

Kainuu, Finland

In Finland each of the six pilots of service delivery took into consideration the local characteristics in terms of needs and resources and their results are incorporated in future local activity. Furthermore, innovative mobile services have been provided by co-operation of different practitioners active in different projects or programmes. The social networks including representatives of public services and village workers, programme and project leaders made possible the transfer of ideas expertise and knowledge, allowing joint learning processes. Researchers have been playing a mediating role, stimulating the innovative solutions findings in a triple helix partnership in Finland.

The Finnish Vuolajoki village shops electronic points' project has equipped two village shops to become multi service points in the manner of the Swedish shops. Computers equipped with internet connections and webcams have been sited in the shops and access is free of charge. This allows various other services to be accessed e.g. bank services, with Osuuspankki Bank providing training for its customers. The presence of the computer in the shops has contributed to the villagers being able to access internet services and has also attracted holiday makers with no immediate access to the internet to utilise services and provisions provided by the local shops and village halls.



Transnationality

Transnational co-operation was enhanced through the ability of the project to offer the participants the benefit of visits to partner's areas. The programme design was such that there were nine International Steering Group

meetings, three in Scotland and Sweden, two in Finland and one in Iceland. These business meetings also had a study group element and this provided all the partners with an opportunity to visit other countries. The BOTTOM RULES, a 'supportive project'

Dissemination and Transfer of Experiences

The DESERVE project has brought together national, regional and local politicians and civil servants as well as researchers, voluntary sector employees, community activists and small business entrepreneurs. Formal methods of transferring knowledge were: providing partner countries with descriptions of how services were delivered within different partner areas, study trips, workshops, and published papers. In addition, as groups met together, there was a less formal networking. Within this, there was 'a learning together' by the participants which resulted in variations of new ideas being implemented within the partner countries. The project has published a number of leaflets and publications, including a calendar which provides a pictorial record of projects and study tours as well as a briefing on the project. These may either be viewed online at

the website, or copies obtained from the project co-ordinator, Barbara Love, at Barbara.love@scvo.org.uk. These have been widely distributed at a range of events by partners and distributed in mailings to individuals, agencies and government departments with an interest in service delivery and rural development. The NPP DESERVE website (www.nppdeserve.info) includes a full range of briefing material and other information on the project. The NPP DESERVE success is reflected in a number of inquiries from different countries, including an invitation to address a conference in Spain, which was taken up by Erica Lundstrom the Swedish lead co-ordinator; and the Regional Responses to Demographic Challenges attended by Andra Aldea-Partanen the Finnish lead co-ordinator.

Conclusions

Each of the participating partners has achieved very positive outcomes from their involvement in the project and can demonstrate a service outcome which will benefit members of the community. However, delivering services by using the transfer of best practices or models tested by others has to be done in a flexible manner, combining processes contributing to the creation of socially innovative networks activated by joint learning (e.g. study trips, seminars, workshops). Improved accessibility was achieved in a number of very

diverse activities. Final reports for the DESERVE project will be made available to regional and national politicians, with recommendations that the partners would wish to see incorporated into rural regional policy within the participating nations.

Further information can be obtained from Barbara Love, NPP International Co-ordinator, on ++ 44 (0) 1463 251725 or email Barbara.love@scvo.org.uk. The NPP DESERVE project website www.nppdeserve.info also gives links to partners' web pages.

Further information can be obtained from the national co-ordinators:
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The DESERVE project seeks to establish the transferability of models of service delivery to remote and rural areas among the participating partner regions within the Northern Periphery INTERREG IIIB area. Given a budget of 2.261 million Euros (approximately £1.58m), it began in 2004 and completes its activities in June 2007. With partners in Scotland, Sweden, Iceland and Finland, each region implemented a project in its native area utilising a model, or elements of various models, previously tested by partners in their own territories. The emphasis is on models of service delivery to remote and rural areas rather than on the specific services provided in these areas. The rationale for this is that sectors may be able to learn lessons from one another. Partners are also keen to establish the extent to which models must be adapted to suit local contexts. The Icelandic project is not funded through NPP but is part of a new Icelandic government policy in rural and regional development. It has partners from the Voluntary Sector, Local Authorities and Administrative Bodies, Educational establishments and Government Departments; within the EC, the Northern Periphery Programme funds the project at a level of 75% and the Icelandic partner receives funding at a level of 25%.



Whale watching trip from Húsavík, Iceland



Project information and Objectives

The main objectives of the project are:

- ◆ to improve the viability of service provision
- ◆ to test the transferability of models of rural service delivery among partners by implementing models, ideas and practices employed in other partner regions
- ◆ to establish the extent to which these models must be adapted to suit regional contexts; that is, how flexible they are and what barriers to success exist
- ◆ to improve the delivery of services to remote and rural areas within the Northern Periphery region
- ◆ to improve accessibility of services within the Northern Periphery region by mainstreaming the new approaches across the whole transnational partnership area

Project activities are designed to:

- ◆ develop a better understanding of the economic and social circumstances that may impact on rural service delivery in sparsely populated areas
- ◆ benefit from transnational co-operation through the exchange of ideas and practices across the Northern Periphery region
- ◆ utilise joint working to address common problems

- ◆ transfer knowledge and information across regional boundaries
- ◆ improve the level and quality of rural service delivery
- ◆ implement innovative approaches to common problems, as a step towards finding new and improved ways of delivering rural services, bearing in mind that what is already a solution in one region may be an innovation in another
- ◆ establish more integrated ways of working by moving away from the present sectoral approaches found in most partner regions, towards a more co-ordinated and co-operative approach that should be more effective and efficient
- ◆ develop a long-lasting transnational co-operation, thus promoting continued learning and joint working towards the resolution of common problems in rural service delivery

The partners in the project are:

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Scotland • Argyll & Bute Council, Scotland • Scottish Executive Environment & Rural Affairs Department, Scotland • County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, Sweden • The Icelandic Regional Institute, Iceland • Lönnrot Institute; University of Oulu, Finland • Pro Agria Kainuu, Finland • Karelian Institute, University of Joensuu, Finland • Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland • Joint Authority of Kainuu Region, Finland.

Project implementation

The Scottish project, located in the Cowal area of Argyll, was originally intended to test the model of an organised community transport programme that takes services to individuals as well as taking individuals to services. However, this was redefined as to 'improve access to services for vulnerable people living within the rural areas of the Cowal peninsula'. Working closely with the Supporting Services team within the Argyll and Bute Council, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, who are the lead partner for the whole project, have subcontracted the delivery of the service to the local Argyll Council for Voluntary Services. The project directly employs 5 staff based in Dunoon and has delivered services to over 320 users. The total number of services accessed is over 70, including those such as bank, chiropodist, doctor, lunch club and educational facilities, as well as more traditional shopping requirements. At the conclusion of the NPP DESERVE project these activities will be mainstreamed. A social enterprise company (Interloch Ltd) has been incorporated and it has obtained sufficient funding to provide, in the period 2007 – 2010, an enhanced service with larger vehicles and will cover a greater area of the Argyll peninsula.

Cowal DESERVE is also seeking to transfer a Swedish model called a multi-service shop, however it has become apparent that because of the different legislation regarding sales of alcohol and other core goods and the level of national funding towards rural shops in Sweden it would not be possible to replicate the Swedish model in the Cowal area. A shopping scoping study has been undertaken and actions, which will use some of the Swedish model and also the methods used in the Finnish Mini projects, are being implemented in the last year of the project.

SCVO has also organised a number of International Study Group meetings which have ensured that members of the DESERVE project have had the opportunity to visit all the partner countries to observe how services are delivered at local level.

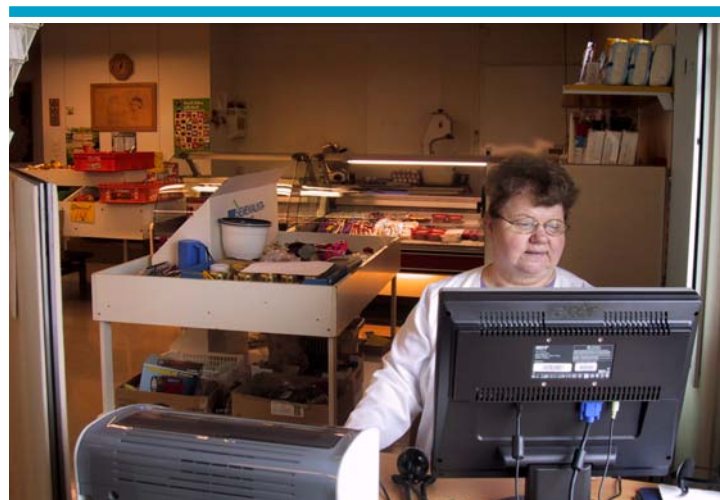
The Finnish project, managed by the Research Unit of Lönnrot Institute from the University of Oulu, assisted by staff from the Karelian Institute from the University of Joensuu and Pro Agria Kainuu, focuses on :-

Local experiments of rural services – there have been six pilot mini projects in the Kainuu region. These include: the Hiisi care activity (village shops electronic business service points in the Vuolijoki municipality), Active Senior meetings (new mobile technology testing of the Sonoco Care Phone), Heinis (using broadband networks in their village halls) and the Nakertaja network service (digital studio work in village hall locations). In addition, ProAgria Kainuu has produced a Register of Kainuu women to aid the location of goods and services offered by women entrepreneurs living within the region.

Improving local strategies for better rural services and transfer of models knowledge and experience – At the programme level, DESERVE Finland has been involved in preparing regional and local development strategies so that various development agencies have been able to explicitly mention the strategic importance of services in programme documents. Examples of this include work conducted with local planning groups, e.g. North Karelia's Rural Programme for 2007 – 2013. The Finnish DESERVE project has delivered models and experiences from different countries and has organised a series of networking events consisting of study trips to Sweden and Scotland supported by feedback questionnaires and workshops.

The Swedish project is managed by the County Administration of Västerbotten, which works closely with the County Administration of Norrbotten and a number of other Swedish organisations including the Swedish National Consumers Agency. The participating counties in the Swedish DESERVE project, Västerbotten and Norrbotten, are in northern Sweden and together they cover approximately one third of the Swedish landmass and have a population of some 550,000. Over half of the population live in the four principal towns, with the remaining people scattered throughout the region. The project activities commenced with a small team from the county administration meeting with politicians as well as with representatives from the 29 municipalities and the local areas, to explain the DESERVE project's aims and objectives. The Swedish project's main objective is to promote cooperation between public, private and non-profit associations according to service matters in rural and remote areas. The villages that are trying to implement these kinds of businesses have been particularly influenced by visits to Scottish village halls. The Swedish project has enabled strengthened links, not only between the two Swedish regions of Västerbotten and Norrbotten, but also between the four participating municipalities in Västerbotten (Skellefteå, Storuman, Sorsele and Lycksele) and those in Norrbotten (Kalix, Boden, Luleå and Gällivare). Representatives from the participating municipalities have made a number of study trips to partner countries and have also been involved in seminars in Sweden at which all of the municipalities in the regions have been represented. This has led to the improved cooperation and the sharing of good practice between regional and local politicians as well as between business and community groups.

The Icelandic input, led by the Icelandic Regional Institute, to the NPP DESERVE project, is to report implementation of the SMART COMMUNITIES RURAL INITIATIVE. The aim is to transfer knowledge, both within Iceland and to transnational partners outside, of the progress of the SMART COMMUNITIES programme, as well as to inform the Icelandic partners of the progress of the NPP DESERVE project. The overall aim of the SMART programme is to establish and demonstrate the usefulness of ITC in improving access to rural services. Iceland has hosted visits from the DESERVE partners and an Icelandic representative attends all International Steering Group meetings and study visits. The Smart Communities project in Iceland was financed outwith the NPP project and is currently nearing completion.



In Aho village shop, Finland, a pleased shopkeeper uses the new computer with broadband connection



The DESERVE study group outside a local shop in Niemisel, Sweden.

Project Results

Over the duration of the project there have been a number of studies, reports, and published articles relating to its progress. These include articles in Inforegio (Regions for Economic Change January 2007) and other academic papers. Copies of these papers can be obtained from the NPP DESERVE website – www.nppdeserve.info — and also from a linked Finnish website, where information is available in English and Finnish. The project has successfully achieved its objectives. At the conclusion of the European funding, the services that were developed and delivered throughout the project will continue to be available to the population in the rural areas. In Scotland a social enterprise company has

municipalities and county administration officials has now become embedded as a method of co-operation in the delivery of rural services.

The numbers reported are as at 31 December 2006. The nature of the project is such that the number of individuals reported for Sweden is the contact individuals in the municipalities, politicians and the local groups involved in meetings. In addition to these, also included from Scotland is the number of people in receipt of transport services and in Finland the numbers of individuals accessing the IT help facilities. It is not possible to quantify the numbers of individuals who have benefited indirectly by the project.

Number of participants in project activities in 2004-2006, by gender and age

	Male	Female	Total
Over 25 years	1145	1115	2260
25 years and under	154	3	157
Total	1299	1118	2417

been formed which will provide an enhanced community transport service; in Finland the IT facilities introduced into the village shops and community village halls will continue to be available; and in Sweden the enhanced networks and co-operation between

Case Studies

In the Swedish DESERVE project, activities have focused on a range of networks; with representatives from different sectors working on local actions to provide innovative services on a long-term basis to local communities. The transnational experience has

delivered advice which has been adjusted to work within the local conditions, so that activities have been amended where necessary to be appropriate to the local needs. Many of the activities within DESERVE do not rely on large amounts of financing, so the methods used in the project will continue to be implemented when the DESERVE project finishes. A number of the groups have indicated that they wish to continue to participate in a similar type of transfer of experiences which would continue to deliver 'DESERVE' style activities once the formal project is completed. The external evaluation of the Swedish national activities shows how the municipalities believe that, as a result of transferring knowledge gained from participating in the DESERVE project, they now deal with service matters in a better way.

but which, because they had no access to transport services, they previously could not use. The community transport service has been utilised by over 320 individuals and to date approximately 10,000 different services have been accessed by the clients. Networking happens in a co-ordinated manner so that individuals who might otherwise have had to be either hospitalized or moved into care homes have been able to remain in their own homes. The pilot NPP transport project has been successfully mainstreamed and from 1st July 2007 a social enterprise company, Interloch Ltd has been established, to whom the existing Cowal DESERVE staff will transfer. The small shops project had originally planned to pay an amount to shopkeepers to deliver shopping to individual households within the Cowal area (transferring the Swedish



DESERVE staff from Scotland show study group members their specially adapted vehicle

Cowal, Scotland

The Scottish project has enabled individuals who were previously very housebound the opportunity to access services throughout the Cowal area. The project, through its ability to provide transport services, also enabled disadvantaged individuals within the area to access a number of services which public authorities, e.g. council and health boards, had been providing in the Cowal area,

model). However, it became apparent that because of the distances to shops and the provision of transport available through the Cowal DESERVE project, it would be possible instead to transport individuals to the shops using project transport resources. Rural shops or village halls in the Cowal area are now being offered the same mini pilot project facilities being successfully run by the Finnish partners.