

Country Report Sweden



The present fiche aims to present, in summary, how youth-related projects and initiatives are supported by the Rural Development Programmes in a number of countries selected for the second phase of the research in the framework of the Youth and Young farmers Thematic Initiative.

1. Actors involved in youth related projects and main sources of financing

In Sweden, a multitude of actors are involved in projects that promote rural youth. Out of the governmental actors, the most important ones are the Ministry for Rural Affairs, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen). Civil society is also active in rural youth-related projects. The LAGs are especially active in engaging youth locally in the countryside. The young farmers' association, the Federation of Swedish Farmers – Young LRF (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund Ungdom, LRF) –, the youth association Vi Unga, the association for all agricultural colleges (Naturbruksskolornas förening), and the LAG youth coaches' network U Land are also involved in rural youth projects.

The main sources of financing rural youth-related projects are the EAFRD, ESF, ERDF, Youth in Action, government funds and private financing (e.g. the Swedish Institute, Sparbanksfonden and the Swedish Inheritance Fund Commission).

2. How RDP promotes youth initiatives/projects in rural areas

Youth is one of the six priorities of the Swedish RDP. Hence, youth is horizontally considered throughout the implementation of the programme.

The Swedish RDP addresses specifically youth in its communication strategy. Young people are listed as a particularly important group to reach and to consider in every information campaign that relates to the RDP.

a. Consultation process for the preparation of 2007/2013 RDPs

The preparation of the Swedish 2007-2013 RDP started in autumn 2004. The initial process included political discussions, analysis and debate over the future challenges for the Swedish countryside as well as preparation of technical dossiers on RDP measures and issues. During 2005 and 2006, the Ministry of Agriculture held regional meetings to discuss the future RDP as well as bilateral meetings with social partners.

Out of the youth organisations, only the Swedish 4H Club was involved in the RDP negotiations. The 4H Club participated through the Hela Sverige Ska Leva association, which gathers Swedish local development groups and some 40 other organisations interested in rural development.

However, the U Land network of the LAG youth coaches was active in promoting youth issues throughout the RDP preparation and consultation process. The network lobbied successfully for making youth a horizontal priority for the 2007-2013 Swedish RDP. The U Land was set up in 2006 as a network of youth coaches working with LEADER. It is a meeting place for exchanging experiences and developing competencies. The network organises meetings



for and together with rural youth across the country. The aim is also to strengthen further the position of youth in rural development.

b. How the RDP targets young people

Youth is one of the six priorities of the Swedish RDP. As such, youth is included in the selection criteria for all measures.

Youth are also mentioned as target groups of several RDP measures. Measure 112 'Support for Young Farmers' is aimed at people under 40 years of age. Under measure 311 'Diversification into non-agricultural activities' young people are mentioned as a target group for the measure in the Sami areas in the northwestern parts of Sweden. Measure 312 'Creation and development of micro-enterprises' supports actions that enable young people to start their own businesses. Young people are also mentioned in the description of measure 321 'Basic services for the economy and rural population'. Namely, investments improving infrastructure are needed because limited access to cultural and recreational activities in rural areas contribute to out-migration of young people. Under axis 4, some measures (M411, M412, and M413) prioritize activities with importance to young people.



c. Role of the LAGs

The LAGs play a vital role in involving youth in rural development. Young people are taken into account in the LAG strategies, and the LAGs finance projects both for youth and by youth. Some LAGs have also established a youth LAG (U-LAG). The youth LAG consists of young people, and it is typically consulted in all youth-related issues of the LAG. In 2013, altogether 70 young people were engaged in youth LAGs.

Lärande Sommarjobb ('learning summer job')

LAG Leader Linné, Sweden

Sub-project of Lärande Bygd, for which total funding €93,000

The project aimed at engaging young people in the development of the local area so that future out-migration could be reduced. The project consisted of a two-week work placement with active learning modules for ten local young people. During the active learning modules, the young people acquired leadership and public speaking skills and brainstormed on the following topic "what is missing from the municipality".

The LAG was the project initiator and coordinator. The Växjö municipality and five other local associations participated in this project. The municipality paid the salaries of the summer workers, and the associations organised and delegated the tasks (e.g. painting, gardening and working in the local dance hall).

49 out of the 63 Swedish LAGs operate umbrella projects for youth. It means that the LAGs run one large project, which funds small sub-projects that are initiated and managed by youth. Most LAGs have hired youth coaches, either full-time or part-time, to engage youth and to work as project managers for umbrella projects for youth.

The youth coaches are instrumental in the success of the sub-projects. They make the umbrella schemes known amongst young people and youth workers. They are also available to discuss the project ideas and help the appli-

cants with the completion of the application forms. During the project, the youth coaches also teach young beneficiaries how to promote their projects (e.g. how to write press releases and make contacts with the media).

Skånes Ponnyagility ('Skåne pony agility')

EAFRD funding €2,300

Sub-project of La Source, an umbrella project for youth
(Leader Ystad-Österlenregionen, Sweden)

The project, managed entirely by a group of four young girls, aimed at building an agility track for ponies that are too small to be ridden on and organising pony agility competitions. In pony agility competition, the horses go through the agility obstacles with the help of a handler.

The project was initiated and managed by young people and involved the local rural youth. Furthermore, the project has helped to increase interest in pony agility regionally and nationally, through the organisation of competitions and pony agility demonstrations in local events.

Skånes Ponnyagility won the prize for best youth project in Sweden 2013.

The youth coaches also follow the progress of the project and give advice on the project closures. The LAG youth coaches have formed a network, U Land, which supports the work of the youth coaches as it is a forum for exchanging experiences and developing competencies. The network organises meetings for and together with rural youth across the country and helps to promote rural youth issues at national level and in other arenas as well.

For instance, for the preparation of the 2014-2020 programming period, U Land developed a toolkit for engaging young people in writing local development strategies. The toolkit is part of the guidance material that the Swedish Board of Agriculture provided to all LEADER groups and county administrations.

3. Role of the NRN in supporting youth

The Swedish NRN has mainly taken a funding, facilitating and network-supporting role in youth issues.

In the previous programming period, the NRN funded a study of youth in the Swedish RDP. The results of the study led to the establishment of an NRN thematic working group on youth in this programming period. The participants of the working group represent the LAG youth coaches' network U Land, the county administrative board, the Swedish 4H Club, the youth association Vi Unga, the young farmers' association LRF Unga, the Association of Agricultural Colleges and the Swedish Board of Agriculture.



The NRN supported the establishment of a concept (developed by Vi Unga and U Land) for organising youth workshops called Ungagemang (youth engagement, web site <http://www.ungagemang.se/#home>). The idea is to organise meetings/workshops where young people are given tools and inspiration to develop their ideas into projects that add value to rural areas. The workshops aim at creating a good atmosphere within a (regional) group of youth so that they can both inspire each other as well as network. The workshops contain lectures (e.g. sources of finance for projects), hands-on activities, small group work as well as entertainment.

The NRN also funded the writing of guidelines for engaging youth in the RDP strategy making process, both at local and national levels. The guidelines were written by the U Land.

The Swedish NRN organises an annual Swedish Rural Gala, where nominated rural development projects, in seven categories, receive awards for their ideas, developments and accomplishments. Youth is one of the categories.

Finally, the Swedish NRN is involved, as coordinator, in the EUSBSR flagship project on youth (<http://ruralflagship.eu/>), in cooperation with the Finnish, Swedish, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian NRNs and the Russian Ministry of Agriculture. The flagship project focuses on youth involvement in local development and support for innovation in rural areas.

4. Role of youth and young farmers' organisations in supporting youth

The main youth organisation (Vi Unga) and the young farmers' organisation LRF Unga participate in the NRN Thematic Working Group for youth.

The young farmers' organisation LRF Unga participates in and initiates different kinds of projects, typically aimed at young farmers but sometimes also targeting rural youth. The funding sources of the projects vary. There are some examples of the young farmers' organisation gaining LEADER funding for local projects, such as Ung och Grön i Sydöst (young and green in South-East) and Aktiva Unga i Värmland (active youth in Värmland).

Youth organisation Vi Unga mainly initiates projects for youth in general and it is especially active in building youth capacity in participation and civil society. There is one civil society education project for young people, Alma Akademin, in which the Vi Unga cooperates with the Swedish Farmers' Union LRF.

The Swedish 4H Club participates in and initiates youth-related projects locally, typically through LEADER support like in the Nya Former av 4H-Företag (new forms of 4H companies) financed by LAG LEADER Linné.



5. Preparing the 2014-2020 RDP

Some youth organisations (the Association of Swedish Agricultural Colleges, Vi Unga, LRF Youth, U Land network) participated in the consultations for the future RDP through the NRN technical working group on youth. The technical working group contributed to the technical paper by the Swedish Board of Agriculture. Furthermore, some youth organisations contributed to the RDP proposal by submitting a written comments and opinions. Altogether, 239 submissions were received, including one each from U-Land, Vi Unga, Young Entrepreneurs' Association, Hela Sverige Ska Leva and LRF Ungdomen, the youth branch of the farmer's association. At the time of this research, the negotiation process had not fully started.

Information included in this fiche is primarily coming from the analysis carried out within the ENRD Initiative on "Youth and young farmers in rural areas". The fiche is compiled by the ENRD Contact Point on the basis of information collected in the EU Member States and Regions. The content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EU institutions, national or regional authorities.