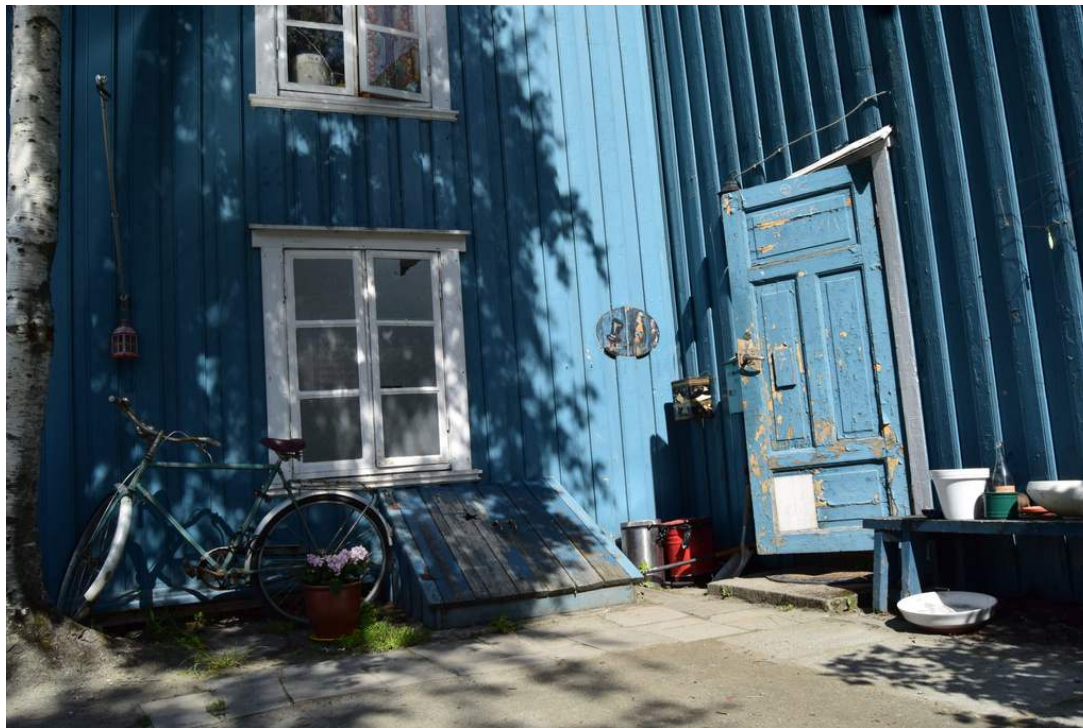




CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

FOREWORD

This collection of case studies is made within the project **We make transition!** (2023-2025). The project engages local authorities, civil society actors and business in co-creative processes to enhance cooperation for eco-social sustainability. One of the core aims is to improve understanding of the role and added value of active civil society for sustainability.

The following case studies provide an outlook on the various roles and power of civil society initiatives in different Baltic Sea region countries. All case studies reveal the fundamental value of active civil society for social innovations and sustainability. At the same time, the case studies show how crucial the pioneering role of civil society in enhancing sustainability in sectors like circular economy, sustainable food and biodiversity can be. They are about the power of creative people that can make real transition by enabling the way to others - fostering the alternative, sustainable ways of doing things.

All case studies are widely respected examples of the amazing power of people who act according to their values and persistently strive for good communication and cooperation with the public sector and other stakeholders. This requires openness, listening skills and active role of the public authorities as well. Some cases have turned into business or projects from which people can make their living.

This publication gathers the best examples from six Baltic Sea region countries. We hope that it raises discussion, learning and respect among transnational cooperators, national and local authorities, decisionmakers, civil society & business actors and the general public.

We make transition! project team:

Johanna Leino, the Baltic Institute of Finland

Maili Marjamaa & Markus Lappi, Council of Tampere region, Finland

Miranda Sundholm, Regional Council of Helsinki-Uusimaa, Finland

Henna Salminen, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Finland

Silja Ngobese, Valonia, Finland

Martin Noorkoiv, Christo Alliksoo & Karl Lembit Laane, DD Foundation, Estonia

Lienīte Priedāja-Klepere, Zane Pipkaleja & Anita Āboliņa, Vidzeme Planning Region, Latvia

Agata Lewandowska & Marta Jarosińska, City of Gdynia, Poland

Anna Dudziak & Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło, Baltic Institute of European and Regional Affairs BISER, Poland

Anna Burhorst & Tina Schneider, University of Bremen, Germany

Kjersti Bjørnevik & Rabeya Khatun Kazi, Regional Council of Trøndelag, Norway





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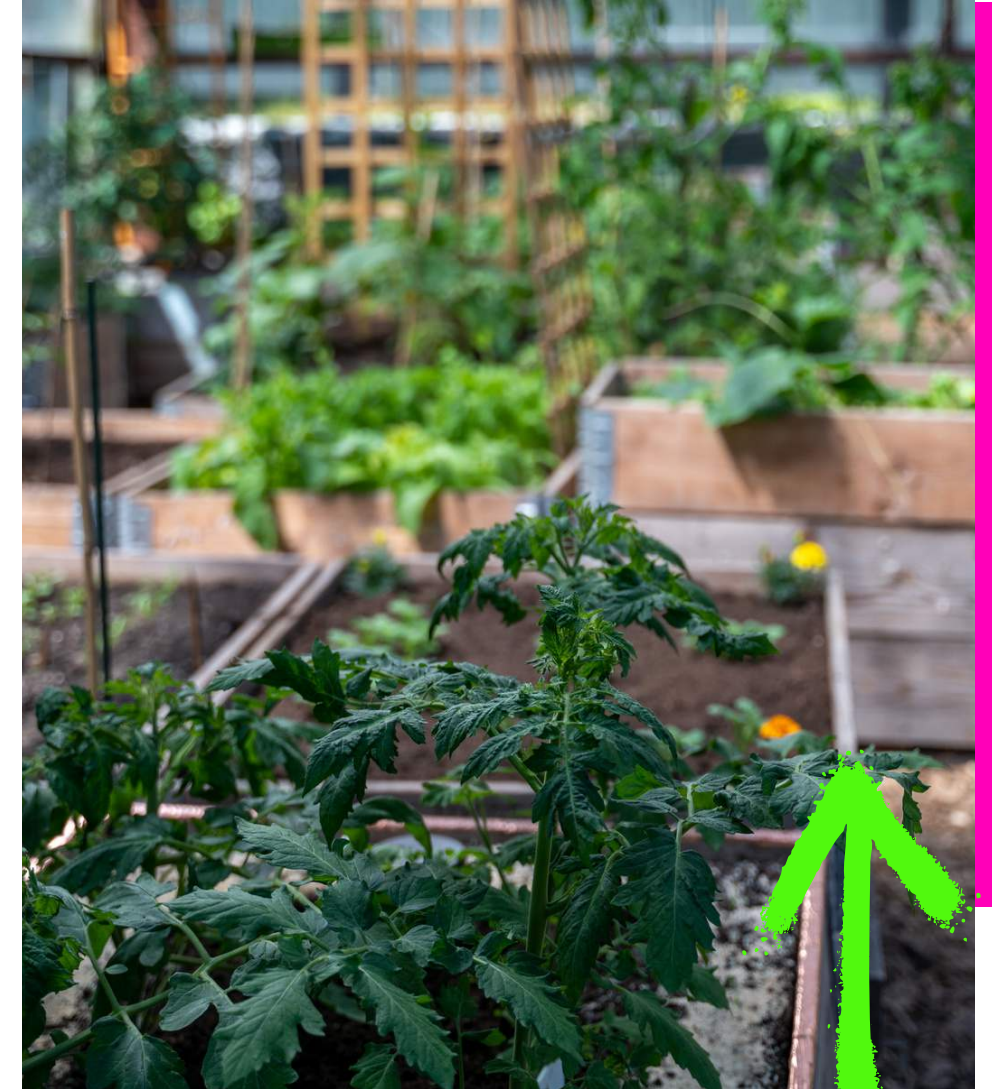
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REKO LOCAL FOOD RINGS (FINLAND & SCANDINAVIA)

“REKO local food rings” (REKO = Rejäl konsumtion/fair consumption) enable inhabitants living in a certain region to buy food directly from the local producers. REKO rings are coordinated with the help of Facebook groups where buyers can pre-order local food products. Each REKO group has a regular time and place for distribution where producers and buyers meet to exchange what was ordered. REKO has strongly spread to all Scandinavian countries. Currently there are about 500 REKO groups in Scandinavia. The concept is known in other European countries as well.

REKO groups challenge the traditional economic model that is based on global chains of food production, in which sustainability of the food has to be verified through complex regulations and certificate systems. These systems have not yet been politically established to cover the global food market as a whole. Global production chains also distance the consumers from the ecosystems that, de facto, produce their food.

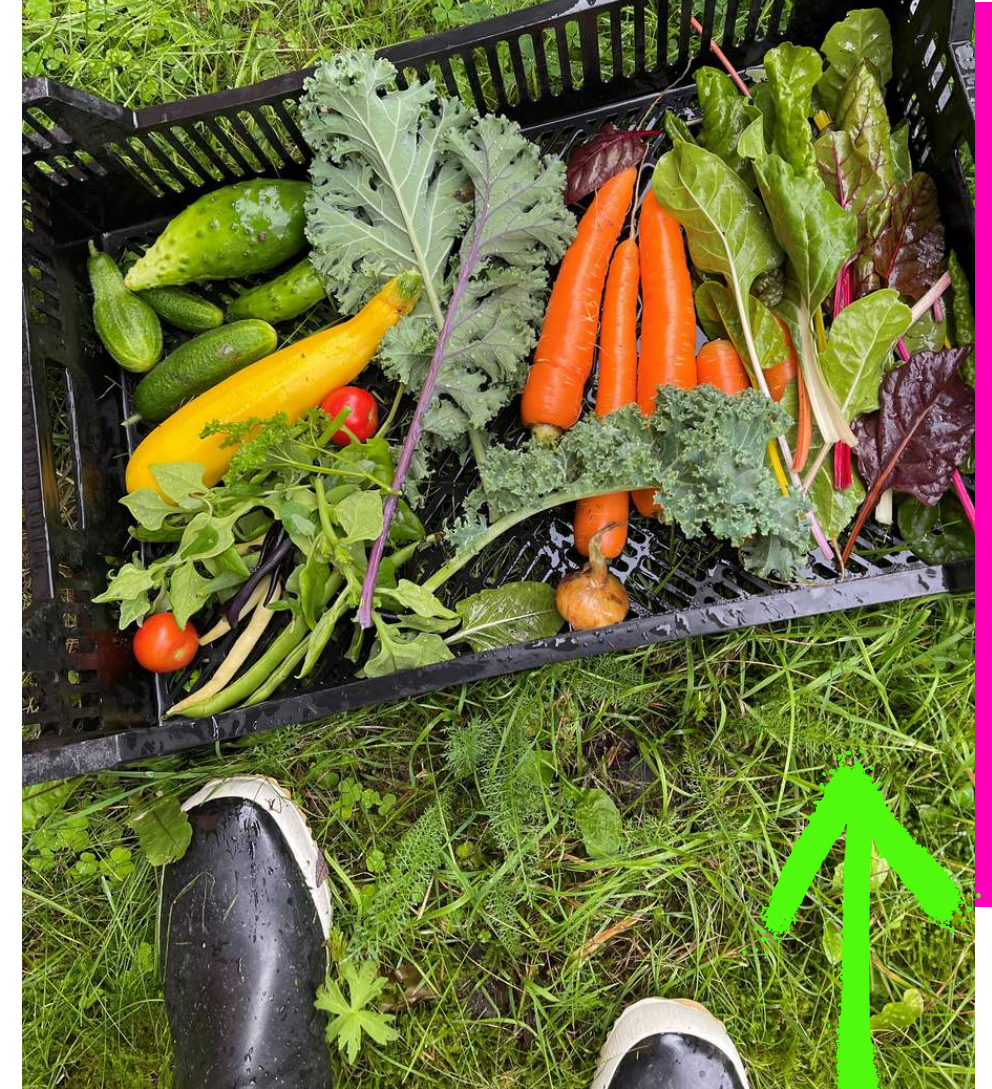
HOW IT STARTED?

The idea of REKO originates in Pedersöre (Pietarsaari), Finland. REKO was started in 2012 by a project worker who got to know a French community farming concept and started developing similar ideas for Pedersöre. This was made possible

by existing network and getting funding for development work. At first, the idea spread in Western Finland. Later, new groups were independently established in different cities, municipalities and areas.

The same mechanism of spreading through nearby areas also started REKO Uusikaupunki: the admin of REKO Rauma from neighboring town next to Uusikaupunki asked a producer from Uusikaupunki to sell their products on REKO Rauma Facebook-group. This producer had own networks, so she decided to establish own REKO ring in Uusikaupunki.

A new Facebook group was created, and other producers were invited in. At first, REKO Uusikaupunki was established alongside a cooperative that offered a development space for food industry entrepreneurs. The new REKO ring was marketed through Facebook, personal networks, and a local newspaper. The group has over 3000 members.



SUCCESS FACTORS

A success factor for all REKO groups is their low need for coordination. The activity is based on a Facebook group and jointly agreed practices on the time and place of orders and distribution of the food. Despite the low need for coordination, the group does need an admin who gathers decisions based on joint discussion in the group when needed. When the group becomes well-established and gains enough members, it usually starts to self-organize.





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REKO LOCAL FOOD RINGS (FINLAND & SCANDINAVIA)

It becomes more like a community than a platform for services: all members are equals and each member takes care of their role in selling, buying and instructing new members to the REKO practices. The personal nature of the membership also leads to discussion and social control that quickly reacts to any noticed problems with certain producers or low-quality products.

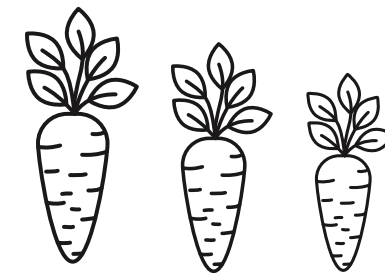
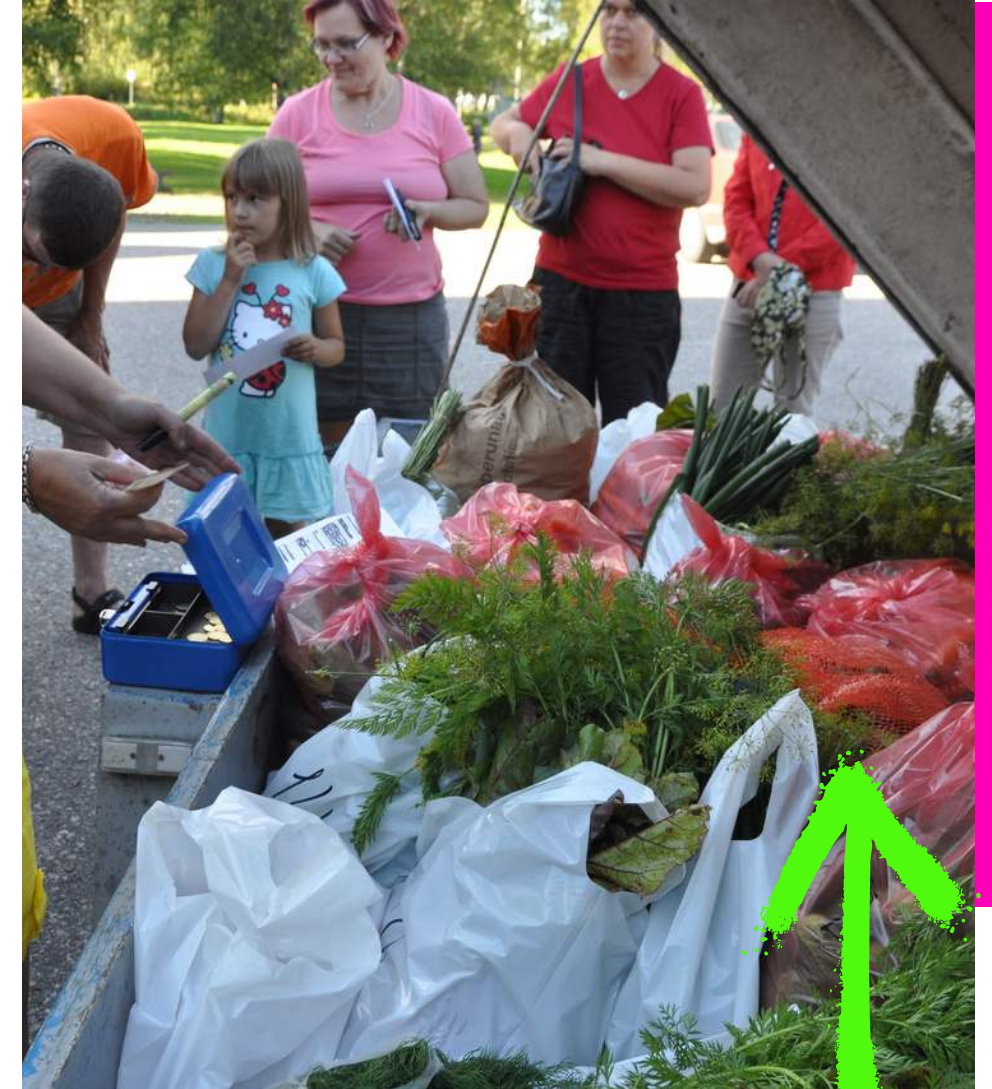
The selection of products should be renewed at times to maintain interest from the customers. There are no set criteria or control methods for the producers, but the admin has to be able to intervene if the purpose of the food ring starts to change towards unwanted phenomena. For example, there is a desire to keep the groups from becoming places for resale or easy ways of selling irresponsibly gathered food, such as berries picked by people who in reality work for someone else with poor pay and employment conditions.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

REKO promotes sustainability as the food is mostly unprocessed and the need for transport is limited. Primary producers can sell their products at a fair price without intermediaries.

Since the products are pre-ordered, no food loss is created. REKO enables people to support their local food producers, ensuring the locality of the products and that the payment goes directly to the benefit of local producers. Locally produced food reaches its consumers quickly and has plenty of remaining shelf life left. Especially for small producers, it is easier and sometimes the only way to get their products into the market via REKO sales than via retail market.

REKO has been scaled-up fast to many locations. In 2021 there were 600 rings in Scandinavia and beyond. To implement the idea, one needs a geographically small-enough area, where there are both food producers and buyers. In addition, to form a group you need an admin – someone who can coordinate the starting actions and later administrate the group with low effort. Setting up a REKO ring does not require any authorization or payment systems. It only needs both the producers and consumers to use Facebook or similar platform that are common to most people and accessible for new people to join.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

SOPHIENHOF SOLIDARY AGRICULTURE FARM (OLDENDORF, GERMANY)

Sophienhof is a solidary agriculture farm in the German village Oldendorf, situated 30 kilometres from Bremen. The farm harvests regional and biological products and distributes them to the people who subscribe to the farm. This concept enables the farmers to produce for the local community and free them from the market pressures. Members contribute to the farmer's income by paying an annual membership fee and support him with different tasks on the field. In return they are provided with fresh and healthy agricultural products on a regular basis.

Sophienhof has operated since 2013. The farm focuses on circular economy that is designed through the use of a suckler cow herd. The suckler cow herd grazes on pasture land that is not suitable for growing crops. Suckler cow herds provide important protein (through manure) that does not have to be bought from other (mainly development) countries. The manure from the cows is used to grow vegetables. This manure ensures that the soil fertility of the arable land is maintained for a long time.

HOW IT STARTED?

Experienced organic farmer Marc Schweighöfer bought a rest farm in Oldendorf, Germany in July 2013. The owner has worked as an organic farmer, also at biodynamic "demeter" farms, since 2001. His own career is therefore characterized by a large network and a great deal of knowledge about organic farming.

It was only when he got to know the economy of community-supported agriculture (Solidarity Farming) in 2011 that he saw the possibility of living with his own family on a diverse, organic farm. He was able to buy the farm, including the herd of suckler cows, from the local seed breeder and initially had around 39 hectares of usable land at his disposal.

After that intensive expansion work followed. The owner and his family and workers have been able to expand the operating area to almost 95 hectares (20 hectares of arable land and 61 hectares of grassland, as well as 4 hectares of forest. The rest is yard and hedge area). They have built up a diverse ecological primary production and want to expand and refine it in the future.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

SOPHIENHOF SOLIDARY AGRICULTURE FARM (OLDENDORF, GERMANY)

SUCCESS FACTORS

The success factors are the high quality of the biological products and taking part in protecting biodiversity. Building a solidary community around the farm helps working at eye-level with the community and having the security of challenging risks together.

Another success factor is being able to pay fair wages to the workers, so that the employment is lasting and sustainable. The investment opportunity through loans and microcredits enables the company to grow quickly through more modern machines or improved infrastructure for example. Proximity to consumers is also crucial, as is the trust that comes with it.

Instead of two or three major buyers, the farm has 340 direct buyers as customers. This poses a challenge to logistics and thus a distribution plan is needed. The members of the farm may work on the farm themselves or just pay a membership fee.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

The farm is supplying the local community (340 paying members) with sustainable and healthy products. The farm is doing public work in informing the community about the costs and process that it takes to harvest and manufacture the food. The farm members are also educating themselves and the community about how to implement sustainability into food production. They are also building a network of solidary agricultures that cooperates and shares knowledge. They are implementing new ideas about economics and delivery chains.

The employees of Sophienhof deliver the vegetables to 30 so-called depots in Bremen, Bremerhaven and the surrounding area. They can offer up to 15 different types of vegetables in winter. For the sheltered cultivation of tomatoes, cucumbers and other summer vegetables, they possess two 720 m² poly tunnels.

The farm employs up to 14 people during the season, including many part-time workers, so that the company requires an annual average of 6 full-time positions. They harvest around 30 tons of potatoes and around 65 tons of vegetables.



The idea is scalable, and there are other solidary farms existing (at least in Germany). To start solidary farm needs agricultural land, farming skills and a community that wants to consume biological, local produce and to support their local farm. It needs a farmer who is willing to take the risk to open a solidary farming. Motivated and devoted members are crucial for the success of any solidarity agriculture.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

ÅTERBRUKET - A SECONDHAND SHOP, YOUTH SPACE AND A LIVING ROOM FOR LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY (KIMITOÖN, FINLAND)

Återbruket is a secondhand shop, space for youth work and training, and a living room for local civil society, located at an old factory site. It was opened in May 2023 and is run together by the local Red Cross and the municipality.

Återbruket combines multiple functions for fostering eco-social sustainability: extending the lifetime of clothing and goods, providing a standby stock of clothes and homeware, collecting removal textile for recycling to reduce textile waste, providing meaningful work-life training for young people and a meeting space for outreach youth work as well as supporting other local civil society actors by providing them a free meeting room.

Återbruket also provides a fundraising possibility for Red Cross's humanitarian aid in Finland and abroad. It functions according to circular principles also regarding the use and sharing of empty buildings by utilising an out-of-use factory space.

HOW IT STARTED?

The idea for Återbruket was born as a side-product of a meeting: The local Red Cross held a presentation at municipality's youth workshop about different volunteering possibilities when the youth workers of the municipality brought up the idea for Återbruket. In the past, there had been good experiences of similar activities with a local parish.

The cooperation became possible when the municipality offered a free space for the shop. This way it was financially possible to found Återbruket together, since it would not only provide training possibilities for the youth but also be a viable form of fundraising for the Red Cross. It was also important that the Red Cross and the municipality found a shared interest in supporting youth through third sector activity.

Återbruket operates with the effort of a few paid workers and multiple volunteers. It has been crucial that many volunteers have given their time to the project and that there is a possibility to get a governmental pay subsidy to hire sales workers from unemployed workforce. Without these efforts the shop could not run.



SUCCESS FACTORS

Återbruket's main success factors have been the strong will and support from municipality and Red Cross' expertise and credibility as an NGO. Through the cooperation with municipality Återbruket gained a big and steady background organization. Finnish Red Cross as a national NGO had previous know-how from similar activities in running a national chain of secondhand department stores. Red Cross' familiarity and credibility as a charity has helped with gaining popularity – people know what it is about and want to give their support to the shop.





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ÅTERBRUKET - A SECONDHAND SHOP, YOUTH SPACE AND A LIVING ROOM FOR LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY (KIMITOÖN, FINLAND)

At the beginning the newly cooperating actors had to organize and find ways for making decisions. Active dialogue and meetings at the planning phase clarified the roles and responsibilities for running the shop. There were some challenges with finding pay-subsidy workforce, but this was overcome by actively reaching out to employment services.

Now that the shop is running, a remaining challenge lies in marketing. Visibility and familiarity have been pursued by setting up a sign and organizing a secondhand shop day with a map of the secondhand shops in cooperation with other shops in the area.

Currently, Återbruket sets out to familiarise people with their sharing space function – so far with good outcomes, since the living room has been booked most weekdays. Another remaining challenge still concerns storage spaces: there are a lot of donated goods and only limited storage space that is located elsewhere than the shop. Better solutions are currently under discussion.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Återbruket has a piloting period of three years, after which the impacts will be measured and it will be further developed. There are for example ideas on integrating rehabilitative training or more organised leisure activities for youth.

Many social impacts are already visible: the living room for associations has been greeted warmly since many associations didn't have a non-commercial meeting place before where everyone is welcome just as they are. In addition, Återbruket organized a successful meeting for people who used to work at the factory. It manages to bring life to the old factory area, as it is important for the local community that the site does not turn into a dangerous idle space. Återbruket has also created meaningful volunteering activities and encounters between different generations.

The idea that Återbruket embodies is not one of its kind. For example, in Denmark there are Red Cross' secondhand shops run by trainees and volunteers and operating to extend the lifetime of clothing and goods.



Since most countries and areas also have their local Red Cross, it is rather simple to replicate the idea elsewhere. A good basis for this is an agile municipal organization and a community where people are active and rich with ideas. In a bigger city the financial viability might come from increased sales, but a low-rent or rent-free space offered by the municipality is often needed. This kind of public-NGO cooperation is a cost-efficient way to gain many ecological and social benefits.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

UBRANIA DO ODDANIA – CLOTHES FOR DONATION (POLAND)

Ubrania do Oddania (UdO) is a Polish brand that collects clothing, accessories, and textiles, renewing and selling them in second-hand stores called "Circular Boutiques" or recycling them. It donates 1PLN to charity for each kilogram of items collected.

HOW IT STARTED?

The brand was founded in 2018 by Zofia Zochniak and Tomasz Bocian, who initially ran a fundraising platform combining collecting used clothing with financial support for charities. They have grown over time and now their main focus is the product's circularity.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Many companies and institutions were open to collaboration. They were eager to participate financially and by lending space to put the boxes for the clothes collection. A few delivery companies offered free pick up from private people, which also increases the programme's attractiveness. Local authorities also played a major role in supporting and advertising the initiative.

A success factor has been the automatic machine ("Ubraniomat") in which citizens could put their clothes – its location, intuitive interface, and round-the-clock availability encourage citizens to use it.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

UdO allows people to participate in fundraising without financial involvement. So far, they've donated over 2 million zlotys to NGOs, connecting over 40,000 users and carrying out over 600 campaigns. They collaborate with companies to realise Corporate Social Responsibility and they introduce logistic chains in the textile collecting and sorting field. UdO also contributed to the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles.

In Gdynia, there are several places where people can drop off clothes, including an automatic one (Ubraniomat). Gdynia is a record holder in Poland for the amount of textiles collected – about 1000kg per month. Over 90% of the clothing was first class textile and was resold in second-hand stores.



UdO has created a unique concept of Circular Boutiques - vintage stores available in the big shopping malls in Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz, Krakow and Łódź. In the Circular Boutique you can find selected and refreshed second-hand items - vintage clothes, branded clothes with tags and casual clothes, all presented in a boutique formula.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

PARANDUSKELDER – REPAIR BASEMENT (TARTU, ESTONIA)

Paranduskelder (Repair Basement) is a community maker/repair space located in Tartu, Estonia. It is a non-profit organisation that aims to encourage change within people's habits, mindset and skills towards repairing and upcycling. The purpose is to create a skilled and creative network of people who set an example in building a healthy and sustainable society where materials are recycled and used again. The space offers craftsmen-support and machinery for repairing textile, electronics, bicycles and general repairs (toys, shoes, furniture, ceramics, music instruments etc.).

HOW IT STARTED?

NGO Paranduskelder was established in 2019 after two years of different volunteer-based activities. The team originally came together in 2017, organising repairing cafes and other open workshops in Tartu, for example the Tartu Experimental Bicycle Factory and the Restoration Centre. The team members include initiators and leaders of various community movements in Tartu.

In 2019, the team participated in the national Negavatt energy saving competition organised by the Environmental Investment Centre. Out of 77 initial ideas they were awarded second place in the final.

The prize was a € 5.000 start-up grant, which was used to buy tools and equipment. Only six months later, 13 November 2019, the team opened a workshop in the basement of the Aparaditehas creative centre. Since that Paranduskelder has been the pioneer of circular economy in Tartu gaining visibility in whole Europe.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Paranduskelder was born as a community action. The community includes professionally skilled craftsmen, engineers, architects, creatives, educators and artists. The leaders of Paranduskelder state that having free time, real need for affordable commodities, likeminded comrades and lucky chances is what spiralled into forming an NGO. The charisma of leaders, their active presence in social media with fun DIY and repair videos are also significant success factors. The NGO and its mindset are well known - local media is keen on their activities, projects and calls for action.

Basic funding has enabled to set up a repair shop with regular opening hours, and to have craftsmen present for walk-in visitors or for organising workshops. The "customers" of Paranduskelder also pay a voluntary-based fee to cover the costs of materials and premises.



Since the seed-funding from Negavatt, Paranduskelder has received financial support from Tartu City Government, EU Structural Funds and Emissions Trading Scheme via Environmental Investment Centre. Ability to get co-funding is incremental for continuing and scaling-up its activities for a great social and environmental sustainability impact.

Good relationship and cooperation projects with municipality are important. For example, in 2020 Paranduskelder organised repair cafes each month in different parts of Tartu as part of municipal culture programme. They also cooperate in EU-funded project TREASoURcE, to research the consumption habits, attitudes towards repair and reuse of objects and interest in developing repair skills of Tartu residents.





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PARANDUSKELDER – REPAIR BASEMENT (TARTU, ESTONIA)

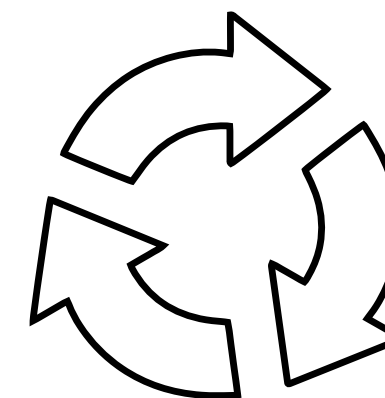
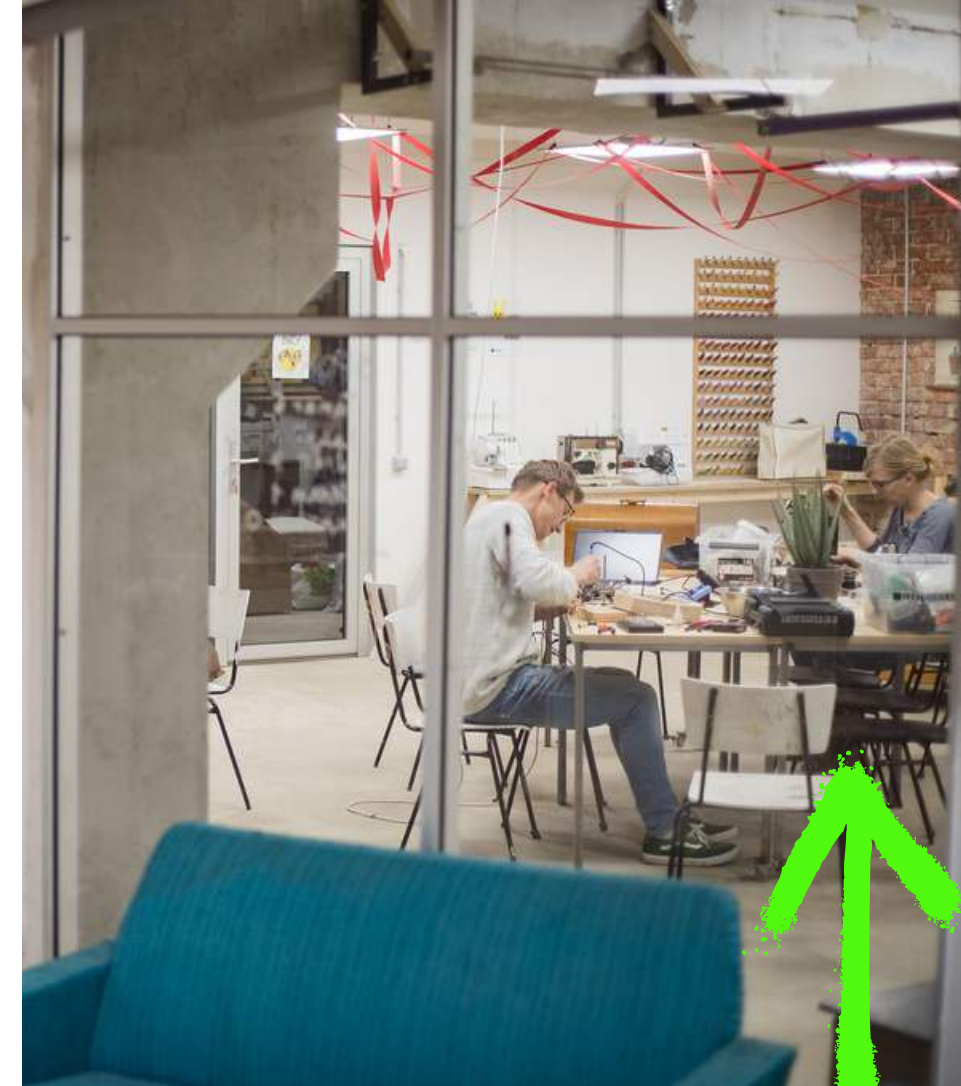
IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

The example of Paranduskelder illustrates one of the fundamental roles of civil society actors in eco-social sustainability transition. It is to harness the grassroots possibility for flexible fast action, a strong sense of mission and joy of building a community to launch major development waves.

The NGO raised the attention of the local media, municipality officials and politicians to a need for and possibilities of a repair-culture. As a result, one of the strategic aims in Tartumaa regional Circular Economy Roadmap 2030 will be to increase the re-use of objects also through institutionalising repair centres. Paranduskelder cooperates also with schools to offer students educational programmes on circular economy and teach repairing skills as part of regular curricula.

It was Paranduskelder who imported internationally known model of repair cafés to Tartu and Estonia – sparking the spread to other communities in Estonia. “Paranduskeskus” traveling repair events have been inspired by the global Repair Café movement. It is a series of events where people can fix their broken things with the help of volunteer repair masters. It has proved to be a great way for the local community to come together and develop their manual skills, exchange skills and reduce their eco-footprint. The repair cafés have gained a lot of attention since the beginning, are widely known in Tartumaa region and have inspired other enthusiasts in other towns in Estonia.

Having an institutionalised repair-shop with stable place near to residents, fixed opening hours and regular workshops requires institutionalised cooperation models between NGO and public sector to gain credibility, visibility, success and impact. Paranduskelder works as an example for other maker spaces, libraries and other public workshops to figure out ways to motivate and enable the public to have access to affordable repair service that simultaneously educates.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

RESTAURANT CIRCULAR (TAMPERE, FINLAND)

Rescued food restaurant CIRCULAR (in Finnish KIERTO) utilises rescued food from the food stores to prepare meals that are served at the restaurant for a favorable price. The source of lost food is the local "Foodbank" that collects unsold food from food stores and delivers food aid in Tampere for those in need. The Foodbank is organised by the Finnish evangelical Lutheran parish with financial support from the City of Tampere.

The restaurant CIRCULAR makes tasteful lunches from lost food and employs people who are within the employment aid programme or rehabilitative work activities. At the same time, it serves as a learning environment of circular economy for the employees of different ages. Moreover, the restaurant enables affordable meals for unemployed people and people with low incomes. The restaurant is a good example of eco-social sustainability.

Restaurant CIRCULAR is located in a local parish building in a housing district near the Tampere city centre. It is open three days/week. The share of loss food in the meals is about 70-80%, sometimes 100%. A full meal with bread, salad, dessert and coffee costs 3 euros for people with low income. The suggested meal price for other people is 6 euros or more. One can decide the level of financial support for the restaurant.

HOW IT STARTED?

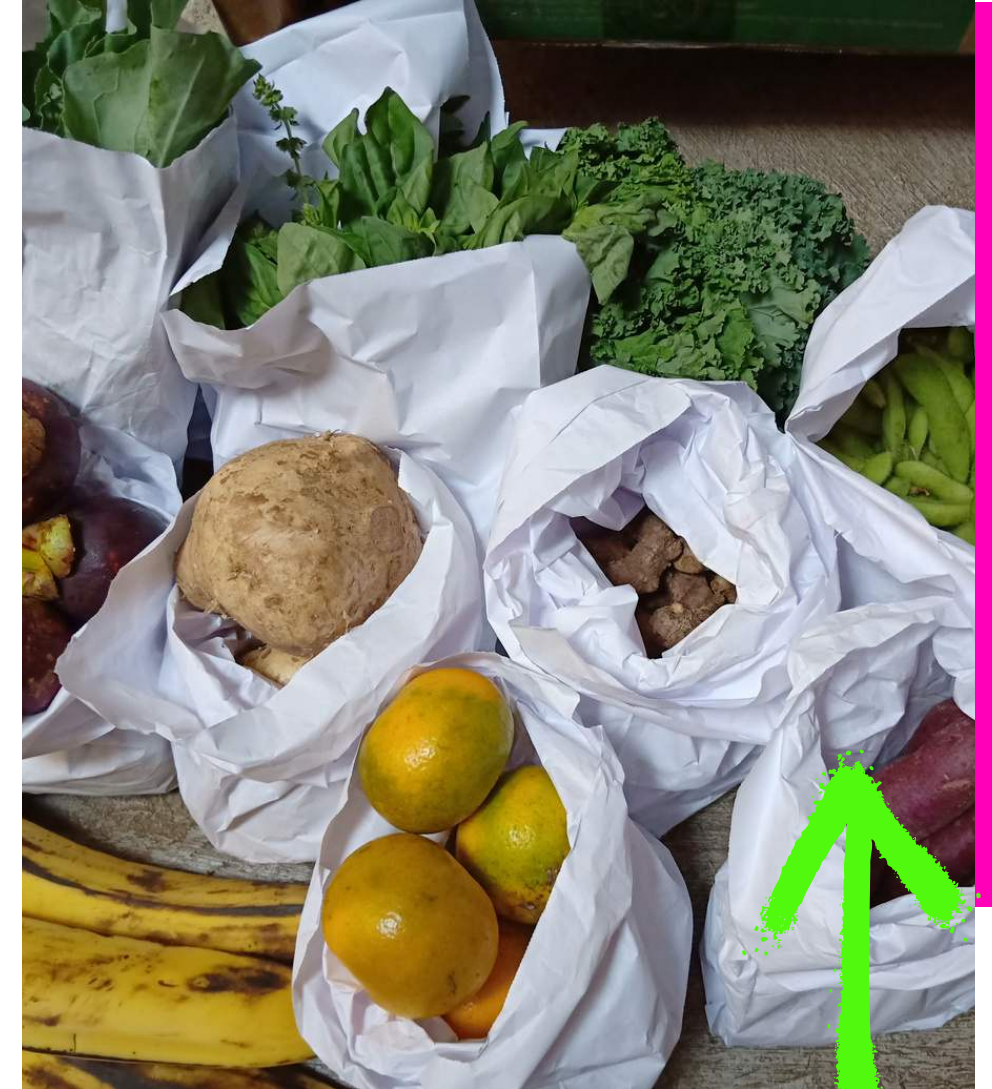
The restaurant was opened in August 2022. The idea of the lost food restaurant originates from an EU-funded project "Growth from circular economy" in which the local parish was one of the partners. The restaurant has been very popular right from the start and is operating now on its own.

SUCCESS FACTORS

A key success factor of the restaurant is the Tampere Foodbank that has operated for decades. The Foodbank has established cooperation with many food stores and a logistic system that collects the surplus food from the stores to one place. Another success factor is the use of employees that are within the employment aid programme.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

The restaurant attracts 70 customers per day on average. Many customers live close to the restaurant, but there is a big group of people coming also from longer distance. Most of the restaurant customers are over 65 years of age. Many of the customers come regularly and the restaurant serves as an important meeting point for them.



The circular food restaurant concept is scalable. A first precondition is to have a cost-efficient system to transport the lost food from the food stores. Second is to have a suitable and approachable place and space for the restaurant. If there are difficulties in getting enough big amounts of surplus food, the meals could have smaller share of that. Non-profit -instead of private - organisations can be the best operators for such a restaurant.





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NGO WILD ZONE (TAMPERE, FINLAND)

NGO Wild Zone (in Finnish Villi Vyöhyke ry) is a Finnish environmental protection association for whom the absolute value of nature and biodiversity is the most important: caring nature is a precondition for caring humans. The NGO has the aim to enhance biodiversity by nature's terms.

Wild Zone develops and experiments with new methods for restoring habitats and creates operational models that enhance the human connection with nature through participatory approaches. Wild Zone makes concrete initiatives on landscaping and restoration. Since their establishment in 2013 they have, for example, founded over 80 meadows with handpicked seeds.

The NGO cooperates with many Finnish cities, other public organisations and other actors. Their opinions might differ from the mainstream, but they are a good example of a pioneering actor, whose unique expertise related to nature and the value of biodiversity has gained high respect at both national and local levels.

HOW IT STARTED?

The NGO Wild Zone started in Tampere in 2013 from a small initiative of a few activists. The key person behind Wild Zone is the current chairperson - a nature activist and researcher Jere Nieminen.

In the beginning the group started to make DIY meadows in suitable urban areas and alternative suggestions for the City of Tampere to enhance biodiversity in urban forest and other nature areas of the city.

Today, Wild Zone is a well-known biodiversity and local vegetation expert that is involved in many EU-funded projects and gets various commissions from cities and other actors. It is also invited in projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministry of the Environment in Finland. Wild Zone has currently 3 permanent workers and involves a big group of volunteers. In high seasons the NGO has about 10 people that get payment for their work. Wild Zone has almost 30 members and 4 sponsors.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

NGO WILD ZONE (TAMPERE, FINLAND)

SUCCESS FACTORS

The success factor of Wild Zone is the core focus on straight actions for nature. They believe that concrete actions and showing a pioneering example on truly acting for nature is the best way to influence. This needs also courage to make radical stands and suggestions. Courage and self-confidence are based on expertise that is gained over the years by simply being in nature and by developing an ability to look at things from nature's perspective.

Other important success factors are patience and negotiation skills. Suggestions that differ from mainstream can easily be turned down. Despite this, Wild Zone strives to convince potential partners.

A recent example of successful negotiations is a new Biodiversity Park project in Turku that eventually received almost 4 million EU-funding. Preparation of the project started originally from a suggestion made by Wild Zone. The Biodiversity Park will be an example for other cities as a flagship site for promoting biodiversity in a growing city.

The NGO has grown fast and is a wanted expert partner in many biodiversity projects in Finland. This has created a need to get more human resources for administrative tasks and renew organisational structures. NGO has recently hired a full-time executive manager to take care of coordination.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Wild Zone has been able to turn radical suggestions into actions and changes in urban planning that promote biodiversity. It is a forerunner in landscaping and restoration on nature's terms. The activities have gained a lot of visibility in the media and therefore affected the thinking of the general public. Wild Zone is an important awareness raiser on value of local species and biodiversity.

Establishing an NGO like Wild Zone requires a unique expertise based on nature values and strong desire to act according to own values. It also requires a somewhat persistent attitude.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

ROŚLINNE PORADY – PLANTY TIPS (GDYNIA, POLAND)

Roślinne porady (Planty tips) is a community with the aim to show people that everyone can have a green thumb if they are willing to learn and that living a sustainable and planet-friendly life is neither complicated nor expensive.

HOW IT STARTED?

Roślinne porady started in 2015 by two nature-lovers: Sebastian Kulis and Robert Ropel. At first, they made posts at Instagram to share a passion for homegrown foods, agriculture and a sustainable lifestyle. Over the first years, Sebastian and Robert gathered a community of over 60.000 users.

Now they work as landscape architects and gardeners, creating self-sufficient garden ecosystems. Roślinne Porady is a company that offers services for private gardens and public greeneries. They also run workshops and give lectures in Poland and abroad. They have several clients in Scandinavian countries.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Initially, it was a minimalistic form that made it more exciting and eye-catching. It was just a hand on a white wall with a plant. It stood out in social media, full of flower photos straight from the garden. The second crucial thing was the language used to communicate – it is far from strict, old-school gardening books. Information text is short, clear, encouraging and without specialised words known only by professionals. The third thing is the whole planet. It is not only about the plants in our garden, but our impact on the entire planet. Gardening in a way that enhances biodiversity, fighting climate change, a plant-based diet, human rights – it is all connected.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

The initiative increases people's awareness of organic gardening, encourages to transform private lawns into meadows, and decreases pesticide and water use while raising awareness of the need to save biodiversity and how to do it on your own. It increases knowledge about local species and their value, teaches about the soil as a living organism and that it is our most important ally against climate change.



Roślinne Porady was awarded by Herbapol (the biggest Polish herbs-based brand) as an excellent example of "promoting love to nature on the Internet". Roślinne Porady also published four books: "Vegetables", "Calendar for Gardeners", "Notebook for Green Dummies" and "Garden for Four Seasons". Last year, Roślinne Porady was awarded for creating quality content on social media. There were a lot of articles and interviews in Polish well-known magazines.

Roślinne Porady is an example of a small initiative that grows big by gaining remarkable attention in social media. It shows nature as the most valuable element and piece of art we have.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

ROHELINE VALD – GREEN MUNICIPALITY (LÄÄNE-HARJU, ESTONIA)

The community-led initiative Green Municipality (Roheline vald) in Lääne-Harju, Estonia was established by a group of active people including community representatives, entrepreneurs, researchers, experts and municipal officials.

The aim of Roheline vald is to develop and implement community-oriented initiatives related to sustainable thinking. The group's vision is a smart, nature- and people-friendly living environment, a municipality that develops and implements sustainable choices through co-creation with the local people.

HOW IT STARTED?

NGO Green Municipality has been active since 2019 after the Lohusalu Peninsula Nature Society joined the Community Committee convened by the Lääne-Harju municipality at the end of 2018. The committee came up with the idea of creating the best local waste management model, convened by Andrus Saliste, and joined by Kairi Niinepuu-Mark from Lohusalu Peninsula Nature Society and Kerli Lambing. The community initiative was joined by Erki Ruben, Deputy Mayor of the municipality, and Teele Kaljurand, Environment Officer.

In the waste management model working group, Kairi came up with the idea that the municipality could become a Green Municipality. Green Municipality mapped the values of the local residents, which gave the basis for defining altogether six key sustainability areas for activities of Green Municipality. These are: waste management, transport, renewable energy, biodiversity, entrepreneurship and awareness raising (marketing). The objectives for each area were set and implemented by a broad working group of volunteers and officials. The objectives are supported by a community outreach programme, the "Targa Valiku Praktikum" (Smart Choice Practicum). It is a local programme of sustainability seminars and actions organized for and with the local people.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Green Municipality has been successful in engaging people. The information events and workshops helped to engage the community, provided new practical skills and helped like-minded people network on a wide range of topics related to environmental sustainability.



Another success factor is the cooperation with sustainability experts and other stakeholders, such as key municipality officials and companies, e.g. energy companies Alexela and Sunly. Sectoral cooperation is carried out with the Ministry of the Environment, the Environment Agency, TalTec, Tallinn University and many other partners.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

ROHELINE VALD – GREEN MUNICIPALITY (LÄÄNE-HARJU, ESTONIA)

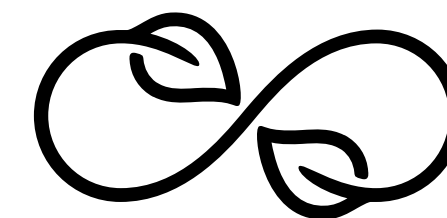
IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

One of the Green Municipality innovations is a food recycling cabinet powered by solar energy, which allows otherwise disposable food to reach people. The goal of the food recycling cabinet is to reduce food waste by allowing surplus food in the area to be immediately diverted to the community for consumption. The food locker is aimed at all residents and is always open. The project raises awareness and sets the mindset, the goal is not to solve social problems.

The NGO has established 6 food cabinets in Lääne-Harju. In addition, food recycling cabinets are also located all over Estonia - in Rapla, Keila, Põltsamaa, Põlva, Haapsalu and Peetri. The food cabinets are owned and operated by local NGOs or in some cases by municipalities. The daily life of the food cabinet can be followed on the Facebook page of the local area.

A grassroots contribution to improving the life of the municipality, which creates a sense of responsibility towards the community, creates a sense of belonging and shared ownership. It allows for collective discussion and volunteer time. Through this process, new solutions are born in the community. The ideas of Green Municipality have been implemented into the municipality's development plans and schools.

The municipality and the community work as a team. The community is proud of their municipality. It is bringing in new people, businesses, investment, making the municipality more vibrant.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

GREENFEST – GREEN LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL (LATVIA)

The goal of "Greenfest - Green lifestyle festival" is to draw attention of people to ecological sustainability challenges. The festival promotes everyone's interest and involvement in practising a green and sustainable lifestyle, for example, by choosing sustainable and healthy food.

The hometown of the festival is Sigulda, but the festival is expanding to two other towns in Vidzeme region – Valmiera and Cēsis. Currently, the main idea of the GreenFest is to promote the concept of the Gauja National Park (GNP) as the "Bioregion" (organic and sustainable region) in Latvia where nature and sustainability are the core values

HOW IT STARTED?

GreenFest was first organised in 2018 by an NGO Greenfest and is a set of events with the slogan "think green, act smart, live healthy". The green lifestyle festival GreenFest includes lectures, discussions, concerts and art events, which actualized the topics of the environment, biodiversity, environmentally friendly lifestyle and climate change.

The festival is organised together with local organic farmers and artisan market.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

The activities of NGO Greenfest have resulted in the formulation of principles and following working directions stipulated in the Memorandum of the development of Bioregion. Because of this initiative, the development of the Bioregion has been stipulated as an example of good practice for the promotion of organic consumption in the Action Plan for Promotion of Organic Farming in Latvia.

GreenFest in partnership with other actors has paved a way for the territory to promote the development of short food supply chains and local organic products in the market. A conceptual agreement has been reached with the organizations to implement cooperation initiatives based on the following local needs:

1. promote communication between municipalities and local food producers.
2. development of new forms of cooperation and cooperatives to improve the competitiveness of local food.
3. creation of a quality mark, product traceability.
4. defining sales channels to understand what activities are needed to promote the operation of short food supply chains.



5. progress towards the Bioregion and the formation of its identity and brand.

6. promotion of product availability, provision of the convenient shopping process and infrastructure, information campaigns for consumers and suppliers about the benefits and economic, environmental and social impact of consuming local food.

This case study is a proof that grass roots initiative can be a powerful force for strategic development of the region and sustainability transition.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

GDYNIA DESIGN DAYS (GDYNIA, POLAND)

Gdynia Design Days (GDD) is an annual design festival organised every summer in the City of Gdynia, Poland. The festival raises issues related to broadly understood design in the context of changes taking place in our environment. The exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and discussions cover technology, process design, ecology, design, fashion, architecture, urban development, and crafts. It combines the design industry with business. Gdynia Design Days is an event for professionals and anyone fascinated by design and curious about the changes occurring in dynamically developing societies.

HOW IT STARTED?

The 16th edition of the festival was held in 2023, and from the very beginning, the city of Gdynia has been financing and promoting the event. Currently, the municipal department - the Design Centre - organises Gdynia Design Days. The idea of the annual design festival was consequent with the modern and future-oriented DNA of the City. The festival focuses on sustainability, zero waste, circular economy and design that is good for the planet and the people.

SUCCESS FACTORS

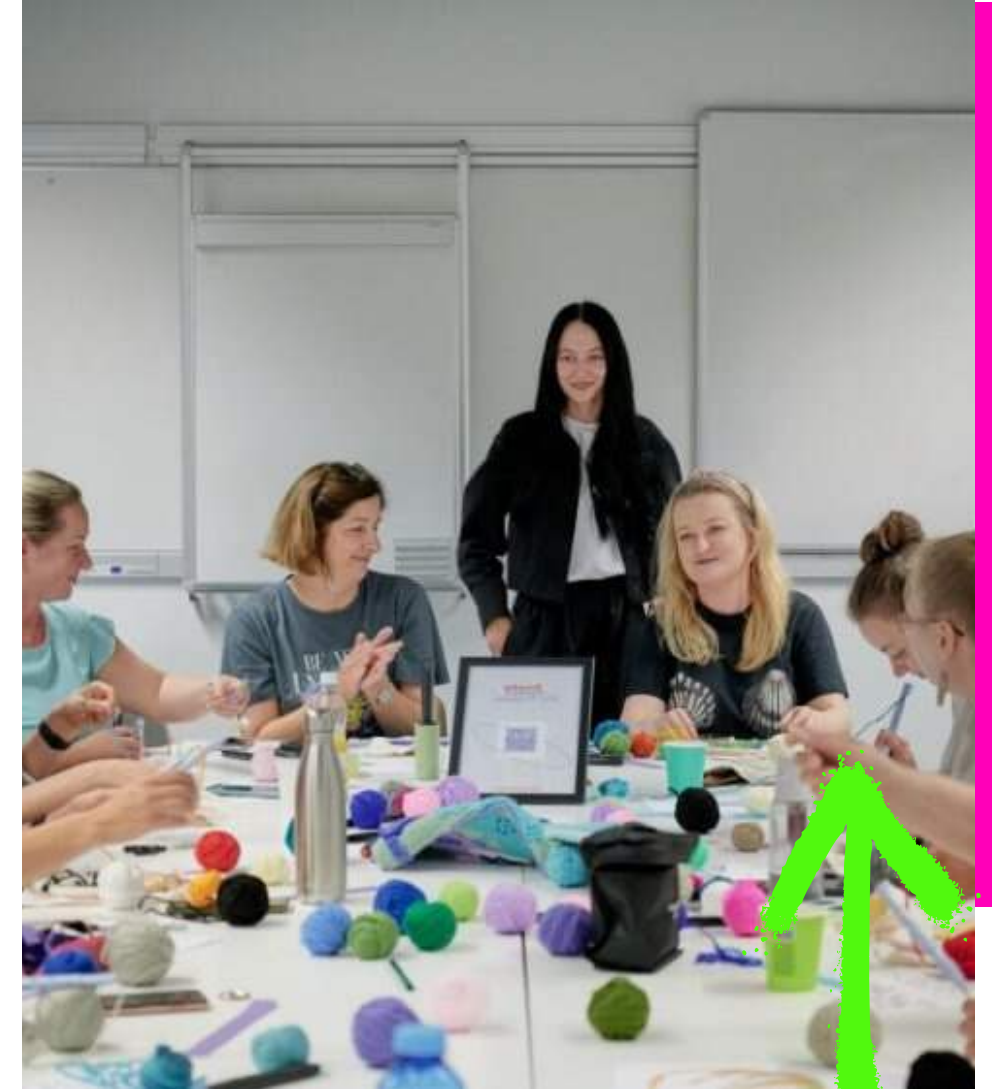
The festival duration is 9 days including over 20 exhibitions and about 40 workshops and lectures. GDD attracts every year about 20 000 visitors in exhibitions as well as 500-600 people in workshops and lectures. The success factors lie on following principles:

Democratic: Design is seen as a tool of change that has to be available for all. That is why GDD tries to involve as many people as possible – not only from the design field but also those who are not specialists in this topic. The program is built in a way that is attractive and understandable for all people interested.

Brave: GDD tries to touch not only comfortable and popular topics but also those meant to push people out of their comfort zones. GDD aims to raise the discussion, educate, and inspire to apply new solutions.

Acting locally: GDD focuses on empowering local designers, mainly from the Pomeranian region and Gdynia.

Authentic: presented ideas go along with the acts and beliefs of the festival. GDD not only talks and shows sustainable solutions, but also evolve to be as waste-free event as possible.





**CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY
TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION:
CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION**

GDYNIA DESIGN DAYS (GDYNIA, POLAND)

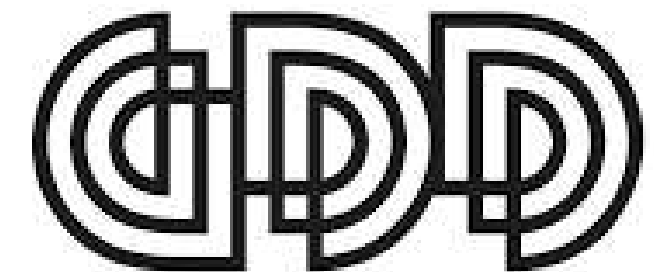
IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

GDD is known in whole Poland and Europe. It has a big influence in educating people in sustainable design solutions and way of thinking. Some products and services presented at Gdynia Design Days are used today. GDD has also been able to promote the knowledge related to organising low waste events.

The activities of GDD inspire other institutions in the Tri-city metropolitan area (Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot).

The organisers have produced a universal exhibition and wayfinding system which is in use every year instead of short-term solutions. GDD curators may borrow these systems for other exhibitions. Curators of GDD are always asked to show what they are producing for the event and what will happen with these items afterwards.

GDD is a member of several organisations gathering design festivals from different European countries to share and exchange ideas having an influence on other events in Europe. Any city could organise their events showing how design can change local communities and how everything around us is designed.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

JALOTUS - TRANSITION MOVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LIFE (KERAVA, FINLAND)

Jalotus - Transition Movement Finland (in Finnish Jalotus - kestävä elämän liike) was established in 2018 in the City of Kerava as a center of sustainable lifestyle and transition movement. The goal is to motivate and help people live a sustainable life. The vision is to help a minimum of 200 000 Finns to transition to sustainable lifestyle by 2030.

HOW IT STARTED?

Anna Evilä, the founder of Jalotus, was employed by the City of Kerava in 2018 to promote the sense of community and prerequisites for city activism. Part of the job was to plan a new use for underused spaces. Anna planned a circular economy centre for everyday lifestyle at an old manor. The idea was to bring together circular economy actors and people that were interested in sustainability, so that sustainable and circular concepts could be put to use in everyday life.

Anna pitched her idea to the Mayor of Kerava and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra. Both the City of Kerava and Sitra were immediately inspired, and the City designated the old cow house building of the Kerava manor for the use of the new centre. The City of Kerava and Sitra covered the initial expenses of establishing the centre.

Activities were kicked off by an open invitation to people to come co-create, and all ideas that suited the aim of the new initiative and had someone to carry them out were offered premises at the site. Nowadays Jalotus continues developing the Kerava center and enables the sustainable lifestyle to be more common in cooperation with various kind of transition groups all over Finland.

SUCCESS FACTORS

The following factors are behind the success of Kerava Jalotus:

Courage: Courage to pitch a new model despite some resistance and belittling was essential for the operations to start.

Trust: The Mayor's trust and understanding of the importance of the topic was fundamental for the activities to start.

Vision: When setting up operations, Jalotus had a clear vision of their goals. The vision is inspiring and meaningful to its' actors, and it has a global impact.

Openness: Invitations to take part in activities were open to all.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

JALOTUS - TRANSITION MOVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LIFE (KERAVA, FINLAND)

Sense of community: It has been a challenge that the community has been open to all, since throughout the years, there have also been individuals who have caused complications and cracks in the community. This challenge was tackled by making the common rules clearer and requiring commitment from members and participants before admitting them to the community.

Brand: A good, appealing and comprehensive brand is inspiring and speaks of quality.

Continuity: Continuity is ensured through good relations with the owner of the premises – the City of Kerava. Networks and skills to apply funding from different funding programmes also has an important impact on continuity.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Jalotus Transition Movement of Sustainable Lifestyle has received over 1 million euros of funding over the years to develop their activities, which has enabled them to significantly scale their activities. Jalotus is a National Hub of the Transition Network and National Contact Point for Ecolise, and at the end of 2023, Jalotus initiated the Finland's Transition Movement Network. They also host the Community Farming actors' network in Finland.

Jalotus is a nationally known actor. Its activities are being replicated and training is offered through the Transition Network, with audiences for example in Australia.

In Finland, Jalotus will increasingly support the establishment of local transition activities, and coach small businesses and associations. They collect both new and established actors into one transition movement network. Development projects and participatory activities concerning all themes of sustainable lifestyle are part of their operations and these models have been spread throughout Finland, for example their community farming model, and the Jalotus Lifestyle tool to make a sustainable lifestyle roadmap and implement it in one's life. The roadmap for individuals consists of climate, nature, and wellbeing actions.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

LIEPAS KOPA COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (CESIS, LATVIA)

Liepas kopa is a community initiative organisation that brings together residents of Liepa parish. It is a voluntary association that aims to foster a sense of community and to promote the well-being of its members. By uniting the residents of the parish, Liepas kopa seeks to empower them to take collective action to improve their living environment and to address issues that affect their daily lives. Through various projects and activities, Liepas kopa promotes social cohesion, cultural exchange and environmental sustainability in the area.

The association aims to encourage the participation of community members in social activities to:

- 1.create a strong community that is able to direct and implement important initiatives;
- 2.create special offers that encourage to get to know Liepa through natural and cultural heritage adventures;
- 3.promote, plan and implement activities that encourage people to go out into nature with awareness not to harm the values of nature with their actions.

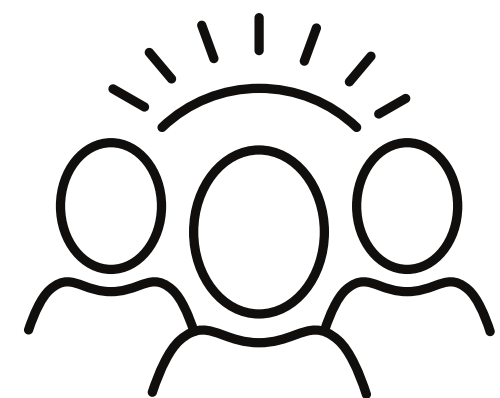
Liepas kopa is run by a team of ~30 volunteers who use their knowledge, networks, and motivation to drive the initiatives of the organisation. Liepas kopa promotes the destination, educates visitors, engages locals, and communicates with public sector actors.

HOW IT STARTED?

Increased demand for outdoor recreation possibilities and limited outbound travel during COVID-19 pandemic caused extreme load on the nature trail Līču-Lanģu cliffs (Gauja National Park, Latvia) exceeding capacity of the site, which resulted in physical damage, costs for local community and negative visitor experience.

Liepas kopa noticed the situation and initiated several communication rounds with stakeholders (municipality, Nature conservation agency, local public, Vidzeme planning region). The site inspections together with stakeholders were implemented followed by a proposal of solutions.

These catalysed further activities by stakeholders. For instance, Nature conservation agency renovated trail infrastructure; municipality changed location of parking place, reviewed information about site; local community started small business activities.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

LIEPAS KOPA COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (CESIS, LATVIA)

SUCCESS FACTORS

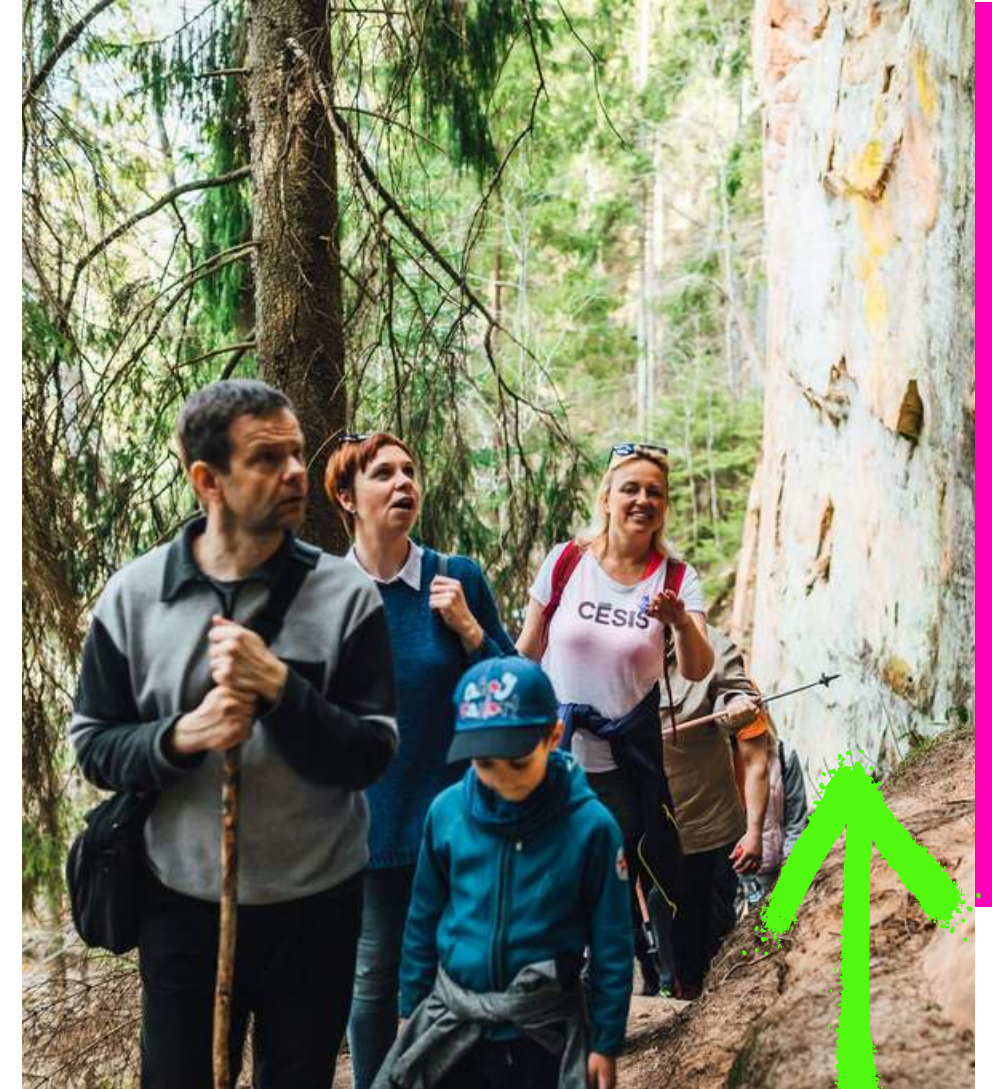
The most important success factor is community collaboration and the ability to communicate with stakeholders in a concrete action-oriented way. The community itself showed a great willingness to engage in the search for a solution, which created a positive and purposeful dialogue for cooperation with several stakeholders.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Implemented solution reduced anthropogenic pressure by renovation of infrastructure, enhanced visitor safety and experience by changing the direction of visitor flow, location of parking and improving information on site. Two cafes were opened along with other tourism and business services in area. This case proves that complex solutions initiated and directed by local community on voluntary basis without specific funding or other resources are possible and can continue as long-term activity chain.

Key learning points:

1. Local initiative groups can be powerful, because they are owners of past and present information, as well as competences, capacity and networks, which sometimes are insufficient in public bodies.
2. Natural heritage objects are exposed to natural changes; this requires frequent follow-up and flexibility in regards of planning and implementation.
3. Mindset and sequence of actions: local community observed problem, analyzed from different perspectives, created network and initiated specific steps.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

LAMOMAT – FOOD AS A MEANS FOR INCLUSION (TRONDHEIM, NORWAY)

The LAMOMAT project of Trondheim uses food as a means for inclusion and to strengthen the local community. It is a non-traditional pop-up restaurant in Rosendal theatre where women with immigrant backgrounds prepare and serve authentic vegetarian cuisine from their homeland for the guests. So far, the restaurant has participants from Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia who are out of traditional work but have passion for cooking. The purpose of Lamomat is to create a meeting place, which provides authentic taste for the residents of Trondheim, as well as creating employment opportunities for the immigrants' women behind it. The project is continuing for two years already and is admired by many.

HOW IT STARTED?

The Lamomat project was initiated by a food enthusiast from Trondheim, Hilde Stålskjær Osen. While studying in Copenhagen, Denmark, Hilde lived in the multicultural neighbourhood, Nørrebro where she experienced authentic, cheap and homemade eatery from different parts of the world. She felt the need of similar settings in her hometown Trondheim, and this is where the inspiration for Lamomat came from.

After moving to Trondheim, Hilde started living in one of the most diverse neighbourhoods of Trondheim named Lademoen. Whenever she passed the houses of her neighbours, cooking smells coming from the houses made her longing for Nørrebro. Being a food lover, Hilde wanted to bring out that diverseness of those people and food together. Hilde encountered someone from the municipality and shared her idea. Luckily that time, Trondheim municipality was in the process of area development in Lademoen.

Lademoen is an area with great diversity in Trondheim, consisting of housing, industry and commercial activities, arts and culture, parks, churches and public buildings. It also has large living differences among residents. The area development process in Lademoen has strong focus on dialogue and cooperation with residents and actors in the area for achieving social sustainability and to provide an increase quality of life for everyone.

As Hilde's idea had all the ingredients Trondheim municipality was looking for, it resulted in some fundings from the municipality for the Lamomat initiative.



Hilde came in contact with some best cooks from the immigrant community and went on to test her idea by opening a pop-up restaurant in Rosendal theatre. Initially it served food for the artists but later opened for other guests. This is how Lamomat started. The name Lamomat reflects the area name as the locals call Lademoen as Lamon and Mat means food in Norwegian.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY
TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION:
CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

LAMOMAT – FOOD AS A MEANS FOR INCLUSION
(TRONDHEIM, NORWAY)

SUCCESS FACTORS

The main success behind Lamomat is a group of passionate people who has made it possible to keep it going. Incorporating it in the Trondheim municipality city development process also worked as a success factor.

Lamomat initiative is taken by a resident of the neighbourhood, which adds extra value to the development of Lademoen as it not only ensures participation of the locals in the development process as well as brought together all the ingredients an area needed for a social uplift.

The homemade vegetarian cuisine Lamomat serves, not only contributes to social inclusion over food, but also it contributes to the environment by reducing meat consumption.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Lamomat contributes to social inclusion, and it has all the elements of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Lademoen is a neighbourhood which has residents with large socio-cultural, economic, and educational differences and Lamomat brought them together in one meeting point. It also created alternative career choices for the people without work, which opens up opportunities for future entrepreneurship.

Scalability of Lamomat requires active initiative and funding in the start-up phase.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

SVARTLAMON – A SUSTAINABLE RESIDENT-DRIVEN HOUSING DISTRICT (TRONDHEIM, NORWAY)

Svartlamon is a unique urban district in Trondheim, Norway focused on eco-social sustainability. For over 35 years, this resident-driven community has emphasized ecological practices, social equity, and a vibrant creative culture. Svartlamon serves as a model for community-led initiatives that promote alternative and sustainable ways of living.

The neighborhood houses approximately 220 adults and 80 children across 151 rental units. The average age of residents is 35. The area is leased from the municipality through a foundation, with residents paying affordable rent in exchange for contributing labour towards maintenance and operations.

HOW IT STARTED?

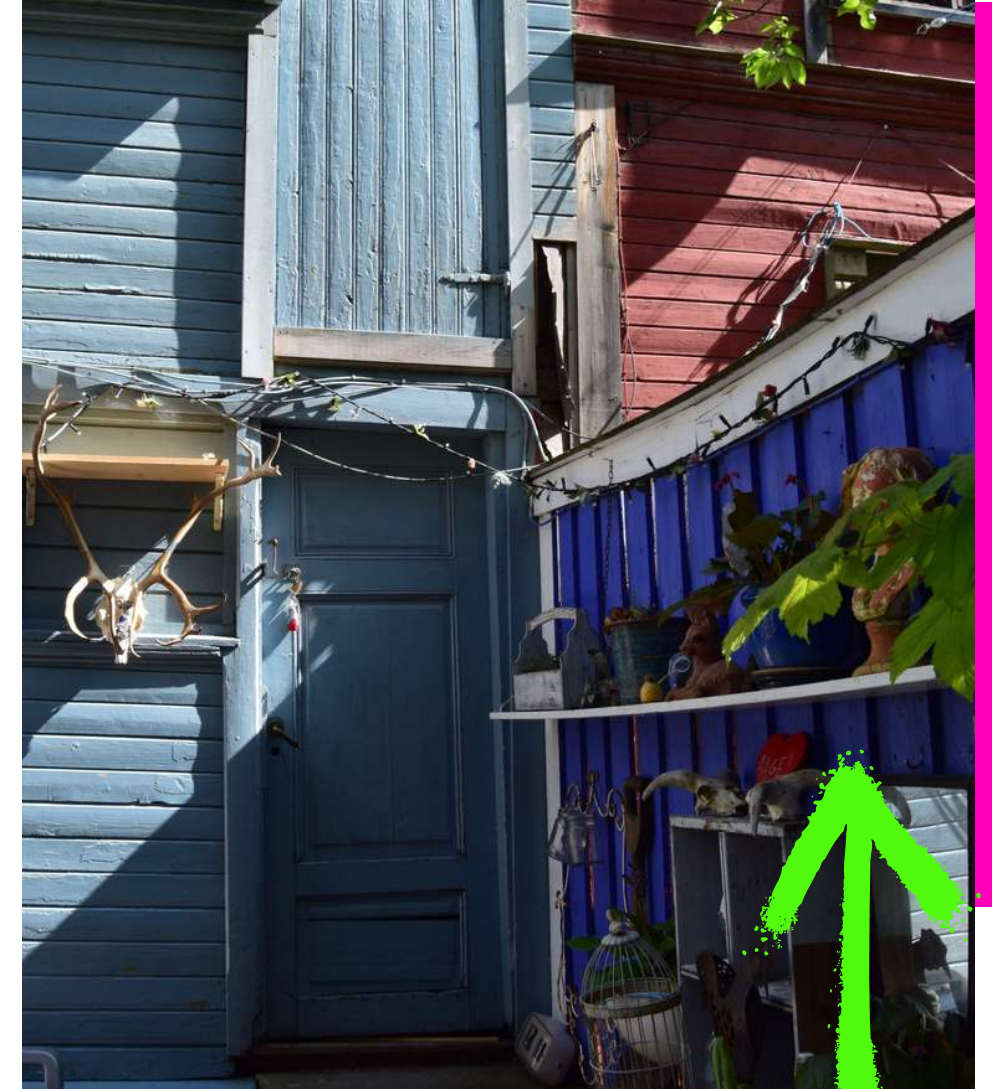
Svartlamon's origins lie in a working-class neighborhood slated for demolition in the 1980s. The fierce resistance of residents led to a successful occupation, sparking a movement focused on ecological and social values. Support from activists and eventual recognition by Trondheim City Council gave the project official status. This legitimacy, combined with residents' shared vision for sustainable, community-driven living, enabled Svartlamon's unique experiment to take root.

Crucially, residents co-created an innovative regulation plan with the city planning department, ensuring their vision was reflected in the development of the area. Key elements included community resilience, strategic alliances, political recognition, and a unified vision for an alternative way of life.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Success factors of Svartlamon include:

1. Community-driven approach: Residents actively shape their neighbourhood, fostering ownership and engagement.
2. Emphasis on sustainability: Ecological practices and green spaces promote environmental responsibility.
3. Vibrant creative culture: Arts and alternative lifestyles cultivate a dynamic atmosphere.
4. Strong social bonds: Cooperation and mutual aid strengthen the neighbourhood's fabric.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

SVARTLAMON – A SUSTAINABLE RESIDENT-DRIVEN HOUSING DISTRICT (TRONDHEIM, NORWAY)

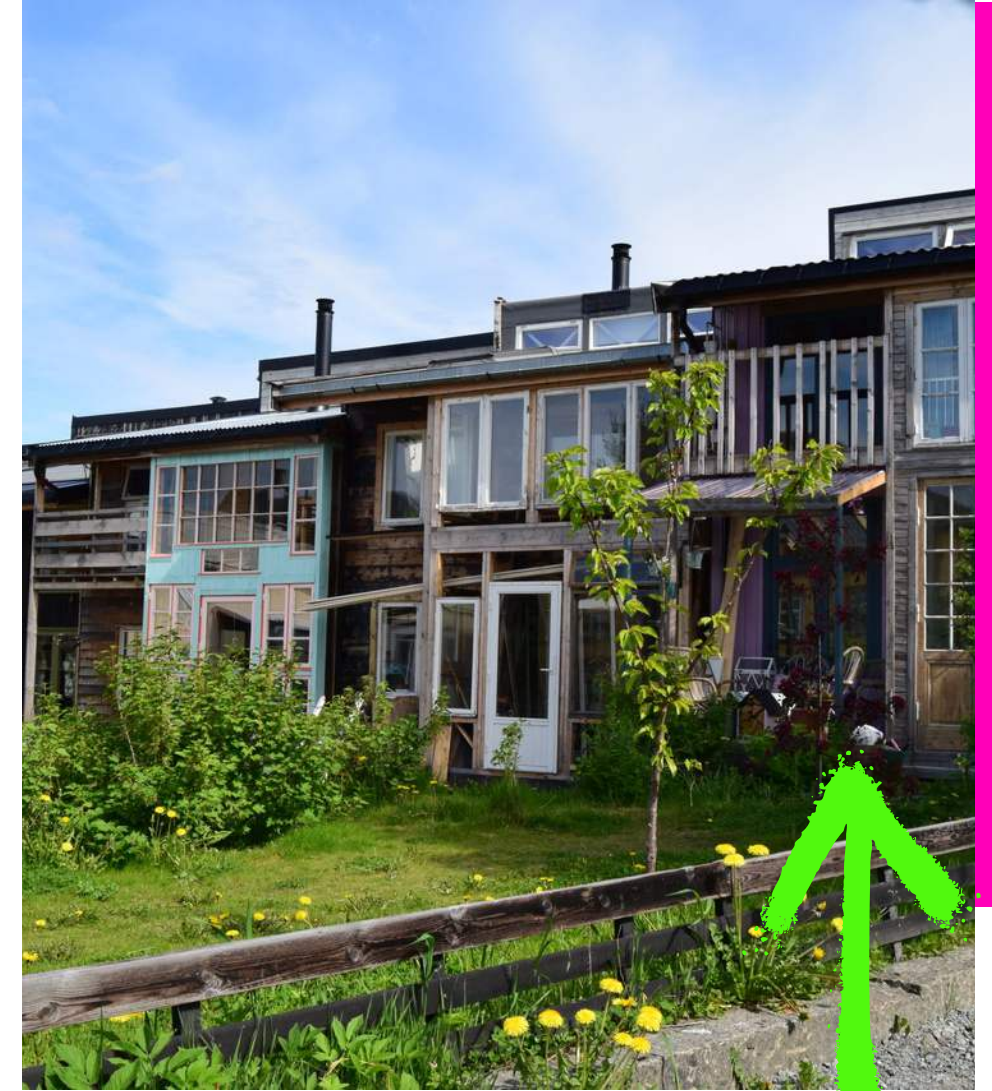
There are also challenges:

1. Economic tension with the municipality: Low-cost land rental by the city creates continuous friction within the administration.
2. Resident-driven development: The area's development and maintenance rely heavily on resident engagement, creating both strength and potential vulnerability.
3. Balancing individual and community needs: With 250 residents holding diverse interests, Svartlamon struggles to effectively manage potential conflicts. While participatory processes exist, unresolved conflicts can weaken the community and hinder its development and maintenance.

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

Svartlamon demonstrates the power of community-driven development, ecological practices, and creative expression. The neighbourhood inspires alternative urban models and fosters a vibrant hub for arts, diversity, and social empowerment. While Svartlamon's direct quantitative impact on Trondheim is less measurable, it serves as a powerful social and environmental experiment.

While replicating the exact Svartlamon model is challenging, its core principles – community ownership, ecological focus, and creative culture – can inspire similar initiatives. Creating a similar housing area likely requires a catalyst like a threatened community and a committed group of residents. A crucial aspect is the partnership between the municipality and the community to co-create regulations or agreements outlining the management of the experimental area, fostering mutual learning and support.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

BREMEN GLOBAL CHAMPIONSHIP (BREMEN, GERMANY)

The Bremen Global Championship (BGC) is an annual football tournament that has existed in Bremen since 2009. However, it is not only about football: the participating pupils demonstrate their knowledge and ability to work in teams. In addition to the sports event, the BGC aims to bring environmental issues to young people and to encourage them to enhance sustainable lifestyles. The BGC addresses school classes in the 6th and 7th grades.

Each year the BGC has a main theme that is covered in the different stages of the tournament. In 2023 the BGC was addressed to global waste disposal and sustainable development.

HOW IT STARTED?

The idea of a "global learning school football tournament" was born in 2009. At that time, the Bremen Development Policy Network (BeN) organised the BeN World Cup in cooperation with other NGOs, namely: sportsgarden (non-profit organisation), Bremen Information Center for Human Rights and Development (biz) and Bremen Regional Association of Diakonia (Diakonisches Werk Bremen e.V.). Ten school classes of the 7th and 8th grade participated and engaged in sports and development policy stations.

Since then, the "global learning school football tournament" has taken place annually. In 2010 it was called "African School Cup", in 2011 "African School Cup Goes Fairtrade" and in 2012 the tournament was renamed the Bremen Global Championship. Over the years, other NGOs have also joined the event.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Each year, the Bremen Global Championship is divided into three phases:

1. Kick-off event – country allocation (each class represents a country)
2. Information phase - Thematic development on the country and topic of the tournament with expert visits
3. Active learning - tournament phase in summer in the sportsgarden.

The teams can collect points in advance for the tournament evaluation in phase 2 through a project around the agenda. The focus of the project should be about the country that each class represents as well as the tournament theme. In addition, each class is visited by an expert from an environmental or development policy organisation for a double lesson, depending on the country assigned.



BeN Bremer
entwicklungspolitisches
Netzwerk e.V.





CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

BREMEN GLOBAL CHAMPIONSHIP (BREMEN, GERMANY)

During the tournament phase, the most important thing is to survive as a team. In order to win, the tournament participants must be fully involved at all stations and in all phases of the tournament.

The rating distribution for the individual parts of the Bremen Global Championship is made up as follows:

- Soccer: 20%
- Fairness: 10%
- Activity and learning stations during the tournament: 30%
- Active participation in the expert lecture: 5%
- Project presentation: 30%
- Games: 5%

The success factors are a high degree of interactivity with simultaneous learning. The learning process happens on a practical level in a "community structure" (forming a country). In addition, there is the excitement of sporting activities. Another success factor is the engagement of schools. It has also proven practical to choose a "true to life" topic such as toothbrushes in Malaysia, because youth can follow the topic and understand it easily.

IMPACT & SCALABILITY

Pupils learn to communicate with each other about complex environmental issues. In the long term, they may also anchor the topic in their everyday lives, for example by using less plastic.

Every year, about 12 to 14 school classes take part in the tournament that is about 280 to 330 pupils. The overwhelming majority of the children state that they have learned something new about the topics covered in the Bremen Global Championship. They feel inspired by the topic even a long time after the tournament.

The idea is scalable. You need dedicated schools and teachers as well as time in the curriculum to do such activities. There needs to be an organization, which takes the responsibility for the acquisition of funds, and the organization of the tournament.





**CIVIL SOCIETY MAKING SUSTAINABILITY
TRANSITIONS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION:
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[Gdynia Design Days](#)

[Jalotus - Transition Movement of Sustainable Life](#)

[Liepas kopa community initiative](#)

[Lamomat - food as a means for inclusion](#)

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