

Transnational conference in Södertälje, Sweden
Diet for a Green Planet in practice
20–23 May, 2014



Connecting cities
Building successes



Transnational conference in Södertälje, Sweden

Diet for a Green Planet in practice

May 20 - 23, 2014

Responsible team from Södertälje, the giving city:

Sara Jervfors, project coordinator and head of the Diet Unit, Södertälje
Daniel Dworetzky, communication and project leader support
Christine Strandberg, strategic advisor
Hans von Essen, financial support
Helena Nordlund, lead expert.

Local coordinators from receiving cities:

Albert García Macian, Mollet del Vallès, Spain
Loreta Štelbienė, Molėtai, Lithuania
Daria Lutrzykowska, Lomza, Poland
Agnieszka Buckowska, Lomza Poland

International participants

Total 23 persons, see attached list.
Poland: 6 persons from the LSG and one agronomy expert.
Lithuania: 6 persons, all from the LSG.
Spain: 10 persons, 8 from LSG under formation.

Objectives for the conference:

The purpose of the conference was to transfer the Diet for a Green Planet good practice to the receiving cities by deepening concept understanding in order to prepare for local adaptation. LSG participation ensures that the transfer takes place and is further disseminated in receiving cities. The goal was to complete the formation of the stakeholder group and give them tools for independent work as LSG group. If the exchange is successful the LSG group formation will be completed and the group will be able to sketch a plan for producing a Local Action Plan (LAP). For all partners with broad participation, including stakeholders from the receiving cities, the goal to start professional exchange between a broad range of key stakeholders.

Program

See attached documents with comments and program summary.



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Summary and process status

The first transnational conference in Diet for a Green Planet Pilot Transfer Network was held in Södertälje 20-23 of May 2014. Södertälje Municipality is the Lead partner and the so called "giving city", and its Diet Unit has implemented the concept Diet for a Green Planet since 2010. The process started already in 2001 with a political decision, and in 2006 started the development of a new Diet Policy. The criteria for Diet for a Green Planet are:

- Good and healthy food
- Organically grown
- Less meat, more vegetables and wholegrain
- Seasonal food
- Locally produced
- Reduced waste

The main purpose of the conference was to transfer the Diet for a Green Planet good practice to the receiving cities by deepening concept understanding in order to prepare for local adaptation. The program was elaborated to give a variety of experiences; theoretical, practical and social. In some parts there were parallel sessions, so that the participants could chose according to their interests and professional specialities.

The conference was successfully carried out and the evaluation survey to the participants has showed very positive answers. All say they have got a deeper understanding of the concept. The workshop Seasonal food pyramids gave the participants a method for how to choose ingredients according to local conditions while following the concept criteria. Part of the group also got the opportunity to in practice prepare a buffet according to this method. The entire group later had this buffet at a dinner which formed the peak of the conference.

All the meals formed part of the program and were served at different units managed the Diet Unit in Södertälje municipality. General presentations on Södertälje Municipality administration, Diet Unit organization, scientific background and concept criteria were deepened in study visits and conversations. Peer exchange between chefs, kitchen staff and Diet Unit managers have been started and will now continue in the coming bilateral meetings.

The goal to deepen the understanding of the concept seem to have succeeded, and the partner cities will now have better tools to produce their own Diet for a Green Planet handbook and start up their Policy work plan. These activities though need to be well supported by Lead Partner and Lead Expert.

The participants

The conference hosted 23 participants from the partner cities Lomza in Poland, Molėtai in Lithuania and Mollet de Vallès in Spain.

From all countries there were municipality representatives, but only civil servants, no politicians. All partners sent kindergarten and/or school headmasters/directors and also chefs or dieticians. Poland and Spain also had farmers, farming advisors and agriculture researchers in their groups. The majority of the participants belong to the Local Support Groups which was the aim.

18 women and only 5 men participated. The Lithuanian group had no men, only woman participating. The Polish had 6 women and one man. The Spanish had 6 women and 4 men.



During three beautiful and sunny days the activities took place over nearly the entire municipality. The first evening there was just a welcoming supper at Hagaberg folk-highschool where all the participants had their lodging. The different groups met here for the first time and the atmosphere was still a bit reserved, but that changed during the coming days.

Wednesday – a day of getting to know

The morning started with a 20 minute walk down to the City hall to get a presentation with background information about Södertälje and its Diet Unit. The first session took place in the city council meeting hall, which is big and very formal, so the discussions did not really get going. But at the break coffee was served at the roof of the city hall, and in front of the view of Södertälje intensive conversations really started involving all present participants.

As the theme for Diet for a Green Planet Network is food, all the meals formed part of the program. This first day the lunch was served in an elderly care centre in Järna, one smaller community in the municipality. After lunch there was a presentation of the scientific background and the BERAS project, which is the parent of the Diet for a Green Planet concept. A visit at the pedagogical garden "Your 2000 m²" showed what can be produced on the average of arable land that exists for each person in the world. A pedagogical, philosophical and poetic presentation by the gardener impressed many of the participants.

In the afternoon there were three parallel sessions; One group had a deeper agriculture conversation. Another group went to Saltå Mill, an environmentally and socially responsible local company with only organic products. The third group went to Norrby Välle integrated garden/café /restaurant which offer jobs to young adults with special needs.

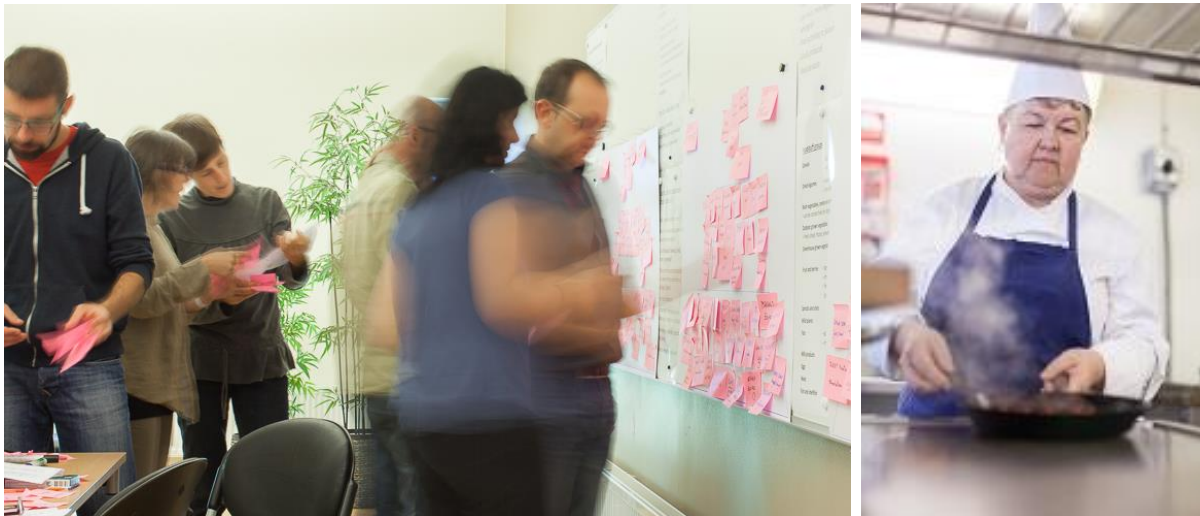


At the end of the Järna-visit all went to the Diet Unit's summer party arranged by the Ene elementary school kitchen, where all the staff from Diet Unit were invited. More than 200 persons ate, sang and had a joyful evening. The theme was building relations across cultural borders, and the conference guests had prepared national songs. This opened for all the others to step up and sing and dance. As the Diet Unit has staff of many different nationalities it became a very international evening. The party was very appreciated by the conference guests and it also became one of the best parties ever at the Diet Unit.

Thursday – a day of being active together

Thursday was the most important day for the concept transfer process. After a short presentation from the URBACT representative, the workshop “Seasonal Food pyramids” started. This was the main activity in order to give a deepened knowledge to make the participants able to adapt the concept to their local conditions. Every country formed a group and created their own food pyramids.

The partner city groups got very active. The groups got two hours to identify their local seasons and the ingredients that belong to each of them. After this we had 10-15 minutes for each group to present their pyramids in a plenum session. General conclusion was that the time was a bit too short and several suggestions on how to develop the exercise came up.



This day there was a nice lunch in Södertälje at Lina Elementary school where 400 lunches are prepared every day. The kitchen was also showed and a dialogue with the kitchen manager took place.

In the afternoon there were four parallel sessions. One group went to Skillebyholm biodynamic training center in Järna. Two kitchen managers met managers from Södertälje. A quite big group went to the Fornbacka school to get presentations on another URBACT project working in this area, and also about the environmental work in which the school is involved as a hub for engaging the entire population of the area.

The fourth group (two from each country) could now try in practice what they had learned in the morning workshop from a theoretical point of view. Together with seven chefs and kitchen staff from Södertälje they prepared a buffet for this evening's conference dinner. It gave a lot of new ideas about how to prepare Diet for a Green Planet food to all involved. Everybody got very enthusiastic and wanted to go home and implement the concept according to their possibilities.

When there was time for dinner they presented all dishes and those who came from the other activities appreciated very much to see and try this buffet prepared according to the morning's theoretical exercise. This was an evening for all kind of conversations – the sound level was quite high around the tables in the restaurant school where the dinner took place.

Friday – a day of visiting practical initiatives and summing up

The Lithuanian group left already in the morning but for the others there was still half a day conference program with parallel sessions. Three groups were at school kitchens to see the practical work there and also visit the schools and talk to pupils and school staff. This was very appreciated both by the guests but also by the Swedish kitchen staff. The Swedish staff was asking for more knowledge exchange like this. The guests were impressed by the highly equipped kitchens and schools in Södertälje.



The rest of the group visited an organic sheep farm, Molstaberg, in Mölnbo a bit further out in the countryside, but still inside the Södertälje municipality. This farm has a farm-shop where most of the meat is sold together with products from other local producers. A very active farmer couple runs the farm and topics like fodder crops, farmer's situation and workload, local cooperation, marketing and selling channels were thoroughly discussed.



Back in Södertälje the lunch was served at Västergård gymnasium, where 2000 lunches are prepared every day. The chef presented their work, both on food preparing and also the social aspects in the canteen, which they have handled successfully with a special host who has managed to change a violent situation to a good and friendly atmosphere.

The Spanish delegation had to leave so the summing up was short. In general very positive, the seasonal food workshop and the visit at Molstaberg Sheep farm were mentioned as good activities.

Analysis and conclusions

Methodology

The structure of the conference was:

Tuesday: **Arriving and welcoming.** A meal together and presentation of the Södertälje conference team and the participants + some general information.

Wednesday: **Getting to know** Södertälje Municipality, Diet Unit, the scientific background, and some study visits. Party in the evening with the entire Diet Unit; 200 persons.

Thursday: **Being active** in workshop + preparing dinner and peer exchange.

Friday: **Visiting practical activities** in kitchens and farms + conclusion.

The methodology with different kind of activities, and some parallel sessions where people could choose, functioned well as many different professions were represented among the participants. As the theme of the network is Diet for a Green Planet the meals also formed part of the program.

The main workshop, the Seasonal pyramids, gave a deepened understanding of the concept for all participants, and also tools to continue the work independently on national level.

The peer exchange sessions gave possibility to learn to know each other and prepare for the coming peer exchange visits in the partner cities.

There was too little time for conclusions and evaluation during the conference itself, but this will be handled with an e-mail survey instead.

Missing; time for coordinator meetings to talk about administrative and organizational issues.

Content

- **General information about Södertälje Municipality** political work and organisation on the first day. This was deepened in many of the peer exchange sessions where different conversations took place.
- **Facts about Diet Unit organisation and work** on the first day, which also was deepened through conversations during peer exchange sessions.
- **Scientific background both on Diet for a Green Planet** and Ecological Recycling Agriculture on the first day, which was deepened by dialogues and study visits at organic gardens, farms and training centres.
- **Diet for a Green Planet concept** was thoroughly processed at a theoretical level at the workshop Seasonal Food Pyramids, and further deepened in practical food preparing and peer exchange in the kitchens. Also all the meals were a demonstration of what Diet for a Green Planet food looks and tastes like in Södertälje.
- **School situation and environmental work in schools** with Diet for a green Planet as a pedagogical tool, was presented at the Fornbacka school and mentioned in the first presentation by head of Diet Unit. It was deepened at the peer exchange in the kitchens.

Partner cooperation

The partner cooperation has functioned well, and all partners succeed to gather good participation. One problem was that according to Lithuanian law the municipality cannot pay for journeys for persons who are not municipality employees. Södertälje therefore had to pay for the dieticians from Lithuania, which have caused a lot of administrative work.

Local Support Groups, LSG

The Local Support Groups were established at an early stage in Lithuania and Poland, and all their conference participants belong to the LSG's. In Spain the LSG is still under formation, but 13 persons have agreed to form part of it, and 8 of them participated in the Södertälje Conference. The problem seem to be if and how to include politicians? In Poland they have succeed to include four politicians that are quite engaged, in Lithuania only one, bit with little interest. In Spain they are hesitating to include politicians because they "take over" and there is a risk that other members loose space. Obviously the political culture is very different in different countries; and the way how to form the LSG must also be permitted to be different among the partner cities.



Diet for a Green Planet transfer process

The main aim of this conference was to assure a good concept transfer process and a deepened understanding of Diet for a Green Planet both on theoretical and practical level. In the workshop every country formed a group which created their own seasonal food pyramids. They had to choose ingredients for each season according to what is available in their region, and also taking in account all the criteria of Diet for a Green Planet. All participants became very active and

several expressed that this gave them a better understanding of the Södertälje practice and how it could be adapted to their situation. Then when two persons from each country prepared dinner according to the concept together with chefs and kitchen staff from Södertälje, the theoretical learnings from the morning was practiced in the kitchen with a lot of enthusiasm. Their experiences and joy was shared with the entire conference group at the dinner when the different dishes were presented and eaten by all of the conference participants.

Work plan Handbook

During the conference there was no special activity around the handbook, but it was used as an example at the Workshop on how to work with seasonal food. The workshop gave a lot of background and understanding of what ingredients to choose for the recipes to the Handbook.

Local action plans, LAP

There was no particular activity on Local Actions Plans in the conference, as this Pilot Transfer Network has no obligation to make LAPs according to URBACT guidelines. Anyway the absolute majority of the participants belong to the LSG's who will have as the task to elaborate the future work plans. All the activities together gave ideas and a good basis for the LSGs to be active on their own.

Future Policy work

There will be an international Policy conference in Mollet, Spain, in September. A lot of work between Lead partner and the Mollet partner must be done before that to succeed to involve the right people, especially the politicians. This will be a challenge. During the Södertälje conference the policy theme was not a highlighted topic. The only politician involved in this conference was Ewa Lofvar Konradsson, Deputy Mayor, from the Green party. The Södertälje situation is important to communicate as a model. In Södertälje the Green party took the initiative to a new environmentally friendly Diet Policy in 2001, but now all the political parties, also those which are not in power, stands behind the Diet Policy.

Swedish coordination

We were a coordinator group of five persons, in which project coordinator and project assistant did the biggest job, together with our strategic adviser. But all the five have been active with ideas and we have had a good cooperation although we had little time to do all the planning. The biggest mistake was that the internal communication inside the Diet Unit came too late and was not clear enough. The involved in Diet Unit complained that they could have done a better job with more and earlier information.

Translation

Translation was handled inside the partner groups when they had English speaking participants present. In the parallel sessions sometimes we had to use other translators. We had access to Polish and Spanish speaking kitchen staff that could help in the kitchen sessions, which functioned well. A Russian speaking pupil helped with kitchen translation for the Lithuanians. In some session we used a Lithuanian language teacher which also functioned very well.

Logistics

As the activities were spread over nearly the entire municipality, and sometimes parallel sessions were ongoing in different places, a lot of transport and coordination was needed. Two rented mini-busses and available private cars were used. One contracted driver, who was not involved in other activities, drove one of the mini-busses, and he was a big help for all kind of services needed. These were a good solutions because the groups that were transported varied a lot in size.

Appendix 1: Conference participation list

Appendix 2: Summary of conference activities

Appendix 3: Conference program with comments





Some comments from the participants:

"The conference program was prepared very well; especially the parallel sessions were very useful and interesting."

"The Saltå Mill is a good example of a socially responsible company and its attitudes towards the community."

"My staff liked the practical workshop very much, because they could work with other chiefs; they got to know new recipes."

"This exercise show how seasonal pyramid looks like in each country. I get to know a lot about seasonal food and their use in Spain and Lithuania."

"Generally the idea of eating in public canteen was great! I especially admire that in each canteen there is a buffet and the students can choose what they like."

"It gave lots of clues to my delegation! Since I returned I received many emails and phone calls with new and fresh ideas about how to implement it at home."

"The presentation of "Your 2000m²" I liked very much because it was both theoretical and practical."

"It was a very good idea that each country sang their song. It was very funny."

Report author: Helena Nordlund, lead expert, 27-06-2014.