

RURAL BEST



2012

Facts about the Swedish Rural Network:

Is operating within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and is aimed at strengthening the 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 levels.

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 glass. It is the Swedish artist and multi active Peter Gadh who designed the prize.



The awarding of the Ullebagge prizes is now in its fourth year. The aim is to show off the very best rural initiatives in the country, within the framework of the Swedish Rural Development Programme, 2007–2013. At the same time as the current programme comes to an end, a new programme is in the process of emerging.

The Rural Development Programme is promoting growth, commerce and employment in addition to local development work. The finalists in the seven categories for 2012 are presented in this brochure. They represent the very best initiatives within the work to develop the countryside.

It is a great pleasure, but also extremely difficult to choose from among all the interesting and eager proposals that have been received from the Swedish Forest Agency, the Sami Parliament, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the county administrative boards and the country's entire leader groups.

An important task of the rural network is to spread good examples that help to meet the objectives of the Rural Development Programme and ultimately help the countryside to develop and flourish. It is important to show that the Programme's funds do good, but also that we can learn from all the rural initiatives that have been successful.

It is with great pleasure that we declare that a very large number of initiatives are being carried out for the Swedish countryside. Behind all of these initiatives there are many creative entrepreneurs who through their enterprise, contribute to the development of the countryside. All of them and the initiatives in which they are involved, have contributed to people wanting to live and work there. A thriving countryside is also a prerequisite for vibrant cities and for growth throughout the whole country.

I am proud to be able to mention these good examples. In the future, they will contribute to the continuing development of the Swedish countryside; to the establishment of communities and to a healthy economic development in Sweden.

Peter Melin
Chairman, The Swedish Rural Network Steering Group





Photo: Daniel Johansson

Have a seat at a table in Örebro County and enjoy the tastes of Sweden. Last year, the county's restaurants served up dishes from Sweden's different regions for a whole month. The project “26 smaker – 26 landskap” (26 regions – 26 flavours) led to that every third restaurant came into contact with new local suppliers.

Project name/name of company:

26 smaker – 26 landskap (26 regions - 26 flavours)

Project owner(s): Örebro County Administrative Board

Contact: Ann-Sofie Hedberg

Contact details: 019-193871, ann-sofie.hedberg@lansstyrelsen.se

Project period: March 2011-May 2012

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 800,000



Swedish menu with local flavours

“The restaurants lapped up the idea immediately. In a few weeks, the tables were booked for the 26 regions. We then randomly assigned a region to each kitchen, who found inspiration for their menu with the assistance of a mentor from that region. It was extremely successful. During the month of September you could eat anything from lamb burgers with wild garlic pesto from Gotland, to seafood platters from Bohuslän”, says Ann-Sofie Hedberg, Project Manager for Örebro County Administrative Board, who organised the event.”

The aim of the project was to encourage restaurants and public sector kitchens to purchase from local food producers in order to help Swedish growers, farmers and food processors to survive. The idea for the project came from Karin Strömberg Lundqvist, the Närke region's ambassador for Matlandet (Sweden, the new culinary nation).

There is now an awareness of locally produced food in the county. “Several of the restaurants who wanted to make contact with new, small-scale suppliers, achieved their aim. The evaluation shows

that 30 per cent of the school kitchens and restaurants now have arrangements with new suppliers. Many have also made contact with other restaurants or mentors”, says Ann-Sofie Hedberg, although she does not know the extent by which purchasing has increased.

However, one evaluation conducted by a firm of consultants shows that many restaurants did not prioritise the issues that were particularly highly valued by the project, such as the possibility of forging new contacts with local suppliers. According to Ann-Sofie, there are currently several obstacles to trading locally that first must be overcome. One example of this are the rules concerning procurement, that make the procedure more difficult for public sector kitchens. There are also certain problems with logistics.

“It is also very time-consuming for restaurants to contact many small suppliers and it can sometimes be difficult to acquire the necessary quantities at the right time.”



Project name/name of company:

Lokala servicelösningar (Local Service Solutions)

Project owner(s): Bodens kommun (Boden Municipality)

Contact: Leif Engström

Contact details: leif.engstrom@boden.se, tel. +46 (0)70 340 53 63

Project period: July 2011-September 2013

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 900,000

Flags with a red dot now wave outside the small, green municipal buildings of Harads and Gunnarsbyn. Here, information about public services and opening hours can be found and you can also apply for planning permission or ask questions about the care of the elderly. The Lokala servicelösningar project (Local Service Solutions) has made it easier to live in the country.

Local information offices link villages

The two local information offices could be considered municipal administration, albeit on a smaller scale. The two 'service points' that have opened in Harads and in Gunnarsbyn are intended to provide, on the whole, all the information that the municipality normally provides to local residents. Residents can come here to apply for planning permission, to get information about pre-school places, bus timetables, but also for information on travel routes and tourist information. The idea is that the offices should be the first stop, a filter on the way to contact authorities and bodies such as the county administrative board, the county council, banks and associations.

"Instead of travelling to, for example, the town hall in Boden, a journey of 45 km one-way, the information that people need is available here. The basic idea is to ensure that the rural districts do not lose even more of their attraction," says Leif Engström, project leader for the work with Local Service Solutions via Boden Municipality.

It is the municipality that has initiated the project, which is financed by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, the Rural Development Programme and municipal funds. Those in charge

saw the dilemma that is created when villages deplete as a result of the loss of their schools, libraries and local shops; these closures often have a domino effect.

When asked whether it was in fact the municipality that brought about the closure of schools and libraries from the start, Leif Engström replies that this has now been reconsidered.

"Yes, it doesn't work any longer. The municipality has now realised that it has to re-establish its services", states Leif Engström, who feels that this had led to more people moving in.

He knows that the offices have become like an extension of the county council through e-systems where, for example, a resident should be able to get connected to a doctor at their local health centre. The Swedish Public Employment Service would also like these kind of services. At the moment, there are discussions concerning how the service points can be secured for the future through commercial operation as separate companies, with a long-term service agreement with the municipality. An agreement has already been made with one tourist office.

NOMINATED FOR RURAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson



Photo: Daniel Johansson

From the charcoal-burners' cabins and the witch-burnings, to the church-boat and then by horse and cart up to the present day. These were some of the subjects covered by the fourteen hour-long historical theatre ramble through the deep forests of Bergslagen. The Riddarhyttan project wants to promote the area by retelling its past and describing its present.

Theatre retells local history

It is hard to believe that once over, lessons were held in the classrooms of the little red village school in tiny Riddarhyttan. It is hard to see past the stage, dressing rooms and other equipment in the theatre building that is now being constructed. The building will house a collaboration that incorporates theatre, research and local and regional development work. It was in this same spirit of collaboration that the ideas for the Riddarhyttan project started to emerge from Föreningen Teatermaskinen (The Theatre Machine Association). The association was granted funding, following an application to the Rural Development Programme.

The project managers can now see the results of the work.

“The village and the local district have a fascinating history that we have brought to life in our project through the theatrical portrayal of characters, meetings and events. We have put together a stage play that lasts for a day and a half, where the audience follows us in a journey from the 1300s to the present day. In the forest, the action is based around historic events, we pass by old buildings, ride on the church-boat and travel by horse and cart”, explains Anders Olsson, project manager.

Project name/name of company: Riddarhyttan

Project owner(s): Föreningen Teatermaskinen

Contact: Anders Olsson

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Project period: June 2011-September 2013

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 500,000



In the play, which is called 'Vi går en annan väg' (We go by another way); over 50 local actors describe the culture and lives of people in the forests of Västmanland over the past 700 years. The project's funding has been used for the collection of material, photographs, information work, payments to those involved, the development of technology and the construction of cultural and natural settings where the play is performed. Countless meetings have taken place between the county museum, local history and interest groups, Mälardalen University and many other local organisations.

So far, 400 people have participated in the theatrical ramble which has attracted so many headlines that it has become something of a tourist magnet. Schools, folk high-schools and businesses have also been amongst those who have booked tickets. In Anders Olsson's opinion, the district is flourishing as a result of the theatrical activities.

“Eight people have moved into the area since the project started. Many villagers work in the theatre and local teenagers work there during the summer. Another plus is that people from outside the community also have a very positive attitude to these cultural initiatives”, Anders Olsson explains.



Project name/name of company:

Hävvi i Glen HB

Project owner(s): Elaine Asp and Thomas Johansson

Contact: Elaine Asp

Contact details: bokning@havviiglen.se, +46 (0)70 600 64 76, www.havviiglen.se

Enterprise Support: March 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 418,000

Oven baked venison marrowbone with char roe, blood bread made from reindeer blood, pickled angelica and red onion.

These are a few of the signature dishes served at the restaurant Hävvi i Glen in Oviksfjällen. Following the conditions set by the Sami and the reindeer, the company has been able to build a flourishing all-year-round business.

Sami slow food for a prosperous society

Nowadays, people go on a pilgrimage to the famous restaurant located in Jämtland to try the local dishes of venison, elk, char, berries, chanterelle mushrooms and local herbs. Hävvi i Glen, whose name means 'of course' in the language of the Sami, is a family owned company that managed to become a tourist attraction after only two years in business.

"The business grew far beyond our expectations. We could never have dreamt of such a response. We cook 100 to 150 meals each day, but only have room to serve 30 people at a time, which means that people often have to wait", says Elaine Asp, who owns the company together with her husband Thomas Johansson. The company currently has a turnover of SEK 900,000 and several seasonal employees.

"In 2012 we will grow even more. We feel that we should expand our storage space, for example, to be able to accommodate the demand."

Thomas is a full-time reindeer handler and supplies the primary produce on the menu. Elaine is the chef and uses old Sami recipes in her cooking, preferably dishes that require the slow-cooking of forgotten cuts of meat such as the loins and intestines. Boiled elk

muzzle and reindeer heart smoked in a Sami 'Goahti' are examples of rare dishes.

"Many are curious and want to taste dishes such as pancakes made out of reindeer blood. There is a lack of knowledge about the origins of the produce. This is particularly noticeable when we receive visits from companies, schools, and pre-schools."

Money from the Rural Development Programme and private funds made them brave enough to repair the old village café and turn it into a restaurant. They also renovated the adjacent guest cottages. The idea of their own restaurant came from the desire to create a local meeting point in the almost forgotten Sami village of Glen, which has a population of just 14 people. At the same time they wanted to demonstrate what life is like in a Sami village; something that Elaine believes reaps further rewards.

"Sami business activities in the sparsely-populated areas are important as they help to maintain schools and other services. What's more, we provide our guests with an insight into the Sami culture, food, and everyday life. That, in itself, may remove old prejudices that have their roots in ignorance", says Elaine Asp.

NOMINATED FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson



Photo: Daniel Johansson

It took just one machine, instead of three, to make wood chips from branches and treetops. When the company, Blekinge Flis AB, developed a new, truck-mounted wood chip machine, it saved both diesel and man hours. So much so that the company expanded as a result.

Project name/name of company: Blekinge Flis AB

Project owner(s): Ola Petersson

Contact: Ola Petersson

Contact details: ola@blekingeflis.se,
tel 0455-288 10, www.blekingeflis.se

Enterprise Support: March 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 800,000



Smart machine led forestry company to recruit

“We have rationalised several parts of the business. Before, we used an all-terrain machine to prepare the wood for chopping, then we chipped it up with another machine and then we used another to pick up the wood chips and load them into a vehicle which took them to the heating plant. Our concept is a new type of mobile chipping truck that takes care of several of these stages”, says Ola Petersson, owner of Blekinge Flis AB.

The new 'chipping truck' has been developed based on an idea that Ola Petersson came up with after having realised the disadvantages of the traditional method. The chipping machinery itself is attached to a normal truck chassis. What is unique is that the chipping machinery sits on a turntable which quite simply makes it capable of turning. It can therefore make wood chips on both sides, spray them back into its trailer and into containers in the vehicle. Furthermore, the vehicle can work alongside another lorry in the forest.

“This means that we can take bigger loads and utilise the chipping machine more, which saves both diesel and the environment. The vehicle does less damage to the roads and the forest as fewer turning places are required”, says Ola Petersson.

This innovative machine has made the company much more com-

petitive and it has acquired more local customers. The company has now become one of the leading operators in the county.

“Thanks to our new machine we have been able to employ ten people altogether, and we have also passed more work on to smaller sub-contractors”, says Petersson.

Despite rationalising, Blekinge Flis has not needed to make any redundancies.

“No, we have been growing the whole time and have doubled our turnover in a few years, so it's important for us to have the right people in the right places. We would rather save on diesel than on staff”, says Petersson.

It was in 2011 when the company was granted money by the Rural Development Programme that made it possible for it to produce a new machine. The first prototype was developed back in 2008, and this was also done with EU support.

Increased revenue is important for the company.

“Yes, otherwise development comes to a halt, both for us as a business and for the local community here. 99 per cent of the profit is reinvested, we must be able to build a strong business.”



Project name/name of company:

Tobias Knutsson, sole proprietor

Project owner(s): Tobias and Karin Knutsson

Contact: Tobias and Karin Knutsson

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+46(0)70 385 9149, +46(0)70 210 08 39

Enterprise support/setting-up aid paid out:
2007-2012

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 739,000 in enterprise
support and SEK 200,000 in setting-up aid

Second-hand stall equipment and their own carpentry skills meant that Tobias and Karin Knutsson, from Öland, could rebuild their farm for a mere pittance. In just five months, their Östergården company converted from meat production to a profitable dairy operation with 120 COWS.

Cheap buildings resulted in profits for farmers

How cost-effectively can a farm be converted? That question led the owners of the farm, Tobias and Karin Knutsson from Färjestaden on Öland, to completely new ways of thinking. One idea was to look for used milking equipment on Blocket, find cheap stalls through auctions and to haggle over prices with suppliers. As they did not have substantial cash reserves to draw on, they received setting-up aid and enterprise support from the Rural Development Programme. This was a welcome economic foundation for the reconstruction of the old beef cattle stalls.

“The money has meant a great deal to us and represents about 30 per cent of our investments. We also took out bank loans so we could manage everything”, says Tobias Knutsson, one of the owners of Östergården AB.

The farm had 400 young beef cattle, but the owners felt that the yield from them was insufficient and they therefore wanted to convert to dairy farming. Then everything happened very quickly. From 60 to 120 dairy cows in six months.

“The conversion only cost us SEK 10,000 per cow place as we bought used milking equipment, mattresses, ventilation and tanks. We have also built in a slightly different manner, using a simpler modular system. What's more, we've done our own carpentry work and constructed most of the walls and roofing ourselves. And we've painted it as well”, says Tobias Knutsson.

Cost-awareness and 'miserliness', as he calls it himself, has led to every decision being carefully considered. Negotiations with DIY stores over timber prices, the questioning of routines and the constant hunt for second-hand equipment have also helped. Another important factor has been that the couple have only purchased essential items of farm machinery, others have been leased. Östergården is now a profitable business.

“Our low costs have been behind our success. We were cautious and wanted to have a certain amount of production up and running before we invested. We have constructed things somewhat differently, compared with others, and some people thought we were mad.”

NOMINATED FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson



Photo: Göran Grönhammar

A rotating hose reel that converts raw gas from cow manure into automotive gas. This is the invention produced by the Biosling company, whose ingenious technology makes it possible for every farmer to produce their own gas, at home on the farm.

Project name/name of company: Biosling
Project owner(s): P-O Karlsson and Birgitta Leijonclou
Contact: P-O Karlsson and Birgitta Leijonclou
Contact details: +46(0) 980 230 00, www.biosling.se
Project period: April 2010-June 2011
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 870,000



Biosling for automotive gas

The manufacturers, Per-Olof Karlsson and Birgitta Leijonclou, have over twenty years of experience of a variety of inventions within automotive and environmental technology. In recent years, their work has been all the more concentrated on a simple, energy-saving biogas machine. The two innovators both realised that the ingenious gas plant with a reel, which is housed inside a container, could be used on a normal-sized farm. Large-scale production could be replaced by small-scale production. With the support of funds from the Rural Development Programme and private funds, the company was able to test the equipment at a pig breeding farm, outside of Luleå.

“The results were greater than all the expectations, it worked very well. We see an enormous potential in small-scale production of biogas. In Sweden alone there are 240 farms with 200 cows or 1,000 pigs which, with the manure they produce, could manufacture their own automotive gas”, says Per-Olof Karlsson, one of the owners of Biosling, which has won awards for its environmentally-friendly innovation.

Farmers cannot currently use their rotted cow manure directly as vehicle fuel, it must first be cleaned of pollutants before it is approved

for use. Larger retting plants have such equipment for the upgrading of the gas, but for smaller businesses, this has been too expensive.

“The good thing with the hose reel is that farmers can be self-sufficient, from an energy point of view. The plant, which is built as a module system, is quickly installed, in no more than a day, and it’s quickly up and running.

It should even be possible for farms to produce enough gas so that it could be distributed to gas stations”, says Per-Olof Karlsson.

But so far the company has only sold the machine to a few other farms. However, ten or so quotations are currently under consideration. Birgitta Leijonclou explains that the slow pre-sales process is due to lengthy decision times:

“It is a major investment, so customers need to think about it. They also want to see the effects of long-term tests. We have several plants that have been operating around the clock for over a year, non-stop”.

The company forecast is to sell nine pumps next year, then 14 during 2014 and 20 during 2015.



Project name/name of company:
Innovativ upphandling (Innovative Procurement)
Project owner(s): Saffle municipality
Contact: Sven Junzell
Contact details: sven.junzell@saffle.se, tel.+46(0) 533 68 15 20,
www.saffle.se
Project period: May 2010 – March 2012
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 176,000

Everything from nappies to books and pencils – every year. Saffle municipality purchases goods and services for SEK 400 million. Since the training project Innovativ Upphandling (Innovative Procurement) was concluded, small businesses in Värmland County have also started to show interest in the tender process.

Saffle purchases locally

Over a two year period, the project has helped local, rural businesses to familiarise themselves with procurement procedures. At first, this was a tough job as the Public Procurement Act (LOU), can seem intimidating, explains the CEO of Saffle Municipality, Sven Junzell. He sees how important the project has been for their district.

“If we don't look after local industry, then the district will not survive. Then it is only the big players that remain and that can tender, and that is not in our favour”, says Sven Junzell.

Education was the keyword in the project, which was initially supported by funds from the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, and later also by the Rural Development Programme. One part of the project was involved with education, the other with simplification of the procurement procedures associated with LOU. The municipal officials learnt how to prepare better offers and tender specifications and how to make use of electronic procurement tools. Through specially adapted lectures that were led by a hired consultant, the county's business leaders learnt more about LOU and procurement tools. However, to start with it was difficult to reach all businesses.

“After a while we started making field visits in order to find out the viewpoints of the companies. The companies often had information on why they had not tendered; often it seemed that it was too awkward or that they were lacking information”, says Sven Junzell.

The objective of the project was that 50 local business leaders and 20 municipal officials would be trained in LOU procedures by the end of the project. The result was 30 business leaders and 38 officials. The CEO has, up until now, not been able to see if the work has actually led to more local interest in the tendering process, but he believes it has.

“I believe that more companies are on the ball now, that's what I hear from them anyway.”

In his opinion, the municipality has learnt many lessons from the project. Complicated description has now been removed from the tender documentation. Furthermore, mailshots are now produced to “market” forthcoming procurements.



Photo: Säffle kommun



Photo: Magnus Kalnins

No-one believed in the idea. Some thought it was a joke. But the unique weeding machine, CombCut, with its intelligent knives that cut away thistles and dock leaves without harming the crop, has proven to be a successful invention. Funds from the Rural Development Programme played an important role in getting the product out on the market.

Project name/name of company:

Årets miljövänliga ogräsjägarare

Project owner(s): Jonas Carlsson

Contact: Jonas Carlsson

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+46(0) 709 57 33 30, www.justcommonsense.eu

Project period: May 2007-October 2010

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 338,000



Weeding machine needed risk-free capital to succeed

A gigantic comb that detects plants and cuts away weeds is the special feature of the CombCut machine launched by Jonas Carlsson's own company, Just Common Sense AB.

“It is completely new technology that can be used, for example, in organic farming, where creeping thistles are a major dilemma. “It solves several farming problems, since it spreads no toxins and requires little energy as it is connected to a tractor”, says Jonas Carlsson.

Recent years have been devoted to building one prototype after another. The very first construction saw the light of day in 2006 and since then, two more variants have been produced. Assistance from business developers and engineers has been utilised throughout the process.

The funds provided by the Rural Development Programme were essential. “We were in a grey zone with a product that had to be developed, at the same time we had a great number of costs. Neither venture capital companies nor banks will get involved if the operation is not underpinned by a reliable source of capital”, explains Jonas Carlsson, who also took out private bank loans, received funding from

Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF) Innova and loans from ALMI.

The company has now changed its form from a private firm to a limited company and it is now on its way out into an ever growing export market. Jonas Carlsson now has patents in the EU and in countries such as Russia, USA, Canada and Australia.

“It is great since the weeding machine was originally used just for thistles, but now it copes with other weeds as well. It has enormous potential. Many conventional growers are starting to use it”, says Jonas Carlsson, who has sold 70 machines so far.

In Jonas's opinion, the machine is excellent from a rural development point of view.

“Agriculture is one of our basic industries, but it must be sustainable in order to cope with the challenges of a growing population.”

Jonas Carlsson has been close to giving up on several occasions, when those he has encountered have doubted or wondered about his ideas. It has been difficult to cope financially and to manage to do two full-time jobs; one to provide for himself and another to fund his project.



Project name/name of company:

Kvalitetshöjning inom potatisproduktion
(Quality Improvement within potato production)

Project owner(s): Hallands Primörer Ek förening

Contact: Tore Holmefalk

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tore@langas.se, tore@hallandsprimorer.se
www.hallandsprimorer.se

Project period: March 2010 - Dec 2011

**Funds from the Rural Development
Programme:** SEK 618,000

Better quality and boiling capacity for potatoes from the Swedish province of Halland. More potato bags with quality seals. These are some of the conclusions from the leader project Kvalitetshöjning inom potatisproduktion (Quality Improvement within Potato Production), an association founded by 43 local potato farmers, packers and distributors and stores in Halland.

Farmers cooperate to improve the quality of potatoes

Jan Erik Wahlström, CEO of Långås Potatis & Rotfrukter AB, came up with the idea to improve the quality of potatoes – beyond just “waxy” or “mealy” – in order to increase the product value. But there was a knowledge gap between farmers and stores, making this impossible. The solution was a leader project where the farmers and stores throughout the county created a network via an association in order to raise the quality of potatoes.

“We wanted to unite in order to work in a concrete manner with the merchants”, explains Tore Holmefalk, project manager of the economic association Hallands Primörer.

In order to set up the large local network that would include farmers, packers and distributors and stores, they applied for money from the Rural Development Programme. Together, they took a wide range of sample tests from the potato fields; from planting to harvesting, and also analysed potato types in different soils. Representatives from seed companies eventually participated in member meetings.

“Each member from the association has received both advice on planting and a review of their cultivation. The crop has been

thoroughly inspected. During the time when the project was running, field study visits were conducted and tests were carried out with regard to the digging and boiling of the potato as well as cultivation advice to the farmers”, says Tore Holmefalk, an experienced potato farmer with many years under his belt.

The committed project manager is of the opinion that this has led to an increase of 20 per cent in the number of local farmers that are permitted to use the IP Sigill (Swedish Seal of Quality).

“The farmers have improved the quality of the harvests. The share of Class I potatoes has increased. This has contributed to a better rate of correct tuber size, and also made it possible to get the ideal boiling characteristics.

An expansion of the project during 2012 and 2013 will result in the improvement of the store personnel’s knowledge of potato handling. This has already meant that the participating stores have improved sales for their own potatoes.

“Thanks to the project, the network’s store representatives are now more committed to local potatoes”, concludes Tore Holmefalk.



Photo: Daniel Johansson



Photo: Daniel Johansson

The company FashionWork wanted to give young people the chance to experience working in textile and fashion companies in Borås through the leader project Modekollo (Fashion Camp). The teenagers were to see how the glamorous world of fashion actually works. The training is still ongoing, driven by the companies themselves.

Project name/name of company:
Modekollo (Fashion Camp)

Project owner(s): FashionWork AB

Contact: Sebastian Kjersén

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sebastian@fashionwork.nu
www.modekollo.se

Project period: January 2011-December 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 135,000



Young people go to fashion camp

For one week a year, young people have been able to take a step into the fashion industry. One day they would visit companies such as the clothes site nelly.com, the Gina Tricot chain or the home furnishings company Hemtex, the next they would learn about courses offered by the Swedish School of Textiles or follow a stylist in their daily work. The week also gave them the chance to work on their own sketches in workshops, learn how the image-processing programme Photoshop works or receive training in the development of a business idea.

“This was the chance to get inside an industry which otherwise is something of a closed shop. A chance for teenagers to see the real fashion business with buyers, designers, economists, manufacturers and photographers, to find out where they fit in”, says project manager Sebastian Kjersén, Creative Director and co-owner of FashionWork AB.

The project was born when Leader Sjuhärad contacted the company with the idea of conducting an annual “fashion camp”. Funds from the Rural Development Programme, municipalities and businesses meant that the training could be financed. Places in the pro-

ject have been coveted by the young people who applied and, out of these, a mixed group of 23 was selected. Consideration was paid to age, gender and where they lived. Sebastian Kjersén believes the results were good. “Some of the participants at Modekollo started their own business afterwards; others have been involved in photo shoots. Some have taken part in another project, Fashiondays. I think that the project has created faith in the future and opened some doors for the participants.”

The meeting of young and old, large companies, one-man firms and other operations has, in Sebastian Kjersén's opinion, had interesting synergy effects. There was a strong link to local textile heritage and when several of the parties got together in the spirit of good leadership, the work was a great success.

“The interest for a follow-up project was so strong that in June this year, the company held a national fashion camp under its own management. This is currently financed by the company and the teenagers involved, but we hope to be able to develop it further and form collaborations that can help with the financing.”



Project name/name of company:
Projekt Järnkraft (Project Ironpower)
Project owner(s): Järnboås bygdegårds-
förening
Contact: Kristina Dybeck
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+46(0)70 666 07 82, www.jarnboas.se,
www.jarnboas.com
Project period: January 2011-June 2012
**Funds from the Rural Development
Programme:** SEK 500,000

Revolutionary changes were brought about when businesses, associations and villagers developed Järnboåsbygden together. The leader project involved 150 local residents and led to 100 new residents and an extended range of services.

District marketing initiatives led to growth

Finshyttan, Gammelhyttan, Lindesby and ten other villages in the Bergslagen district have done exactly that which many other districts dream of. A major marketing campaign that promoted the whole of Järnboåsbygden through a website, participation in trade fairs, a mentor programme and activities to attract tourism resulted in around 100 people moving into the area.

“Yes, it's fantastic that we've managed to bring about a generation shift and to further develop the district. That was our goal. The greatest effect of all is that we have now enough residents who will go to the local schools, shop in the local stores, start new businesses and get involved with local clubs and associations,” says Kristina Dybeck, public relations officer and project manager for Projekt Järnkraft (Project Ironpower), which is actually two sub-projects that have received funding from the Rural Development Programme.

The district's singular nature, the many active clubs and associations, its growing spirit of enterprise and the little village school have been marketed through the project on the district's own web pages. In addition to the information initiatives, local associations have also taken part in trade fairs, including one in Utrecht, The Netherlands,

in order to attract families with children to move to the district. The efforts, over the course of a two year period, have led to the district now having 15 new families with children and ten young couples without children. Local residents helped the foreign families get settled in, including giving them advice on house purchases and providing extra activities for young children. Someone described it as though “it felt like we were welcomed in by a large family”. On top of this, the project has also had another positive effect; it has created a new limited company.

“It concerns the channelling of broadband and the starting of our own limited company, Järnboåsbygden AB, which opened a 'service point' in a store in Järnboås in August 2012. There are also plans to establish a petrol station in the village, a café and maybe to add postal, banking and pharmacy services to the service point.

Kristina Dybeck believes that the success of the project is due to exactly this type of motivation and strong communal commitment.

“We have had open dialogue the whole time. At the start we also had several district meetings with a total of 150 participants, so that we could establish and discuss how the village was to be developed.



Photo: Daniel Johansson

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

Farm-produced biogas became a reality for a farm in Horshaga, Västra Götaland that has been owned by the Lundmark family for ten generations. The new biogas plant supplies the whole farm with heat and electricity, which both benefits the environment and saves the farm SEK 150,000 per year.

Project name/name of company: Biogas Horshaga

Project owner(s): Horshaga Lantbruk AB

Contact: Stefan Lundmark

Contact details: horshaga.lantbruk@telia.com, 070-635 89 13, www.vedumsgras.com

Enterprise Support: March 2011

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 1,8 million



Farm biogas self-sufficient made the farm

Stefan Lundmark realised that with 4,800 pigs being bred for slaughter on the farm, there were plenty of opportunities to extract energy from the manure they produce. After making certain strategic installations in a newly-built biogas plant, he can now extract 650,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year from approximately 400,000 cbm of raw gas, i.e., all of the farm's energy consumption plus a little surplus of energy that is sold.

“Yes, investing in the conversion of pig manure into gas has produced great environmental benefits. We even use some of the leftovers from our grass production”, says Stefan Lundmark, owner of Horshaga Farm and the company Vedums gräs AB.

The company was grateful for the enterprise support that it received from the Rural Development Programme, which helped it in the construction of the plant. In addition to bank loans, the major costs of the new build were covered. Compared with the heat pumps and fuel from wood chips that were previously used, the farm has now become profitable.

“We save SEK 150,000 per year. At the moment the price of electricity is low, so right now biogas is not that much cheaper. But the en-

vironmental benefits are considerable”, says Stefan Lundmark, who still has to occasionally supplement biogas with a wood pellet boiler.

The gas plant also ensures that the pig manure does not smell as much, since a major reduction in odour occurs when the manure is processed into biogas. There are also other advantages. The utilisation of nitrogen in the manure is probably considerably better, since the dry matter content of the rotting remains is much lower and it therefore seeps further down into the ground.

“The fertiliser is better and I think that crops grow better and faster as a result”, says Stefan Lundmark.

He has noticed that some of his colleagues have their eye on his successful enterprise. Several farms are planning to merge, so they can invest in biogas.

“You can make money from it, but few realise that. At the moment it's a bit sluggish though, as the economic situation is a little uncertain. If there is to be a major construction boom in the industry, then the Government will have to set aside some money, maybe in the form of support for the reduction of methane.



Project name/name of company:
Kalmarsunds kustmiljö

Project owner(s): Föreningen
Kalmarsunds kustmiljö

Contact: Göran Fahlberg

Contact details: goran.fahlberg@netatonce.net

Project period: April 2008-September 2012

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: approx. SEK 2 million

The long coastline with its cliffs and tiny bays was in the process of becoming overgrown. For that reason, 16 associations joined together to improve the flow of water in the bays, control the eutrophication, remove reed clumps and clean the beaches.

The coast is clear, thanks to environmental project

In the countryside outside of Kalmar, local residents have seen the coastline slowly disappear, due to eutrophication.

An amalgamation of associations, known as Kalmar Norra Miljösektion (Kalmar North Environmental Section), wanted therefore to start an environmental project and invited boat clubs and outdoor and community associations to get involved. When funds from the Rural Development Programme were granted, the major clearance work could begin and machines could be purchased. There is now a lengthy list of the things achieved by the coast project in the last four years. Public funds were also made available.

“We have established eight wetland areas and phosphorus traps. We have also had two mussel farms out there, in order to reduce eutrophication. What's more, we have also improved our bathing areas and cleared away reeds and algae with everything from rakes and scythes to specially built reed-cutting and algae-removing machines”, says Göran Fahlberg, chairman of Föreningen Kalmarsunds kustmiljö (Kalmar Sound Coast Environment Association), which organised the project.

When asked how the project was able to involve so many different associations in the same objective, he replied:

“To start with, there was a great deal of information-based work. We called a number of meetings where everyone involved with the coast could have their say. There has been no clash of interests between the different associations. Local farmers provided land so that wetlands could be established and they had livestock graze there to prevent the reeds from growing back”, says Göran Fahlberg.

In addition to the natural improvements along the coastline, there have also been other positive effects from the project.

“I think we've created a certain environmental awareness. Many of our members have been involved in the 'water council' that has been set up and are now trying to remedy the discharges upstream”, says Göran Fahlberg, who also believes that the collaboration between environmental associations and the municipality has improved as a result of the project.

In his opinion, the work has been successful due to the money that formed the basis of the investments, and also the 10,000 hours that have been voluntarily devoted to the project.

“There must be real enthusiasts for a project like this; otherwise it just dies a death. It needs motivated people who can drive the environmental work forward”.

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Kalmarsunds kustmiljö



Photo: Conserving Agriculture – selected environment in Ammarnäs

The light returned to the Ammarnäs Mountains in Västerbotten County, with its lush hay meadows, open river deltas and restored grazing pastures. Younger farmers now have good conditions to start profitable conservation agriculture. The Naturvårdande jordbruk (Conserving Agriculture) project was the first step.

Project name/name of company:

Naturvårdande jordbruk – utvald miljö i Ammarnäs (Conserving Agriculture – selected environment in Ammarnäs)

Project owner(s): Sorsele kommun

Contact: Ingemar Johansson

Contact details: +46(0)952 14 30 3,
+46(0)70 21 77 403,

ingemar.johansson@sorsele.se

www.ammarnasfjallen.com, click on Naturbeten

Project period: April 2008- December 2012

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 4,927,000



Conservation opened up the mountain

“We have restored over 25 hectares of semi-natural pasture and hay meadows and also repaired ditches and replaced old culverts so that machine mowing can continue on land that is already farmed. Over 80 barns, many of which were in a pretty bad condition, have been put in order and, at the 'eleventh hour', saved for the future”, says Ingemar Johansson, project manager for the Naturvårdande jordbruk – utvald miljö i Ammarnäs (Conserving Agriculture - selected environment in Ammarnäs) project which is led by Sorsele Municipality.

“Since the land and ditches were cleared of brushwood, the timid lesser white-fronted geese now dare stay and feed before they move onto their breeding area in the vicinity of Ammarnäs”, he continues.

Over the years the nature area around Vindelälven had become a jungle of brushwood, bushes and large mountain birch that needed to be cleared away in order to create semi-natural pasture for cattle. The hay meadows in Ruoutetje were also becoming overgrown as there was nobody who mowed this land. Another example was the beautiful wild mountain meadow in Aitenjas that needed a road suitable for a tractor rather than the old path, so that machine mowing could be carried out. It was money from the Rural Development Programme, the county administrative board and the World Wide

Fund for nature that made it possible for the municipality to invest in machines for the 20 or so land owners who provided their land to conservation agriculture.

“The main benefits are not just the preservation of the environment”, the committed project manager explains.

They have also been appreciated by many others who are proud of their local nature.

“An open and well-maintained Ammarnäs delta means that visitors and tourists enjoy the countryside when they come here, not to mention how happy the villagers are. They had no great hopes that anyone would take over, after the older generation of farmers had retired”, says Ingemar Johansson.

Young farmers have actually now started part-time farming and conservation in the area, thanks to the purchase of machines and equipment.

“By combining it with other employment, hopefully they can live off farming through farming subsidies and the breeding of livestock. Besides, there are now also secure agreements between land owners and farmers.”



Project name/name of company:

Bokenäsets motorpark

Project owner(s): Zandra and Martin Dygd

Contact: Zandra and Martin Dygd

Contact details: bokenasetsmotorpark@dof.se,
tel. 0522-711 11, www.bokenasetsmotorpark.se

Project period: May 2010-March 2013

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 346,000

Up and down the dirt roads. At weekends, young men referred by Social Services can try out motocross at Bokenäset's motor park in Rotviksbro on the west coast. Young people with concentration difficulties get a chance to build up their self-confidence again.

Teenagers get to try motocross

Zandra and Martin Dygd had an extensive motocross track that attracted long-distance guests for conference days, hen parties, stag nights and weekend activities. Several years ago they realised that this could also be used as somewhere for young people with difficulties to come and let off steam, through a collaboration with the Majorna-Linné district administration in Göteborg. The couple applied for funding from the Rural Development Programme so that they could improve the meeting places and rooms that would be needed for the young people to be able to stay there overnight.

“Since last year we've been taking in guys aged 10-17 one weekend a month, through an agreement with Social Services. Young people with problems can come here and try motocross; it's an activity that encourages concentration, focus and self-control. They can also take boat trips, play floorball, go climbing or go-karting”, says Zandra Dygd, who also sees how they benefit from eating regular meals.

The winding motocross track lies in a sheltered bay; there are granite cliffs to stretch out on or beaches, should you want to take a dip. The motocross bikes are electrically-powered, quiet and have no

exhaust. According to Zandra Dygd, the young people feel better both mentally and physically for being out in the countryside, letting off steam and enjoying regular meals. She sees how her visitors, who sometimes feel that they do not fit in anywhere, finally get to feel good about themselves, that they feel content, that they are seen and acknowledged. Up until now, the motor park has received about 100 teenagers.

“In our surroundings, we always get a positive response that we are working with this youth activity and everybody thinks it's fantastic that it exists.”

Zandra Dygd feels that, for the district around Rotviksbro, the investment in teenagers has perhaps started to erase the them-and-us feelings that existed. She explains:

“There are many people who want to help out with different services or things that we might need in our activities. This creates empathy, gives a better understanding of others and you can see that you are making a difference.”

NOMINATED FOR YOUTH EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

NOMINATED FOR YOUTH EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Sörlin

A total of 35 teenagers are now in full or part-time employment as a result of the project Ung och företagsam (Young and enterprising) in Västra Sollefteå. This is part of the results produced by two employment agents who focused on providing individual support in several local village offices.

Project name/name of company:

Ung och företagsam i Västra Sollefteå
(Young and enterprising in Västra Sollefteå)

Project owner(s): Leader Sollefteå

Contact: Mari Runesson and Magnus Nilsson

Contact details: mari.ramsele@gmail.com,
magnus.junsele@gmail.com

Project period:

November 2010–November 2013

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: Approx. SEK 1.5 million



Local drop-in-offices lead to jobs for young people

“Some of the local teenagers do not go down to the Swedish Public Employment Service's office in Sollefteå, especially those who don't have much self-confidence”, says Mari Runesson, one of those in charge of the project, which is owned by Leader Sollefteå.

She knows that the seventy kilometres that separate the western outskirts of the area from the centre of the town are significant, and this is backed up by her colleague Magnus Nilsson who adds:

“It can be tough for young people to try to get help from the authorities in a small community. When you walk into the municipal office, everyone assumes that you're looking for social services.”

For this reason, Mari Runesson and Magnus Nilsson established local offices in Junsele and Ramsele which young people could approach for help in a variety of matters, everything from support in applying for various educational courses to filling in forms, writing job applications and looking for their own place to live. The project has led to 35 young people finding either full-time or part-time work within the forestry industry, in restaurants, tourism, healthcare or nursing. In addition to this, eleven have got 'new start jobs', thirteen are in educational schemes and six have got temporary summer jobs.

“We have acted as fellows, and have given the young people support that has been adapted to their specific individual needs”, explains Magnus Nilsson, who previously worked as a teacher.

Thanks to money from the Rural Development Programme they were able to fit out the two offices, pay for the rental costs, pay for two full-time members of staff and organise job events with, for example, the mining industry, in conjunction with Boliden. With the help of young people they were also able to develop a local website, by the name of resursbanken.se, where young people can describe their own skills and job requirements.

According to Mari Runesson, there is a successful formula behind this method.

“We are available almost all the time. You can quickly book a time or just drop-in; it doesn't take long to fix up a meeting. What's more, we have contact with local workplaces, employers in the district, the municipality and other institutions” says Mari Runesson, who also believes that local knowledge is very important.

“I hear young people say 'it's great that you remember my name.’”



Project name/name of company:

Ungdomar bygger landet (Teenagers build the country)

Project owner(s): Hovmantorps tennisklubb

Contact: Anders Karlsson

Contact details: anders@hovmantorp.nu

Project period: June 2009-May 2012

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 674,000

The local tennis club in Hovmantorp has invested in the future by starting a media course for young people so they can describe their local area through film, photos and on Facebook. Through the 'Ungdomar bygger landet' (Teenagers build the country) project, the town in Småland has changed its image from that of a sleepy town to a movie town, at least for young people.

Teenagers shape their future through film

Hovmantorp is located on the outskirts of Sweden's glass-making district. 145 jobs in the town were lost in 2005 when the Sandvik glass factory closed down. When this happened, young people started to leave the area. Jobs disappeared from the town and there was also a serious lack of leisure activities with which they could occupy themselves. The local tennis club and sailing club realised that local teenagers wanted to get involved with film, photography and television. This was something that they had tried during their temporary summer jobs, when they had filmed local juniors playing tennis and sailing.

“But together with the teenagers we wanted to be even better at media production and in 2009 we started a media-oriented youth project which featured integration and the influencing of public opinion via social media”, explains Anders Karlsson, who led the project that was supported by funds from the Rural Development Programme.

Twenty or so teenagers who were particularly enthusiastic were offered 50 hours of training with newly-purchased equipment, in the handling of video cameras, the use of a mixing board for four cameras and live TV broadcasting over the internet, all under teacher supervision.

“The idea was that they would improve their familiarity with media technology so that they could acquire cutting edge skills which would both be of benefit to them and strengthen the identity of the village.”

The result is films taken at market days, industry events and from the local culture school. Campaigns were also implemented on Facebook. Five of the project's participants, three teenagers and two leaders of the same age, currently work as freelance photographers, film makers and producers for web TV. Furthermore, the project has created 150 temporary summer jobs. Those involved have been paid by the municipalities of Lessebo and Växjö. The teenagers have worked on a variety of tasks for the tennis and sailing clubs, but also with film, photos, blogs and in the construction of web pages. Anders Karlsson feels that local life is all the richer for the project, which has made it “a bit cooler and a bit more fun” to live here.

“I am convinced that there are opportunities in rural communities.” Local associations have now become aware of the skills that are locally available, which has led to more film jobs. Hovmantorp's Film and Photography Club has taken over ownership of all of the media equipment and this will be used as the project intended.

NOMINATED FOR YOUTH EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson



Photo: Daniel Johansson

A match-making method, where the knowledge and interests of each foreign-born job-seeker is paired up with the right employer. In the Grön Plattform – Landsbygdsintroduktion project in Norrbotten County (Green Platform - Introduction to the Countryside), new jobs have been created with the help of 'links' between employers and job-seekers.

Project name/name of company:

Grön plattform – Landsbygdsintroduktion (Green Platform – Introduction to the Countryside)

Project owner(s): Hushållningssällskapet (Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies)

Contact: Camilla Häggström

Contact details: camilla.haggstrom@hushallningssallskapet.se, www.hs-nord.hush.se and select Utvecklingsprojekt and then Grön Plattform.

Project period: May 2010-December 2013

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,77 million.



Green internship led to jobs

“Three people have gained jobs in farming via internships and since then we have created three more job opportunities with a vegetable grower. We have also managed to bring about a much better collaboration with people at the county administrative board, in immigrant associations, at SFI (Swedish tuition for immigrants) and at the Swedish Public Employment Service, all of whom have provided insight into how jobs can be found for people”, says Camilla Häggström, Project Manager at Hushållningssällskapet (Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies) in Norrbotten County.

The project was based around a concept to help young, foreign-born and Swedish job-seekers who had not found a way into the labour market. One method was to find the right work experience opportunity with the right company for that individual, so that they could receive good introduction into working life. So far, about 15 foreign-born job-seekers have participated in internships.

“Many employers also understood how good a solution like this is for an under-populated rural district, especially within green industries such as agriculture and forestry. Companies get to import their workforce instead”. Camilla Häggström comments that she has heard farm owners say, “imagine if they enjoy the job and then they stay and take over the farm.”

Ten or so young Swedes and foreign-born job-seekers were also able to try practical work at agricultural colleges during short train-

ing sessions that included tractor driving, plant cultivation and sheep shearing. Study visits were also included in the project.

“Through small steps into working life, through these 'links', good results have been achieved”, comments the enthusiastic project manager.

She has also noticed that other industries want to adopt this method, since the transport, police and care sectors also require a workforce in sparsely-populated districts.

“There are many mining companies coming into the area at the moment. Police and drivers want to leave their jobs to work in the mines. For this reason, mobility in the labour market is required”, says Camilla Häggström.

The key to the project is that the Swedish Public Employment Service, the employers and the foreign-born job-seekers have functioned as a bridge that in several ways, has “shortened the distance”, primarily as a result of improved communication.

How does your project create real integration?

“We know that two of our foreign-born job-seekers are still at the employer where they carried out their internship, and we'll follow up what happens.” The project has also created a basis for a new educational project. Furthermore, rural companies and residents have now been given a more positive image of the foreign-born target group as a resource, she concludes.



Project name/name of company:
Innovation Landsbygd (Innovation
Countryside)

Project owner(s): Open Eye AB

Contact: Gunnar Backman and Tomas
Erlandsson

Contact details: gunnar@openeyegroup.com,
tomas@openeyegroup.com
www.innovationlandsbygd.wordpress.com

Project period: March 2011 - Jan 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development
Programme:** SEK 645,000

Okra and durra on the Uppland plains.

Adzuki beans and Asian leafy greens.

The exotic crops that were tested
on Swedish farms during the project

Innovation Landsbygd (Innovation
Countryside) were many in number.

The project's working model shows that
foreign competence can renew the market
for agriculture and food supply.

Immigrants sow new seeds in agriculture

Gunnar Backman and Tomas Erlandsson, the project managers who have previously worked with rural development, realised that foreign competence was not taken advantage of by the agricultural sector.

“There is a need for development, renewal, and ecology. In Sweden, we import 50 per cent of all our food, so we know that the conditions are there for an increase in production. Furthermore, we have to produce increasingly more food, and more proteins per acre”, Gunnar Backman states.

The project, which was supported by the Rural Development Programme, LRF, four municipalities in Uppsala County, and the Swedish Public Employment Service, began by letting seven agronomists from Ethiopia, Iran, Japan, Egypt, Palestine, India, and Peru, work in innovation teams to test the growth of crops on five different farms. Twenty new crops were cultivated, and the results were positive. Even though some crops were sensitive to the long, bright, northern days, others were incredibly hardy with regards to the rainy spring and autumn periods.

“We have, for example, cultivated Ethiopian grass, which provides both gluten-free flour and hay forage. We have also tested Asian leafy greens, which could be cultivated in the autumn. Moreover, we have also cultivated for example durra, buckwheat, lentils, and lupine,

which work surprisingly well”, says Tomas Erlandsson.

Early on in the project, the foreign agronomists made market studies of the food supplies and vegetables that are of interest to the Swedish market. Many of them were also sold to local grocery stores and merchants. Gradually, producers such as Saltå Kvarn, Risenta, and Kung Markatta showed an interest in buying domestic produce instead of importing.

“They will not have products that they can sell until next year”, Tomas Erlandsson tells us.

The project has led to a working model that others can follow. By letting immigrants with an agricultural background renew the Swedish farming industry, the food supply market can change, and new jobs can be created.

“One of the foreign workers got a job as a machine operator at Maskinringen, another one is the organiser of the new project Ulva Park. Many of them have moved on to new jobs and education”, Gunnar Backman testifies.

An additional effect is that Uppsala municipality and LRF have started a 3-year industry project, Ulva Park, with cultivation on 17 acres, which has even led to the selling of the vegetables in stores.

NOMINATED FOR INTEGRATION EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Projektet Innovation Landsbygd



Photo: Annika Thorvaldsson

Results from the national project **Mångkulturell företagsutveckling** (Multi-cultural business development) show that 9 of 21 people with foreign backgrounds who underwent entrepreneur and vocational education had already found employment when they completed the course. The model is now to be adopted across the country.

Project name/name of company:

Mångkulturell företagsutveckling (Multi-cultural business development)

Project owner(s): LRF

Contact: Jenny Svensson

Contact details: jenny.sh.svensson@gmail.com, www.lrf.se and go in via Medlem, then Företagande, then Driva företag and select Projekt Grön Mångfald (Project Green Diversity)

Project period: November 2007- December 2011

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 2,930,000



Immigrants in **green** employment after **education**

The project is co-funded by the Federation of Swedish Farmers who wanted to invest in tailor-made education at upper secondary level for people with a foreign background who intended to establish themselves within, for example, agriculture, horticulture or the food processing industry, either through starting their own business or through employment in these areas. The starting signal for the project was a two-year course called *Grön framtid* (Green future) that took place at Marieborgs folkhögskola (folk high-school) outside of Norrköping and at Naturbruksgymnasierna (agricultural colleges) in Östergötland. Just over half of the participants had jobs after they completed *Grön framtid*.

“Of the 21 who took the course and undertook work experience, 9 found work straight away. Several others were about to be employed or were going to start their own business. One of the participants had a trial period of employment on a dairy farm, whilst another got a job at a garden centre. One of those who took the course has started up a butcher's shop, together with a brother”, says Jenny Svensson, project manager.

The educational model has been considered to be so successful that

it has now been adopted at other locations across the country. According to Jenny Svensson, the secret of the method's success is that it incorporates training within agriculture and horticulture, offers the chance of work experience on farms and has a focus on networking.

“Other success factors have been that the participants received support in developing their Swedish and that they were carefully matched throughout the process either to the labour market or to starting their own business, depending on their ambitions”, she says.

The project, which was financed by the Rural Development Programme and the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF), was based on a national preliminary study conducted by LRF in consultation with the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Swedish Board of Agriculture in 2005-2006. A market analysis showed then that there were many business opportunities associated with the production of completely new food items and the cultivation of new crops.

“Within the framework of the project, a study was also conducted that looked at the raw ingredients and products that are imported into Sweden and those that could be produced here”, concludes Jenny Svensson.

Experiences and knowledge from the initiatives



Define clear aims and goals for your initiative. The clearer the specific goals and activities are the easier it is to manage the project towards the fulfillment of the aims.

Find a project leader which is enthusiastic and engaged in the project and who can talk with both the locals and the authorities.

Try to find a win-win-situation in cooperation so all the participants can benefit. Cooperation with new partner groups like youth, academy, municipality and businesses can give thrilling results.

Think in long terms how the project will be sustained after the project time. Think in advance about how the activities can be financed and developed to be able to continue.

Take care of the competence, network and ideas within the Leader LAG so you together can create a good project.

Anchor your project so all involved are able to have a say and an influence.

Have patience in the local participation and engagement. It is vital to take care of and use the existing local competence and it's also important to actively seek the local individuals that are not the first to step up in front but who have many good ideas.

Put an effort into information and transparency. Give early information to everyone about what is happening with your initiative so all have access to the information.

The web page is important. "If you are not visible, you do not exist." Through your web page you can reach many more than you can even think of and furthermore it is a marketing channel for your work.

The driving forces, people burning for the case of the project, are always needed to run a project. Otherwise the risk is obvious for everything to simply die out.

It is often good to get in touch with consultants with knowledge of the whole branch you are working with. It has been very successful in contacts with restaurants.

Always keep an eye on the project economy.

See youth as an asset offering possibilities instead of limitations.

Learn from the experiences of others before you start a project. Read through result reports from former projects, draw conclusions and try to understand what is applicable in your community.

Put limits for the range and time span of the project, but think also about how to create value, inspiration and engagement among the participants and inhabitants.

Use your Leader office for support and help – and "Go in hard for your project".

Investigate many different options when it comes to construct new buildings on a farm. Realize that there always might be alternative solutions for new buildings and their functions.

Do not invest in machinery that you do not have full cost coverage for on a farm.

Make sure your company is profitable. All parts and activities in the company should generate money contributing to the profit.

Dare to think in innovative ways, think new and go your own way forward.

In this brochure we present the rural initiatives that have been nominated for the 2012 Rural Gala.

You can watch and download movies about the nominees at www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/landsbygdsgalan2012



**THE SWEDISH
RURAL NETWORK**