



EU Rural Cooperation Fair 23rd and 24th September Edinburgh





Community Development

Our understanding:

- It's difficult to split community development projects between 'headings'
- Life in rural areas often involves complex livelihood choices

Our Community - Northumberland













Our Community

- o Complex community structures and complex livelihoods ...
...lead you into making all sorts of **networks**
- o We **cooperate** every day with our neighbours, with our family, with the shopkeeper, with the people we do business with.



What Opportunity does Leader give us?

- o Leader is a just an approach.
- o But one with a strong theoretical underpinning
- o It encourages us to cooperate – a natural thing for people living in rural areas
- o Why does Leader encourage us to cooperate?
 - To achieve a 'joined up' approach
 - To harness local knowledge and explore new ideas
- o We are challenged to think beyond simple interventions.



Our experiences of cooperation

- o Sparked off by our commitment to Leader principles, and by the personal links and experiences within our Local Action Group
- o In order to support a forestry project we contacted the Swedish Rural Network and the Swedish Forestry Commission
- o It all got out of hand from there!



What we have done?

- o 12 **forest contractors** visited Sweden
- o Reciprocal **exploratory visits** with Leader Linne area and a partnership agreement with that LAG
- o Three NULAG members attended **Swedish Rural Parliament**
- o Motala visited Northumberland with an exciting **social services project**
- o Innovative Umbrella Project for **study visits**
- o **Basketry and Hippotherapy** study visits... To hopefully lead to transnational cooperation

Sweden



Sweden





What we got out of it

- o We think **cooperation** needs to be mutually beneficial, transparent and equitable

If it's all those three things it can be:

- energising
- a creative environment,
- sustainable



Challenges met and lessons learned

- It takes time... We have personally invested a lot into preparation
- We think it's about projects cooperating but links between LAGs are also important as Leader is about leaving a legacy – to continuously improve our work with community development
- Strong and successful community development relies on linking and working with communities elsewhere



Conclusions

- o If you are involved in community development you have to make efforts to understand your own community – we think Leader is a great tool to help you do that
- o We cooperate every day – think globally, act locally!
- o Cooperation has to be mutually beneficial, transparent, equitable... and fun!