

Transnationality

Exchange trips have been available throughout the duration of the NPP DESERVE project. For example, at an early stage of the project, study visits to Scotland and Iceland were arranged, so that the participating municipalities would get new perspectives on alternative co-operation methods. Scotland has been the foremost place to inspire co-operation of commercial, private and public activity in sparsely-populated areas. The Scottish study visits were prepared in close collaboration with a consultant in Scotland, who custom-made the study visits on the basis of the local interest. The participants in these study visits were representatives from the municipalities, including officials, politicians and representatives from active villages. These study visits have generated communication not just internationally but also locally between participating municipalities. Two examples of contacts that the villages have had are: the forms of old people's homes and the Scottish Co-Op. The trips focused on village halls, rural shops and the delivery of services through IT, with each of the trips resulting in the transfer of some element of new methods of delivering services in the participating municipalities. In addition,

there were a number of study trips to Sweden, which provided the opportunity for those involved in the DESERVE project to meet and exchange ideas with people who, although from a different country, shared similar interests and challenges. Thus, a further motivation to participate in the DESERVE project was provided by the fact that fresh insights could be gained from the transnational exchanges. The inspiration that can be delivered by such transnational exchanges is hard to measure, nevertheless the great opportunities to see how services can be provided in ways other than were normally used in Sweden has resulted in new methods of delivery of services in municipalities in northern Sweden. The ideas often could not be transferred exactly as they operated in partner countries, although this may have been owing to the differing political contexts or the diverse local conditions; yet elements of other partners' working arrangements were 'customised' and transferred to local Swedish activities. The municipalities found the benefits of transnational working to be of such a high value that they are seeking to form a grouping which will allow this transnational exchange of ideas to continue after the completion of the NPP DESERVE project.

Dissemination and Transfer of Experiences

In addition to the information available on the NPP DESERVE project website and other publications, dissemination within Sweden has been carried out by the national project co-ordinator. This has included regular reports and meetings with the municipal

executive board and also open meetings regarding the progress of the project within the participating villages. The transfer of ideas initiated through the DESERVE project has also been presented at conferences and seminars in the Northern Periphery Programme area and at an international event held in Spain in 2006.

Conclusions

The national activities in the Swedish DESERVE project have focused on diverse networks, with representatives from various sectors working on local actions to provide services in a wider perspective on a long-term basis to local communities. The experience has delivered advice which has been adjusted to fit the work to local conditions and to amend activities where necessary to be appropriate to the local needs. Many of the activities within DESERVE in Sweden 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. Financing throughout the project has come from the Northern Periphery Programme and from the County Administration Boards of Västerbotten and Norrbotten, the County Council of

Västerbotten, the Association of Local Authorities in Västerbotten, Local Mobilisation in the Swedish Countryside and the Swedish Consumers Agency, as well as from funds used by the local municipalities and the various groups and individuals who have been involved in the DESERVE project activities. These groups wish to continue to participate in a similar type of transfer of experiences and all 29 of the local municipalities have indicated that they would wish to participate in a project which would continue to deliver 'DERVE' style activities once the formal project is completed. The evaluation of the Swedish national activities shows that the municipalities believe that they now deal with service matters in a better way as a result of transferring knowledge gained from participating in the DESERVE project.

Further information can be obtained from the national co-ordinator:
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NPP Deserve The Project



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Sweden

The project has sought to establish the transferability of models of service delivery within the two most northerly Swedish counties. It has examined the Scottish way of running village halls and service points, as well as the Icelandic use of the internet for communication and service delivery. The Swedish project aims to co-ordinate the delivery of services by public, private and voluntary organisations within the constraints of their local conditions and has a budget of 423,600 Euros (approximately £292,000). Eight municipalities, from a total of 29, in Västerbotten and Norrbotten have actively participated in the NPP DESERVE project. These are:

- Skellefteå, Lycksele, Storuman and Sorsele
- Boden, Luleå, Kalix and Gällivare.

The County Administration Board in Västerbotten acted as the national co-ordinator for the activities in the project and has managed the administration for both of the administrative province counties and the ongoing activities in the participating municipalities in Västerbotten's administrative province county. There have been a number of administrative province county meetings which have disseminated information on the project activities. In conjunction with the administrative province county meetings, there have been talks from external lecturers, with all the municipalities in both Västerbotten and Norrbotten having the opportunity to attend these events.

Project information and Objectives

The target for the activities was to co-ordinate public, private and non-profit organisations to provide sustainable services in rural and remote areas on a long-term basis. The initial activities were focused on advising local people, politicians and civil servants on the ideas contained within the DESERVE project and the two regions have focused on different local services within their area. There have also been opportunities to participate in transnational exchange, for example through study trips to Scotland and Iceland, by hosting study trips from these areas, as well as through extending contacts with organisations outwith Sweden.

The counties of Västerbotten and Norrbotten cover one third of the Swedish landmass and have a population of approximately 550,000. Most of the inhabitants live along the coast of the Baltic Sea; over half are in the four principal cities, while by contrast, there is a huge rural land area in which there are a number of villages with only a small population. The

municipalities in the northern part of Sweden, as in many parts of Europe, have difficulties in providing an acceptable level of services, a situation made more critical in rural areas where the people tend to be more elderly. There were two partnerships operating in Sweden. The first one comprised representatives from the eight participating municipalities who met regularly throughout the project. At the start of the project the meetings were more frequent and were mostly face-to-face and spread throughout the participating municipalities. Once contact had been established, and groups working on the project were familiar with each other's roles within the community, there were fewer meetings in person and in the last year of the project most of the information was communicated through telephone meetings and e-mails. The second partnership connected to the DESERVE project activities in Sweden was that of the various co-financiers. There were a number of meetings at the beginning of the project between the national co-ordinator and the co-financiers, and co-financiers' representatives were able to



attend many NPP DESERVE project events. The national project co-ordinator has also given regular reports and summary activity information to the co-financiers' organisations.

In 2002, the Swedish government decided that a national programme for commercial services in each county should be provided. The background of this policy was that, with many shops closing in rural areas, the government wanted the regions to make an inventory as a basis for developing a strategy to retain those rural shops that were still in business. Work began to create a regional programme that was organised by the County Administrative Boards,

but in close co-operation with municipalities, private and non-profit distribution organisations. The programme in Västerbotten and Norrbotten was completed in 2004, with the national strategy being to update the records every year through to 2007. The networks that were established had representatives from public and private sectors. Municipalities were asked for their ideas on new ways of providing and co-ordinating public service in rural and remote areas, as this was one of the clear objectives underlying the programme. The contacts and networks that were established during the work with the programme were used in the development of the DESERVE project.

Project implementation –

The implementation phase for the DESERVE project in Sweden started with a visit to all the municipal executive boards in Västerbotten to inform them about the ideas for national activities and also to collect further data and information in order to give the project more focus on local needs. In Norrbotten, the project ideas were presented to politicians and civil servants at a conference arranged by the national co-ordinator. Four municipalities in each county were chosen to participate fully in the DESERVE project, whilst all the municipalities that were not actively participating had the opportunity to attend all conferences and seminars arranged through the project.

Skellefteå

In Skellefteå, municipality officials, politicians and the project co-ordinator visited village areas in the municipality to advise local inhabitants about the DESERVE project. Skellefteå municipality has also allocated

funds for local activities related to the project. Areas that have been active in the DESERVE project include Byske Laxdal, Bygdsiljum and Bureå.

Lycksele

Lycksele municipality has identified two possible localities where co-operation of services may be implemented. The "villages with surroundings" recognized by Lycksele municipality are Rusksele and Örråsk. On the basis of the local development programme, both of these towns have shops that make them fit the service-strategic requirement. A workgroup which covers both the administrative boundaries has been appointed, with representatives at local level. This workgroup, along with the project co-ordinator, has visited these villages.

Kalix

In eastern Norrbotten, a collaborative project is being carried out between Övertorne, Överkalix, Kalix and Haparanda municipalities. The project is looking at different municipal activities and how these can be co-ordinated. One of these areas is how to use new technology in order to improve services for

people in the countryside. Övre Bygdens Servicecentrum covers the country shop, pellet heat plant and home-help service on a contract basis. They will, through the experiences obtained in Scotland and Iceland, develop their existing "Village Hall" so that it also becomes a site for the provision of public services.

Boden/Luleå

In these two municipalities, a collaborative project has been initiated, linking two villages on either side of the municipal border. The project aims to co-ordinate public services between two villages and between two municipalities. There are also three local shops in this area and the aim is, together with the villagers, to discuss and define exactly what represents a good service level in this area. The respective Church of Sweden parishes are also involved, broadening and deepening the combined effort. A lot of the ideas are based on the experiences that were obtained in Scotland. The municipalities have various meeting forums in order to have a dialogue with different administrations. A local preliminary study has begun, using questionnaires left with and collected from every

household by appointed "Ambassadors". This will become a formal preliminary study for commercial and public services over the municipal borders.

Gällivare

In Dokkas, in 2003, the petrol pumps closed down at the same time as the Hemsj'n's Livs premises. The building has been empty since, and the project aims to examine the possibility of starting activities there. The municipality and Gällivare Countryside Council have had an initial village meeting, where the experiences from the Scotland journey were presented. During discussions which followed, proposals were hammered out on what activities could be held in these premises. A workgroup was also formed with representatives from the village, the municipality and Gällivare Countryside Council. Gällivare municipality took part in the study travel to Scotland and has provided feedback on insights gained. This has in turn generated local inspiration for what they can achieve with the empty premises. In the process, a youth council has also been actively participating.

Project Results

The effects that can be demonstrated are the processes of co-operation that have begun in the participating municipalities. The will for co-ordination has increased especially in view of the economic gains that can be made in the municipalities, and the more long-term sustainable service solutions. The municipalities have funded sector umbrella workgroups with officials and representatives from village areas where co-ordination solutions are planned. A more concrete example of this is Lycksele municipality and Rusksele. A dialogue is conducted between different administrations, the County Council and a workgroup with representatives from the village. A few of the active

operators from Rusksele have taken part in a study visit to Scotland and have been inspired to work further with the co-ordination that is possible considering the Swedish context. In Rusksele, a dialogue is taking place with the municipality to run geriatric care, school transport, an after-school recreation centre and child-care on contract. In the process, local tradesmen and entrepreneurs from the town, as well as the interest association, are involved. Two examples where the activities are particularly visible are:

- Fällfors in Skellefteå municipality, where a local shop has opened with additional facilities other than just the provision of groceries that would be required on a daily basis.

These include: office space for distance workers, tourism, hairdressing, foot care, and massage services. There are also plans for the district nurse to operate a health clinic from the premises.

- Rusksele in Lycksele municipality, where a clearer co-operation can now be demonstrated between the geriatric-care staff and the child-care staff at Blålockan. In addition, the business hours of the



Study tour group inside multi service store at Vitvattnet

NPP Deserve

restaurant have been extended and this has advantages not only to the town's entrepreneurs and visitors but also to school children and the elderly in the immediate surroundings. Blålockan also has a hairdresser and foot care clinic as well as a small teaching centre, where not only employees at the geriatric care but also entrepreneurs can undertake skills' development activities. For the distance-learning students in the area, Blålockan has, in connection with the day nursery and the pre-school child-care centre, office hours which accommodate their needs.

The national project co-ordinator has linked together the municipalities with other municipalities and organisations. The co-ordinator's role has been to organise meetings but not to actually participate in the local work in an active way. There has been one contact person in each of the participating municipalities, usually working with rural businesses. This person has had the responsibility of maintaining contacts with the local people involved; and, with the aid of the national co-ordinator, has kept politicians up-to-date with the ongoing work of the DESERVE project.

To conclude this discussion of the results, it would be helpful to note that the method used at the local level began by identifying three critical elements. First to be documented were the **facilities** available in each village and its surrounding area, comprising aspects such as the local school, post office, bank, business enterprises, tourist and culture attractions, infrastructure and elderly care. Secondly, the **people** involved were noted, including not just local inhabitants and civil servants, but politicians as well, the latter of whom were vital to take into account and to keep updated with the project's progress. Lastly, the **results** expected from participating in the DESERVE project were predicted, such as offering services in a wider framework, therefore securing not only cost-effective, but also long-term provision.

In this way, while local effort has focussed on the service possibilities recognized, it has also concentrated on cost-effective delivery in each area, yet at the same time requiring individuals concerned to develop their own community action plans as well as prompting local communities to apply to funding organisations for grants to enable the implementation of these plans.



Study tour at local shops in Niemisel



Bakery products from Niemisel

Results

A significant group of outcomes emerging from the project initiatives are the dialogues that are happening between administrations, interest associations, County Council and others. The different contact networks that have been created are based on local conditions and needs. An important concept in the discussions is the overall vision for the service questions. The conditions now exist to run constructive

proposals between local workgroups, with support from the administrations or other concerned authorities. Many areas have been provided with an opportunity to find ways to start actions that have resulted in new initiatives within the DESERVE project being financed by external financiers. Permanent results include a number of new service solutions that have been introduced in the areas.

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

	Male	Female	Total
Over 25 years	267	294	561
25 years and under	0	1	1
Total	267	295	562



Swedish national co-ordinator updating partners