

Egnahemsfabrikens garden

Developing a green space to highlight the importance of garden cultivation as a meeting place to attract visitors and inspire neighbours.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Tjörn, Sweden

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 – LEADER CLLD

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Funding: | RDP support | 440 250 (SEK) |
| | EAFRD | 294 967 (SEK) |
| | National/Regional | 145 283 (SEK) |

Timeframe: 13/10/2022 – 31/12/2023

Project promoter: Egnahemsfabriken Tjörn, Ekonomisk förening

Email: lda@egnahemsfabriken.se



© Egnahemsfabriken Tjörn, Ekonomisk förening

Summary

The project promoter was Egnahemsfabriken Tjörn, a non-profit organisation for social construction run by civil society on the island of Tjörn in Sweden. The organisation was set up in 2017 with the goal of creating routes to homeownership for more people and providing a cross-border meeting platform around construction and design.

The project involved a green space at Egnahemsfabriken that had fallen into obscurity as no one had the time to plan and structure its development. However, the space presented an opportunity to be developed into a beautiful garden and pleasant outdoor environment that could be enjoyed as a meeting space and bring people together. The organisation worked together with volunteers to design and develop the garden. Additional activities, such as lectures and workshops, attracted a wider range of people to Egnahemsfabriken to enjoy the new green space and be informed about sustainable living.

Project results

- The garden space was developed in an efficient manner by purchasing appropriate planting materials and tools.

- New target groups interested in cultivation and gardening were attracted to visit and participate in Egnahemsfabriken.
- The project raised awareness and spread knowledge about various environmental topics focusing on the cultivation theme. This inspired many project visitors to work in other places as well.

Key lessons and recommendations

- An important challenge was synchronising the project with other initiatives on-site and nearby in the local community.

Context

The project promoter was Egnahemsfabriken Tjörn, a platform and meeting place for social construction run by civil society on the island of Tjörn in Sweden since 2017. The goal of the organisation is to create more routes to homeownership for more people and to provide a cross-border meeting place around construction and design.

The green space at Egnahemsfabriken had fallen into obscurity as no one had the time to plan and structure its development.





© Egnahemsfabriken Tjörn, Ekonomisk förening

However, the space presented an opportunity to be developed into a garden and outdoor environment that could be enjoyed as a meeting space that could bring people together. The organisation aimed to work with volunteers to design and develop the garden. Through additional activities, such as lectures and workshops, a wider range of people could be attracted to come to Egnahemsfabriken and get informed about sustainable living.

Objectives

The objective of the project was to make Egnahemsfabriken a more pleasant and beautiful meeting place and to highlight the importance of garden cultivation as a suitable transition towards leading a more sustainable lifestyle.

The project aimed at being able to welcome visitors to the location of the organisation, especially during the summer months. The new garden and cultivated green space were designed to attract a different target group than those who usually visit Egnahemsfabriken.

Activities

The project activities were implemented with the help of volunteers and included all aspects of developing a neglected green space into a garden. Project implementation started with the planning and drawing of the garden to create a structure for how it should be developed. During this stage, it was important to communicate with people who spend a lot of time on-site to capture as many perspectives as possible.

The main work involved the detailed planning of flower beds, buying plant material and gardening tools, sowing seeds and raising seedlings. This was complemented by more construction work, which included the making of compost and growing boxes, a water tower, signage and a workbench. Existing material was upgraded, such as pallet collars being repainted and shelves being built in a storage area.

For the new garden to flourish, maintenance work needed to be organised such as trimming, grass cutting, gravel laying, painting, window washing, etc. The organisation of running working days (open working afternoons) for volunteers was thereby an important task.

A further activity involved the planning and organisation of awareness-raising events, such as workshops and lectures, to promote the project, learn about sustainable living and disseminate communication materials.

After the first phase, additional work involved planting a new large flower bed with trees and perennials in several parts of the garden and redesigning part of the new space to adapt it better to the needs of the garden users.

An ongoing task was to spend time integrating the garden with the workplace in general and to conduct conversations about how the garden could be further developed to fulfil its full potential in future.

Main results

- The garden space was developed in an efficient manner by purchasing appropriate planting materials and tools.
- New target groups interested in cultivation and gardening were attracted to visit and participate in Egnahemsfabriken.
- The perception of more employees, members, board members and visitors improved by increasing their appreciation of the green space and the potential of gardens.
- The project raised awareness and spread knowledge about various environmental topics, focusing on the cultivation theme. This inspired many project visitors to work in other places as well.
- The project successfully connected the project promoter, Egnahemsfabriken, to its local community and other actors in Tjörn through plant and seed exchanges. This included organisations such as Omställning Tjörn, Hoga market hall and the Church of Sweden.

- The project triggered further actions. For example, after project completion, other gardens and new cultivation areas in the immediate neighbourhood were created or improved and are being cared for. The project's effects included reshaping other spaces and planting more trees and bushes, including vegetables and flowers.

Key lessons and recommendations

- The position of a project manager is important to keep a clear overview of responsibilities and to hold everything together. However, things can become challenging if there is just one project manager and he or she becomes sick or incapacitated.
- A further challenge was synchronising the project with other initiatives on-site and nearby in the local community. Making projects work well together requires a lot of cooperation.
- With regard to implementation and maintenance, an important lesson was that any future project should focus more on planting perennial plants (such as trees and shrubs) since they require less care and better match the steady but irregular availability of volunteers.
- It is wise to create different areas of responsibility for volunteers. Setting clear tasks and goals is a good starting point for managing volunteers well.
- Gathering feedback from visitors is helpful to inform future development and improvement. The feedback was very positive and encouraged the project to continue.

Additional information:

Website:

<https://tjorn.egnahemsfabriken.se/projekt/egnahemsfabrikens-tradgard/>

