's skills

Bisse Alm, project manager for Knutpunkt Skärgård, explains the purpose of the call centre. It's a telephone number that travel savvy people can call if they want to know the boat schedules, a suitable route, suggestions on kayak tours, opening hours for the archipelago stores or other useful information from the locals.

"We believed that it was important to use the labour force that is available out in the archipelago. We saw a unique entrepreneurial spirit and special knowledge about tourism that we could use."

People who live in the archipelago also have "silent" knowledge, knowledge that is actually only known to those with boating experience.

"It's things like having to set up the semaphore at the pier so that the boat can approach," says Bisse Alm, who initially sought funding for the idea through an archipelago association.

At first, they received funding from the Rural Development Programme in order to test the idea as a project in 2009. A business model was developed, customer surveys were conducted, and technical IP telephone system testing was carried out. After that, they received business subsidies in order to set up a company, Knutpunkt

Skärgård AB, which has had its telephone service up and running on weekdays between 9:00-17:00 since late 2010. The company is owned and run by a couple of Möja inhabitants.

"We have three full-time positions as well as 5 stand-ins," says Bisse Alm.

She thinks it is positive that they have created work opportunities for the locals all year round.

"There are a lot of small family businesses in the archipelago, hand-icraft companies where women often help out with the accounting. Or they work part time. However, we also noticed that there are a number of unemployed women," says Alm, who explains that they do not primarily see themselves as a gender equality project.

"But still, it's great for equality. The women have had the courage to develop the business and work really hard."

She sees development potential in modern telephone technology.

"We could easily grow from five to fifteen people. Technology brings limitless opportunities to the archipelago and sparsely populated communities."



Project/company name: Distinct Lady
Project/company owner:
Distingo Art & Management AB
Contact person: Mai Lundell
Contact information: mai.lundell@telia.com
Project period:
January 2011–December 2011
**Funding from the Swedish Rural
Development Programme:** SEK 228,400
For more information: www.distinktdam.com

A mobile incubator. That's how the "Distinct Lady" skills development programme works, offering business development opportunities to female green entrepreneurs in Uppsala and Stockholm. Three courses were held during the spring. A couple of companies have been set up, and there are also a number of collaborations in motion.

Green enterprise to be reignited by creative courses

"The difficult part is finding the women who perhaps work in a family business or alone, but who want to develop their companies in the countryside. They might be running a bed and breakfast or a farm, or they're active in the cultural sector. I want to give them a chance to build a collaborative network, so that they can all excel together," says Mai Lundell, project manager for Distinct Lady through her own company Distingo.

Her explanation captures the inherent idea behind the project: to learn from one another. The work started back in the fall of 2010, when a competence development programme was developed in a pilot project for the Swedish Agency for Economic and Region Growth. After that, funding from the Rural Development Programme helped start a new project together with the county administrative boards in Stockholm, Uppsala and Västmanland. Three courses have been given so far.

"So far, about 30 women have participated in the programmes, and the pilot project had 18 participants. Some of them are now seeking funding to further develop their skills in project management and

other areas. Some women joined forces to organize a larger event," Lundell says.

The women have initiated several collaborative efforts and there are three or four new companies being set up.

"But I don't think the number of new companies is a good way of measuring our programme. We want to emphasize collaboration as a good way of developing businesses and reducing the vulnerability of self-employed people," says Mai Lundell.

Each course is based on four workshops, involving everything from stage performances to networking and business development. Distinct Lady has now been hired by county administrative boards in other counties to set up three additional education programmes this autumn. However, Lundell does not see her work as solely a women's project, even if she believes that it can help promote gender equality.


"I believe that we are transferring knowledge and experience that is more commonly found in other areas, in terms of innovation and cutting edge education. But we're doing it in a new and more flexible way. That's why we're calling ourselves a mobile incubator."



Photo: Maj Lundell



Photo:projektet Kvinnor och goda gröna affärer/Coompanion



At least eight economic associations, two non-profit organizations and one limited company have been launched thanks to the project 'Women and green enterprise'. Furthermore, around 20-30 job openings have been created as women joined forces to inspire and support one another in common entrepreneurship.

Project/company name:

Women and green enterprise

Project/company owner: Coompanion

Contact person: Bridget Wedberg

Contact information:

bridget.wedberg@coompanion.se

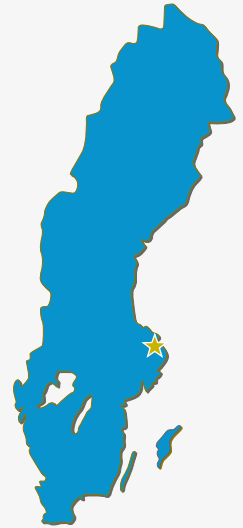
Project period: February 2008–June 2010

Funding from the Swedish Rural

Development Programme: SEK 1,000,000

For more information: www.coompanion.se

click on Roslagen and then on project info



Motivational support turn women into business partners

“We help people try out their ideas. We also try to find ways for them to increase profitability in their current ventures by working together with others, for example in the tourism, health and hospitality industries. However, we also work with groups who want to start something new and who have a common need or interest,” says Bridget Wedberg, project manager for ‘Women and green enterprise’.

She views the successful ventures as a consequence of initiatives in the national project led by Coompanion Roslagen along with Coompanion in Östergötland, Västerbotten, Västmanland, Gotland and Skaraborg. In Västerbottnian Vindeln, a few women started the parent co-op Gläder, and three women in Roslagen took charge of a school canteen while thirteen artists in Kinnekulle joined forces and set up an association. In total, the project has led to the creation of ten associations in the energy and hospitality industries, as well as a limited company that provides “green” rehabilitation services. Wedberg thinks it’s wise to run companies cooperatively.

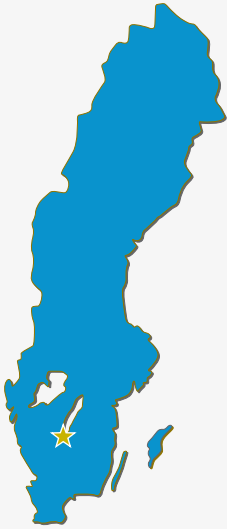
“If there’s something you don’t know, there’s always someone else who knows it. You complement each other.”

The reason the project is aimed at women, and not men, is connected to the fact that she has met many creative women who think it’s more fun to work together.

“When joined by others in a network, they feel more creative and competent than they would on their own. They find the courage to try new things.”

In order to find women, the project members have visited local associations with women on the board, and they have also contacted company associations, rustic site associations, the Federation of Swedish Farmers’ women’s association and agricultural associations. Through networks, information meetings, and counselling sessions, the project has reached around 2,000 people around the country with information about company forms that facilitate cooperation.

“Actually, there are only three good company forms – economic associations, non-profit associations or limited companies. These business forms enable the cooperative way of working: one member, one vote.”



Project/company name: Young and green – future entrepreneurs in green industries

Project/company owner:
The Federation of Swedish Farmers

Contact person: Petra Svensson

Contact information: petra.svensson@lrf.se

Project period: September 2010–May 2013

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 2,585,525

For more information: www.lrf.se click on Regions and choose Jönköping.

Alternatively: log on to Facebook and search for Ung & Grön.

A young pair wanted to get into the potato growing business, and another girl wanted to open her own farm shop. Eight youths have started their own businesses since the completion of the first business course in the ‘Young and Green’ project in Jönköping. Further education, a Facebook page and seminars on transfer of ownership are set to increase the number of green jobs.

Business Course kicks off young entrepreneurship

The youth project came naturally, according to the Federation of Swedish Farmers’ project manager Petra Svensson, who explains the idea:

“Young people with new business concepts didn’t have a place where they could meet or seek guidance. That’s why we wanted to provide support and guidance for 18- to 35-year-olds who want to start, or are already running a business.”

The entrepreneurship courses, which are given over the course of four evenings, teach youths about several concepts: how to develop a business idea, how to make a SWOT analysis, how to outline a business plan, and what strategy to use. So far one course was held last winter, with nine youths participating. This autumn, two more courses will be held. However, the project’s work method also involves other educational elements.

“We will arrange courses in leadership and finance for already existing companies. We will also hold seminars on transfer of ownership and competence courses for employees in green industries. We have a Facebook network with 180 members, and we’re opening a ‘business bank’ where buyers and sellers can meet,” Petra Svensson tells up.

By involving local parties such as Science Park in Jönköping, Almi

Företagspartner, Jönköping International Business School, Maskinringen and local banks, future entrepreneurs won’t have to look far for help.

What has the project been like, now that it’s approaching the half-way mark?

“Our first entrepreneurship course resulted in eight out of nine of our youths starting their own company. There is a horse company, a potato plantation, a milk farm and a machine contractor,” says Petra Svensson, who has also noticed a great interest in their finance and leadership courses.

She believes that their work model provides security during the change of generations, with those born in the 1940s retiring and their ‘inheritors’ taking their places.

How has your collaboration with organizations such as Almi and the Federation of Swedish Farmers affected their work with young people?

“The Federation of Swedish Farmers have really spread the word about our project throughout the country, and they’re putting a lot of effort into it. I don’t know how the other organizations have been affected.”

NOMINATED FOR YOUTH EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: projektet Ung och grön/LRF



Photo: Heidi Andersson

Steel is twisted and shaped in the flaming hearth. Artistic smith Gustav Thane's company revamped its workshop in Ryfors, Västergötland, in order to be able to work throughout the year. School classes from nearby municipalities will now be holding classes in the historical building.

Project/company name:

Gustav Thane and the art forge

Project/company owner: Gustav Thane

Contact persons: Gustav Thane

Contact information:

gustav@konstsmedjan.se

Project period:

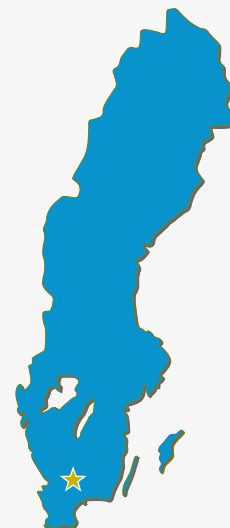
September 2009–December 2011

Subsidy payments: December 2009

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 54,442

For more information:

www.konstsmedjan.se



Blacksmith reconstructed for year round

Blacksmith Gustav Thane has occupied the historical forge, built in 1742, for several years, where he has been working on his iron sculptures as well as giving courses during the summer. In order to expand his business during spring, autumn and winter, he had to renovate the entire basement as well as install a toilet and a pantry. For a 29-year old with modest revenues, funding from the Rural Development Programme was the only way to achieve this.

“I held a course in forging last winter, and I had a few workshops in the spring,” says Gustav Thane.

His company Konstsmedjan has collaborated for a long time with Mullsjö Folk High-School, providing courses in forging. He now has plans to collaborate with the primary schools in Habo as well.

“The teachers have already been here and visited me. I think that the pupils can learn more about the local history, the culture surrounding the forgery and the birth of industrialism. Also, they get to learn the basics of how to shape and knead iron, and they get to make their own hooks.”

He has discovered how pupils who otherwise would have trouble sitting still are overcome by the heated, soft iron. He described how all their energy and hyperactivity is focussed on one thing:

“They channel it differently. After a couple of hours they’ll come up to me and say ‘wow, this is cool, school should always be like this’.

Primary schools in Mullsjö and Bankeryd are also considering school trips to the forgery, which also arranges company events, bridal parties and organized visits. Gustav Thane’s dream is that his “side business” will provide enough revenue to let him invest more time in his art. However, he still has some distance to cover.

“Ten years from now, when I’ve hopefully made a name for myself, I hope to be able to get SEK 8,000 a month.”

These days, the fire in the forgery’s historical surroundings is burning year round, and has become an increasingly popular tourist attraction.

“Preserving the forgery is important for the local identity. In fact, the Mullsjö community owes its existence to it.”



Project/company name: DreamPack
Owner of project/company: Non-profit association DreamPack
Contact person: Terry McLeod, Eleonor Holm
Contact information: boka.hummingbirds@gmail.com, kttmanagement@gmail.com
Project period: October 2010–October 2014
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,418,350
For more information: <http://www.facebook.com/Dreampack> and www.kttmanagement.com

There's no harsh criticism like there is on Idol. It's more about supporting teenagers who want to focus on their music. That's what the DreamPack project is all about, and it has become a small music industry for young people in Uppland who want to work professionally with song writing, music, sound, lighting and mixing.

Young talents enter the stage

“We wanted to help young people who are going through rough times and open up new paths for them. They get to outline and plan their work on their music,” says Eleonor Holm, who is project manager for the Leader project DreamPack, which has been running for one year thanks to funding from the Rural Development Programme.

Young people between the ages of 11 and 25 old have frequented the Hummingbird Music Center in Sigtuna, after school or on the weekends, to dance, sing, record or work on production. The bottom-up perspective is the deciding factor for the various working groups in which teenagers have been able to develop their personal artistry. During the first year of the project, they held auditions and found some thirty new artists. In addition, they organized a workshop for setting up shows, produced new songs, signed dancers to the project, and set up a number of performances.

“We currently have between 60 and 70 youths, both girls and boys, working with us. We've done things like set up a concert in Kungsträdgården in Stockholm, community singing at Steninge castle with guest artists, and other performances.”

However, the real effects of the project are what goes on inside the heads of these teenagers.

“They love being here, it's fun and inspiring. We can see how they're growing with the task. Also, we've been able to reach some young people who were headed in the wrong direction,” Holm continues. She believes that the entrepreneurial spirit that is now being disseminated could inspire the teenagers to produce their own music.

The actual founder of DreamPack is colleague and Englishman Terry McLeod, who has previously worked for companies such as Universal Records International. The project is set up as a three-way partnership, with the association's commitment, the municipality's funding and sponsorship from local businesses. Eleonor Holm believes that local involvement is important:

“We've received a lot of help from Uppsala Nya Tidning and Sigtunabygden, as well as Sigtunahem. The many articles have made youth in the area aware of our project.”

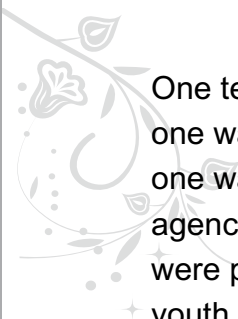
NOMINATED FOR YOUTH EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Dreampack



Photo: projektet och bygdegården Tallklinten



One teenager was nailing boards, another one was measuring beams and a third one was in meetings with government agencies. A group of youths in Odensjö were put in charge of building their own youth centre together with the local rural community centre association. The result: boosts in confidence.

Teenagers built their own youth centre

The red-painted wooden house surrounded by deciduous forest is on track to become a “house of possibilities” for the small town of Odensjö. Over the course of the last two years, the community centre’s attic has painstakingly been renovated by some ten teenagers, thanks to funding from the Rural Development Programme. The youth centre is set to open this autumn.

“The teenagers are currently furnishing the centre. Also, the building has been equipped with broadband internet. We believe that the centre will provide great opportunities for meeting people,” says Jenny Svensgård of the Odensjö Parish Council.

However, it is the actually building process that is the true accomplishment. Teenagers from ages 14 to 18 have planned, measured and built the house along with grown-ups. Project manager and engineer Björn Lindenstam has overseen the teenagers’ work, which has led to the house being dubbed “Björnes magasin” by the locals, after the famous Swedish children’s television show. He has seen how the youths have grown with the task.

“I have noticed how they’ve grown and how they have overcome their fear of tools, for example. They have also learnt about responsibility by, for example, measuring something, being responsible for the



Project/company name:
Education project - youth centre

Project/company owner: The Talkklinten rural community centre association

Contact persons: Jenny Svensgård, Björn Lindenstam

Contact information:
huskultur@hotmail.com

Project period: May 2009–June 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 154,000

For more information: www.talkklinten.se

measurement’s accuracy, and then putting it into practice,” says Björn Lindenstam, who has previously taught engineering students.

The project funding was used for a building course, which he himself taught, as well as for construction material for the centre. Jenny Svensgård hopes that the house will become a place where future generations can meet.

“Everyone has worked together for our neighbourhood, and the teenagers have been given a chance to build their own centre. They have installed a pantry, a separate entrance, a projection screen for film viewings and decided where all the internet sockets will be located. There are many young people who leave town for higher education studies, but we hope that this youth centre will give them a sense of belonging and that they will return,” she explains.

The idea to invest in a youth centre came up during a brainstorming meeting with youths and other residents, arranged by the parish council.

“The downstairs section of the house is already frequented by locals for after work, yoga and other activities, and now the upstairs will also be a meeting place,” Svensgård concludes.



Project/company name: Accessibility for all
Project/company owner: The Stockholm Recreation and Fishing Association for People with Disabilities
Contact person: Jonas Nilsson
Contact information: jonas@stockholmsfff.se, +46 (0)70-261 38 58
Project period: November 2009–February 2011
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 800,000
For more information: www.stockholmsfff.se

Feeling the sea breeze against your face, swimming in the salt water or exploring islands are some of the things these archipelago tours for people with disabilities have made possible. The ‘Accessibility for all’ project in Norrtälje bought a boat with a ramp, which would come to be a ticket to the archipelago for people with disabilities.

Exploring the archipelago from a wheelchair

Everything started after a serious motorcycle accident ten years ago. Jonas Nilsson broke his back and his life changed. He knew that his outdoor life was over, that there would be no fishing now that he was in a wheel chair. He soon realized what needed to be done.

“In 2003 I started the Stockholm Recreation and Fishing Association for People with Disabilities, a non-profit association that would make it possible for people with disabilities to pursue an outdoor life. However, it turned into a catch 22 situation, as we didn’t have any money,” says Jonas Nilsson.

Funding from the Swedish Inheritance Fund helped form a foundation for the association, but it wasn’t until 2009 that the dream of a purpose-built boat with a ramp and a lift could be realized, thanks to funding from the Rural Development Programme which allowed them to initiate a Leader project.

“The boat is a symbol of all our goals. It makes it possible to reach most parts of the archipelago. The Waxholm boats only take you from point A to point B.”

The response to the project has been great. During the first summer, in 2010, they organized around 40 boat tours for 270 persons,

who were able to enjoy a seal safari, fishing, photography tours, archipelago restaurants, island exploration and swimming sessions from the boat (thanks to a splash lift). All tours departed from the Tranvik nature reserve on Gräddö island, where a foundation provides them with a pier and a waiting house equipped with a toilet.

“We’re almost shocked that everything has gone so smoothly, but it goes to prove that everyone can live an active life.”

According to Jonas Nilsson, the work method helped them get organized with other associations, such as Tiohundra habilitering AB and the Swedish Association for People with Polio, who have been able to influence and support their work. However, a one-day tour with the boat costs SEK 7,000 per person, the greater part of which is funded by project money.

“Our association will always be dependent on contributions; it’s impossible for our visitors to afford the actual cost of the tour. Many of them are living at subsistence level.”


NOMINATED FOR RURAL INNOVATION OF THE YEAR



Photo: Accessibility for all

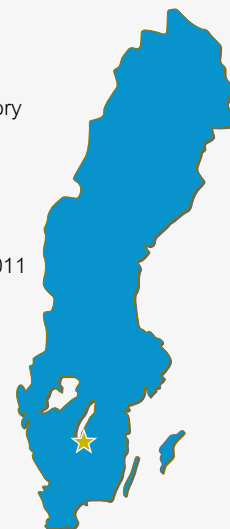


Photo: Mobilt musterl



Bring your own apples to the mobile cider factory and get your own cider in a bag-in-box. This is the concept of Ebe Plant in Gränna, where old apple traditions have been brought to life once again. Suddenly the business has become viable all year round.

Project/company name: Mobile cider factory
Project/company owner: Steffi Eberts-Reinisch
Contact person: Steffi Eberts-Reinisch
Contact information: steffi@ebeplant.se
Project period: August 2010–November 2011
Business subsidy payments: March 2011 and September 2011
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 111,003
For more information: www.grannamusteri.se



Cider factory on wheels headed for success

“The idea is that we get fruit from our customers quickly. Instead of them driving to us, we go to them and achieve efficient production. We produce the cider while the customer waits,” says Steffi Eberts-Reinisch, who got the idea of a cider factory on wheels together with her husband.

There was so much locally grown fruit in the favourable climate around the Vättern lake, and they had witnessed how many Gränna residents were throwing away fruit every autumn. Still, they thought about their idea for two years before they had worked up the courage to set it in motion.

“For a long time we wondered why no one else had started something similar,” she says and laughs.

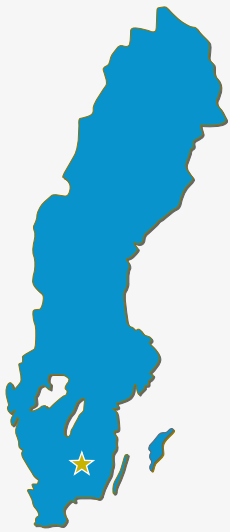
Thanks to business subsidies from the Rural Development Programme, they were able to purchase the machinery. They had to make many phone calls to Almi in order to carefully prepare the start-up, as well as to learn the legal framework for handling of foodstuffs. Both spouses had basic knowledge about fruit – Steffi as a gardener in

the Ebe Plant market garden in Gränna, and Leif as a garden centre employee on Visingsö.

“The cider factory is a great supplement to our existing business, and will hopefully turn a good profit soon. I run the market garden by myself between spring and autumn, and between August and February we drive around and press fruit,” says Steffi Eberts-Reinisch, who also describes how leftovers are sent to farms or turned into elk fodder.

During the first autumn and winter they produced 20,000 litres of cider from apples, pears and grapes, even though the machine wasn’t running at full capacity. The early winter in November halted their business, and they had nowhere to put the machine indoors. But these are surmountable problems. Thanks to their cider venture, the garden has been able to hire a girl to assist them.

“It is somewhat difficult to find a way to make a living in the countryside. With our cider factory we have created a local product and made it possible for people to make use of their fruit.”



Project/company name:
Countryside carpooling – pilot project in Tolg

Project/company owner:
The Tolg Parish Council

Contact person: Maja Söderberg

Contact information: maja@mobilsamakning.se,
+46 (0)735-81 14 22

Project period: March 2010–September 2011

Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 182,000

For more information: www.mobilsamakning.se

The first six months resulted in close to 9,600 carpooled kilometres. The “Countryside carpooling” project has convinced many of the villagers of Tolg in Småland to carpool. All thanks to local marketing and an online system that connects mobile phones.

Carpooling at the press of a button

The 500 inhabitants of Tolg had long sought to bring about some much needed improvement to the sparse bus service, without success. All the half full cars on the roads finally made them realize that carpooling would be the only possible solution.

“There were many people who drove to the same place at about the same time. But still, it’s difficult to get people carpooling,” says Maja Söderberg, project manager and member of the Tolg Parish Council.

With some help from her brother, who runs an IT company, she developed an online system where people who are driving and those who need a ride can register. A digital map of ‘car stops’ in Tolg and its surroundings was promptly developed. The project, which was conducted according to the Leader model, was made possible by funding from the Rural Development Programme as well as countless hours of non-profit labour. The project was launched in March this year.

“After three months we had already reached 6,990 carpooled kilometres and 110 registered users. People drove less during the summer, but now, after six months we have reached 9,570 kilometres, says

Maja Söderberg, who has calculated that they have probably saved 1.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

“Everyone understands this is good for the environment, but we have focused on the financial and social gains. It means a lot when people travel together and get to know one another.”

She believes that the reason why so many people liked the idea is that the parish council invited the locals to participate in the development by handing out questionnaires, holding a meeting and recruiting people for a carpooling panel.

The underlying idea is that the trip should be profitable both for the driver and the passenger. Therefore, they have decided on fixed prices for selected destinations. For example, the 30-kilometre stretch between Tolg and Växjö costs SEK 20, which is paid to the driver.

“We are currently working to bring the system to other towns, municipalities and workplaces. There is a lot of interest, and we are working on a sustainable model for how to spread this idea and make it work in other places.”

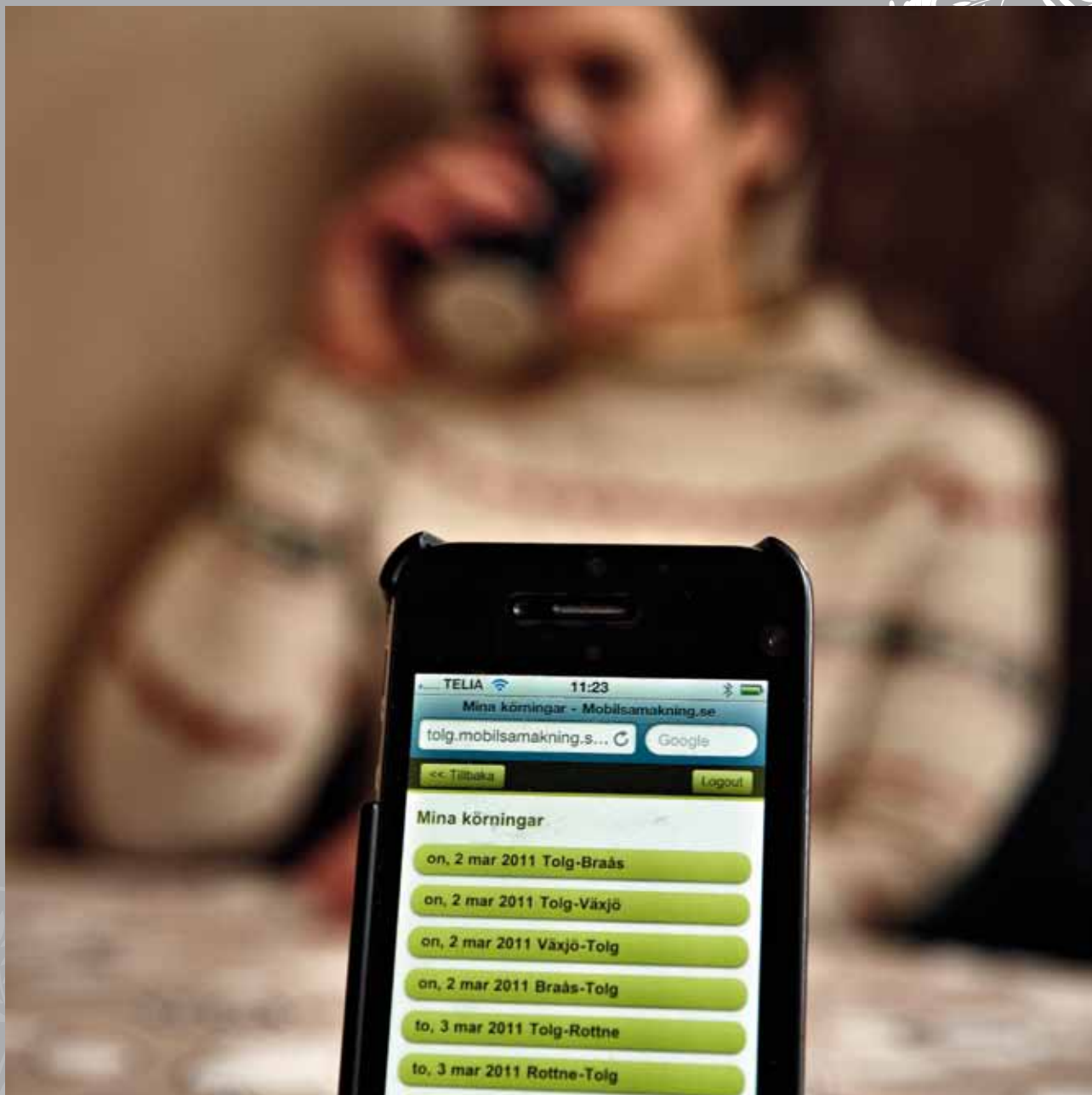



Photo: Hans Runesson



Photo: Jimmy Petersson, www.limitedphoto.se



It was actually a mistake that led to the bean balls being flattened and deep fried into a crisp. A fortunate mistake, it would turn out, as the red beans a couple of years later would become snacks, thanks to the company Svenska Bönchips AB. With the help of business subsidies, the bean crisps are now entering the consumer market.

Project name: Svenska Bönchips AB
Project owner: Svenska Bönchips AB
Contact persons: Mary-Anne and Ulf Wahlquist, Jarl Ugglå, Klas Blomborg
Contact information: info@bonchips.se
Project period: August 2010–December 2011
Funding from the Swedish Rural Development Programme: SEK 158,151
For more information: www.bonchips.se



Red beans from Öland become crisps

Small 50-gram bags of bean crisps in flavours such as chili/dill, herbs and “autumn glow” are being sold in more and more stores around the country. The labels are decorated with Öland’s well-known lighthouse, plains and wind turbines that surround the bean fields outside the town of Färjestaden, which is also where production takes place. Food entrepreneurs Ulf and Mary-Anne Wahlquist, who had already developed several bean recipes, discovered this special product while frying bean falafel.

“We were experimenting and it actually worked on our first try,” says Mary-Anne.

This was 2002, and Mary-Anne and her husband would soon be working on the product in a grocery project. After a trial launch at their own restaurant, the time had come to launch their business idea. In 2009, they established Svenska Bönchips AB along with Jarl Ugglå and Klas Blomborg.

“The idea is that we will be in charge of product development, production and pitching the product at trade shows, while Klas is in charge of accounting and Jarl takes care of the marketing.

Business subsidies were granted for the purchase of a rolling pin machine and ventilation, and for the future purchase of a packing machine that will speed up production. The first fiscal year has been spent on developing a brand, creating a website and searching for distribution channels.

“We are currently selling to ICA stores on Öland and in Kalmar, to Life stores around the country, to Citygross in Kalmar, Skansen’s Gubbhyllan and Solliden on Öland.

They have their sights set on their goal: a turnover of three to four million crowns in three years, which can be compared to last year’s SEK 700,000. She thinks that the next step for the company will be to invest in a packing machine, in order to achieve better packaging of the fibre-rich, eco-friendly snacks.

“Bean crisps are crispy and delicious. They contain lots of fibre, they’re gluten-free and they contain no additives. Growing red beans doesn’t require a lot of resources, and it is important to emphasize that the bean fields fix nitrogen in the soil.”

...last, but not least

Other suggestions

- Dig where you stand. Be true to yourself. Listen and see.
- Never give up, believe in your product and your own abilities. Don't forget to have fun and enjoy your success.
- Solve problems. Deal with the problems, preferably in a group, and don't quit until you have solved them.
- Seek funding for your business from many different contributors, as it can take a long time to receive funding. When writing the application, make it clear that you also have operating costs: salaries, gas and insurance.
- Find the courage to invest in your idea. Hire knowledgeable entrepreneurs to help out in areas where you lack experience.
- Seek feedback on your project and make sure you know how much work will be needed before you start your project.
- Be transparent and inform the community regularly about your project.
- A bottom-up perspective is often a prerequisite for success in projects that involve associations or communities. The initiative and the work must come from those affected, i.e. the locals. Top-down projects that are initiated by the public sector will probably not have the same impact.
- Make sure you estimate the project period accurately.
- Make sure you know that the work method you chose will affect the amount of time required. For example, the planning and feedback stages might take up a lot of time, especially when done in a group. Once you have reached common goals, the work usually proceeds fast and efficiently.
- Keep regular contact with the Leader office. You might have to make changes to your plans over the course of the project.
- Be persistent and convincing. Believe in what you do.
- Find competent co-workers.
- For the self-employed: minimize your expenses. Lower costs and limited consumption will give you greater independence – and will often be good for the environment.
- Don't be blind to the qualities of your region – believe in its unique natural and cultural values.
- Every company must be run according to its prerequisites, and you have to be aware that your venture will require a lot of work.
- Work systematically and don't rush things. Explore all possibilities and don't reject something before having viewed it from several different angles.

Success factors

- Believe in yourself. You will need a viable business idea that you believe in.
- Have a good foundation for your project. A well-thought-out planning process will help you achieve success in the long run.
- Seek help from others. As an entrepreneur, it is important that you take in external competence.
- Keep your finances in order. Make sure that the bookkeeping, cash flow and finances are taken care of.
- Network. Make use of available networks and find solutions together with others.
- Get a business partner. By starting a company together with others or collaborating on certain services, you will increase your profits and competence base.
- Involve the locals in your project. Locals are often willing to lend you some of their time, preferably at general meetings, to give you feedback on your project.
- Be goal-oriented. As a company, it is important to be goal-oriented towards your customers and to be keen to changes.
- Be patient. When starting a company you might face unexpected problems and new prerequisites, all of which must be dealt with.
- Have a good relationship with your sponsors. An open and sound relationship with your sponsors is important.
- Seek political support. Finding common ground with your local politicians on local environmental issues will prove successful in the long run.
- Find good management. A project manager, a project group and a steering group with representatives from the municipal assembly is a prerequisite for a successful community project.
- Make sure to get positive media coverage. If you have good contacts with the press, you can get positive publicity in newspapers and on television.
- Make use of modern technology. Simple, easy-to-use technology and systems for the internet and mobile phones can help businesses in the countryside.
- Find a connection between the region and your product or service. A clear connection to the region and the positive values associated with it can be a strong asset in your marketing.
- Find common goals when collaborating with others. All involved parties should benefit from the collaboration.
- Understand that people may seek the same goal for different reasons. People might want more pastures due to its aesthetic value, because of the environmental effects or for financial reasons, for example an increased meat production.
- Think 'neighbourhood' instead of 'farm' when collaborating on the same piece of land. Find practical, feasible solutions in order to achieve large, connected areas of land.
- Seek early contact with landowners when pursuing an environmental project. Early contact with landowners will make it possible to settle issues early on in the project.
- Listen to environmental advice about your land. Find out about the possibilities of your farm by seeking external advice.

