

SWEDEN

Implementing local development strategies

Location
Gislaved

Programming period
2014 - 2020

Priority
P6 - Social inclusion & local
development

Measure
M19 - LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 53 609
EAFRD 48 843
National/Regional 3 076
Private 1 690

Project duration
2016 – 2016

Project promoter
Film och Foto

Contact
Eryan Meza Howes
film_foto@outlook.com
tel. +46704437697

Website
www.nbv.se/avdelningar/jonk_opingslan/kalendarium/livemusik--sommarliv-i-dalen/

A series of locally organised music festivals to promote social cohesion, youth engagement and community spirit.

Summary

Gislaved is a small community in the Swedish countryside. Over the last couple of years it has experienced problems due to social, economic and cultural differences within the population. Local NGO's and the Gislaved municipality saw the need for some kind of event to build community spirit during the summer holidays. The project helped to create 4 summer events that would provide a meeting place for local inhabitants regardless of gender, age or ethnic background. Live concerts were accompanied by family-friendly activities, ethnic food and free transportation. The 4 festival days were free of charge.



Results

The series of festivals were a success. Indicatively over 1 000 people participated on the 3rd day of the event.

The project brought together many different parts of the community, including:

- 30 volunteers from the local sports club at each event
- 4 local bands
- 5 local NGOs
- 7 local businesses

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ When organising such events it is key to always remain positive and work as a team. Ensure close collaboration and communication between festival organisers and partners, and be prepared for some things to go wrong. For example, the last of the concert days was extremely rainy (the roof of the stage was close to collapsing at one point), but through good cooperation the evening ended up a success.

Context

Gislaved municipality is a small community in the Swedish countryside. Over the last couple of years it has experienced problems due to social, economic and cultural differences within the population. This has been especially apparent during the summer holidays, where some families cannot afford holidays, tourist attractions or other expensive activities. During the summer months the number of events and activities in Gislaved is lower than the rest of the year, leaving children and youths with little to do. This has led to an increased use of alcohol and drugs amongst young adults and an increase in racism and tensions related to social inequalities and division. Local NGOs and the Gislaved municipality saw the need for some kind of event to build community spirit during the summer holidays. They became inspired by similar festivals in larger nearby towns but adapted the concept to fit their own, smaller community.

Objectives

The purpose of the project - run by local cultural NGO Film och Foto, and the National Temperance Movement's educational association (NBV) - was to create 4 summer events that would provide a meeting place for the inhabitants of Gislaved and the surrounding area. It aimed to invite different groups of people, regardless of gender, age or ethnic background, to integrate with each other and create a sense of community. In order to attract diverse groups the events contained a mixture of activities to suit young adults and families with small children as well as older inhabitants. Another objective of the festival was to give local musicians a chance to perform alongside established ones; together representing different types of music.

Activities

In order to reach as many inhabitants as possible the 4 festival days were free of charge and to make the effect last longer the days were spread out; one day every week in July. The diversity of the festival activities would also be positive for Gislaved and show it as an attractive and innovative community which dares to give space to many different cultures.

The 4 festival days took place in the People's Park in Gislaved, which was lent out by the municipality. The NGO Film och Foto - the lead project owner - cooperated with the company G-rent to build an open-air stage. They were helped by local music association Sceneriet with lighting and sound. Every festival day, there was one performance from a nationally established artist with a local band providing the support act. There were also three bouncy castles and face-painting for the children. For the grown-ups there was a bungee-jump. A local Work Integration Social Enterprise specialized in catering sold food at each of the events and there were also vendors selling food from Somalia and Palestine. A special festival train took visitors to and from the park and the whole festival was alcohol and drug free.



Main results

The series of festivals was a success and has shown that these kinds of activities are possible even in a small community such as Gislaved. Over 1000 people participated on the 3rd day of the event. Now that the concept has been established the organisers hope that it will be easier to find funding and sponsorship for future events. It certainly involved many different parts of the community:

- 30 volunteers from the local sports club at each event
- 4 local bands
- 5 local NGOs
- 7 local businesses

Key lessons

"Stay positive", says the project leader from the NGO Film och Foto, Eyran Meza Howes. "A lot of things can go wrong in an arrangement like this, so always be prepared for the worst. For example, the last of the concert days was extremely rainy and the roof of the stage was close to collapsing at one point, but through good cooperation the evening ended up a success. So keep up a positive spirit!"

Additional sources of information

- www.leadervastrasmaland.se/godkant_projekt/sommarliv-i-dalen/
- www.vn.se/article/sommarliv-en-storfavorit/