

Norway



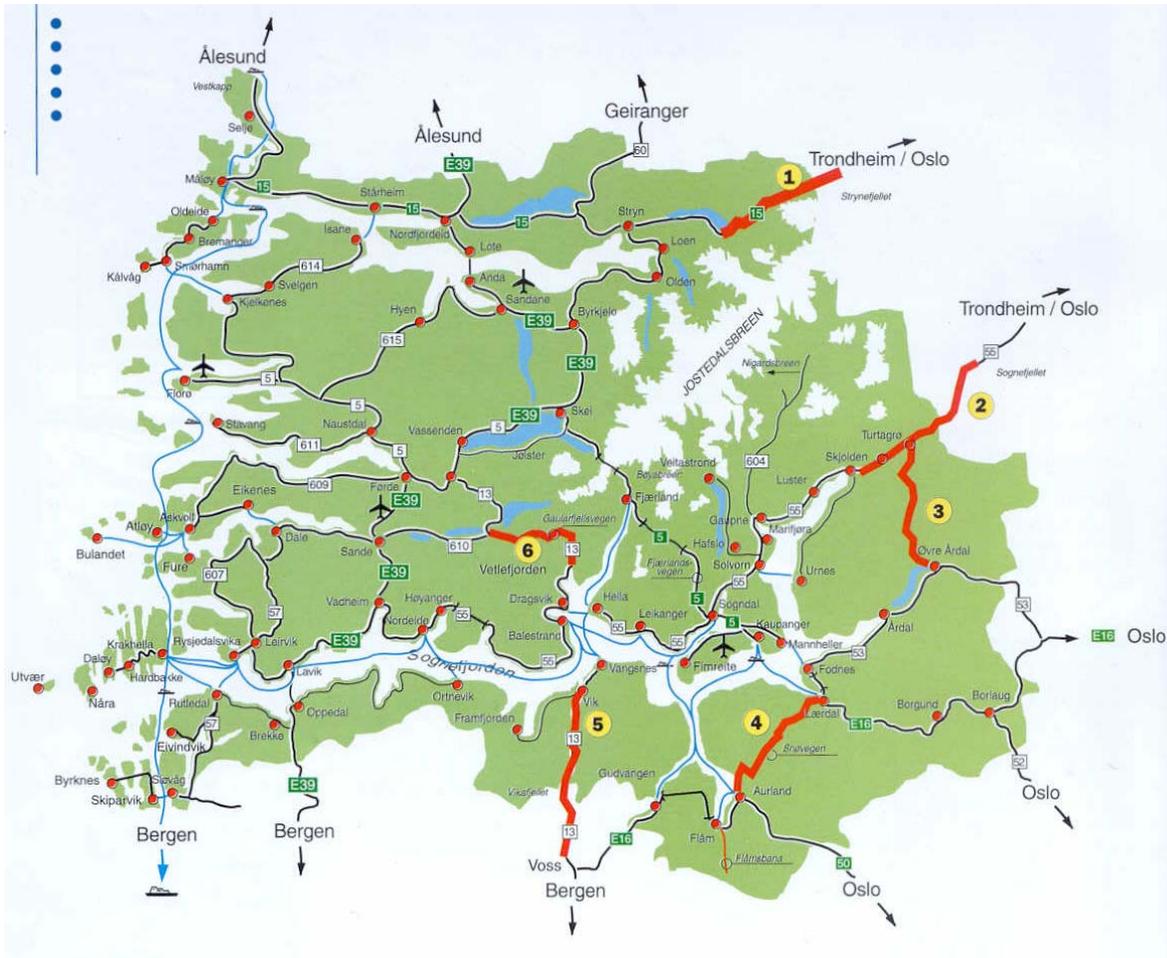
Scotland



Study Tour ~ September 1999



CONTENTS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
INTRODUCTION	3
SECTION 1 NORWAY TRIP ITINERARY.....	4
DAY 1 – SUNDAY 5 TH SEPTEMBER.....	4
DAY 2 – MONDAY 6 TH SEPTEMBER	4
DAY 3 – TUESDAY 7 TH SEPTEMBER	4
DAY 4 – WEDNESDAY 8 TH SEPTEMBER	6
DAY 5 – THURSDAY 9 TH SEPTEMBER	9
DAY 6 – FRIDAY 10 TH SEPTEMBER	12
DAY 7 – SATURDAY 11 TH SEPTEMBER	15
DAY 8 – SUNDAY 12 TH SEPTEMBER.....	15
SECTION 2 NORTH UIST REPORT	16
2.1 RELEVANCE TO NORTH UIST	16
2.2 LESSONS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION.....	16
2.3 LESSONS FOR REGIONAL/ NATIONAL POLICY	16
2.4 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS	17
2.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT.....	18
SECTION 3 TROTTERNISH REPORT.....	20
3.1 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS	20
3.2 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT.....	21
SECTION 4 NORTH SUTHERLAND REPORT	23
4.1 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS	23
4.2 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT.....	26
1 ~ THE NORWEGIAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	29
2 ~ AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN NORWAY.....	29
3 ~ FARM OWNERSHIP - LAND TENURE	29
4 ~ NORWEGIAN HOSTS.....	29
APPENDIX 1: THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - 1992-1995.....	30
APPENDIX 2: AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN NORWAY.....	41
APPENDIX 3 – FARM OWNERSHIP – LAND TENURE.....	45
APPENDIX 4 NORWEGIAN HOSTS.....	46



Map 1: The County of Sogn og Fjordane



Map 2: Location of Sogn og Fjordane

INTRODUCTION

In September 1999, a team of 15 people from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland visited Sogn og Fjordane, Norway. This study visit was organised at the kind invitation of the County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane. The County Governor's staff and the local communities involved hosted the Scottish delegates during the visit. Travel costs were funded through the Dùthchas Project and the participating Scottish agencies.

This visit is part of an on-going, 4 year link between the county of Sogn og Fjordane, and the development of the Dùthchas Project. Our links are particularly related to the Norwegian Rural Development Programme (see Appendix 1) but have also extended to include many other aspects of work in that County.

The first visit to Norway was in September 1996. A return visit was organised for a Norwegian delegation in June 1997. A team from Norway also attended the Dùthchas Transnational Conference held in Sutherland in April 1999. Many of the communities represented at these earlier visits hosted delegates on this visit. Reports from these previous visits, and other information is available from the Dùthchas Office on request.

The purpose of the study visit

- To enable local people from the three Dùthchas pilot areas (North Sutherland, North Uist and Trotternish, Skye) to gain an insight into sustainable rural development approaches in another peripheral area of Europe, which has many similarities to the Highlands and Islands
- To investigate and compare particular issues, in particular the use and protection of local natural resources (land, sea, water etc); local heritage; social provision and infrastructure
- To encourage long term links between the communities visited and the Duthchas areas

The visit took in a wide range of areas and experiences, from the coastal to the inland parts of Sogn og Fjordane. Most of the visits were to and with local communities.

Delegates commitment :

The Scottish team included representatives from each of the 3 Duthchas Pilot areas (see Appendix 4 for a list of delegates). The delegates were divided into 3 teams, based on the 3 pilot areas. Each team was asked to report on :

- Organisational aspects of each experience – structure, funding etc.
- Relevance of the experiences to the delegates' own area
- Analysis of sustainability and lessons for the Duthchas areas
- Overall lessons learned about the Norwegian context : administrative structure, public finance and support mechanisms etc.

The team is also responsible for disseminating the report and the experience as widely as possible in their own area through talks, slide shows, radio, press reports etc. This report was written by the area teams.



The Scottish Delegation

SECTION 1 NORWAY TRIP ITINERARY

DAY 1 – SUNDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

Travel to Aberdeen, from Uist, Skye, Sutherland and Inverness.

DAY 2 – MONDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER

Travel to Selje.

The first leg of the journey was by air from Aberdeen to Bergen and gave us an excellent introduction to the fjords and mountain valleys below. We could appreciate that boats were an essential form of transport, serving communities scattered along the coasts and islands. Every house appeared to have a small jetty and a couple of small boats. There seemed to be houses clinging to cliff faces where we would never attempt to build – however this ensured that all available land was utilised.

On arriving in Bergen we were able to briefly explore the harbour area of this colourful city with the ease that only comes with travelling light! Open-air markets selling a diverse range of local produce proved very interesting. Local seafood was on sale both for preparation at home and ready for consumption. (Dressed crab sold with a spoon). Animal skins including foxes, wolves, reindeer and mink! Handmade sweaters and crafts, and fresh fruit and vegetables along with tourist souvenirs.

The next leg of the journey was by high-speed catamaran from Bergen to Selje. These boats serve the main villages and towns along the coasts and the fjords. They are passenger carrying only and travel at a top speed of 38knots. They enter very narrow passages with ease.

The landscape changed dramatically throughout the journey – serrated coastline with numerous small villages, huge areas covered by woodland, and barren stretches with only bare rock and a few trees visible.

We arrived in Selje to a warm autumn evening and met by a welcoming committee, which included **Egil Nestande**, **Anders Anderson** and **Roar Vangsnes**, organisers of the study tour, from the County Governor's office.

DAY 3 – TUESDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER

RDP (Rural Development Programme) Seminar

We attended the start up seminar for new communities joining the RDP and received a brief introduction to the RDP, including background information for the Scottish representatives and an introduction to the community representatives from the RDP and the Scottish delegation. A brief introduction to Duthchas was given by Vanessa Halhead, Project Manager, and the three Area Co-ordinators.

Field visits to the Stadt Peninsula

The area of Outer Stadt (made up of 4 or 5 smaller townships) is one of the new communities joining Norway's RDP. The community highlighted a variety of existing developments, opportunities and issues.

Wind Power

The group viewed the site of a proposed wind farm on an imposing mountain ridge. There were objections against this proposal as it would be situated in a very scenic area – on top of a mountain where it would be very visible.



Refsnes School

Visit to Refsnes School, which was built by the local people when the Commune decided that the old school was to be closed down and the children bussed to school. There are 300 people in the surrounding area and 30 pupils and 5 teachers in the school.

Since the 1997 School Reform in Norway children must start school at 6 years old instead of 7 years. Basic English is taught from class 1. Outdoor sports and water-sports are also included in the timetable.

The new school was built with the help of the 1 million Norwegian Krone (approx. £90,000) from the sale of the old building to Nordic Marine Shipping Company. The community borrowed 800,000 NOK from the bank and this must now be repaid at a rate of 80,000 NOK each year. The community also donated 5,000 hours of free labour – painting, cleaning etc.



POW Tunnel

At the end of the Stadt peninsula was a small village which was used as a base during the German occupation during the war. Russian POW's were used to dig underground tunnels through the hillside to be used as a lookout post. The prisoners were then kept underground in the maze of tunnels. After the war the Russian bodies were recovered and placed in the local churchyard.

Red Norwegian Cattle

Red Norwegian Cattle is a combined breed for meat and milk production. Milk yield is medium as compared with the Fresian breed. Nets are in some cases used on the udders to protect them from mud and from being torn by sharp branches. Norway now overproduces milk and therefore prices are decreasing, causing problems for farmers.

Book Thieve Islands

These islands were seen out at sea from the look-out tunnel. Pedder Dass, a priest in the 16th century, also a fisherman and poet, was sailing with other monks with a special collection of books. The boat sank off these islands and although the people survived, all the books were lost. Therefore it was said that the islands stole them. Fish soup, rolls and fruit were served to the group while overlooking these islands.

St Svithun's Chapel

This beautiful chapel was built in memory of a shipwreck during the war, when the British bombed a Norwegian coastal steamer by mistake. Forty-five drowned and seventy-five survived.

Fish factory

Honningsford area is new to the RDP. The fish factory once packed white and farmed salmon but now only packs white fish because of legislation. At present they are landing 50,000 tons – however this is not viable. There are plans to increase the production to 80,000 tons. However they would need larger quantities still to be commercially viable – they are searching for an investor so they can upgrade. The fjord is exposed to the coast so a breakwater was built as an emergency harbour. The community is looking at the potential of the harbour being used as a marina for pleasure craft.

Agriculture

There are approximately 130 active farmers in Selje Commune with 30/40 of these full time. Each farm is approximately 7.6 hectares, keeps 8-10 cows and on average 50 sheep or goats. The livestock must be outside in summertime but can be brought in for milking. There are also mink and silver fox farms in the area.



General Briefing about the County of Sogn og Fjordane

The Norwegian Government structure is based on a three tier system; National Government, County Councils and Communes. In addition, County Governors provide a link between national government and county councils, representing national government at a county level.

The **County of Sogn og Fjordane** consists of 26 Communes (each with a population of 1,000 – 11,000). The County has an area of 18,634 sq.km and a population of 108,000. The county councils annual budget is NOK 1, 700million. The county also employs 3,200 people through the administration and responsibilities of the county. The County's economic base comes from hydropower, shipbuilding, fishing and fish farming, agriculture and tourism.

Each Commune has an income from the national taxes which they gather (they have a 20% share) and from local property taxes. They also receive funds from Central Government. There are 15 - 40 locally elected councillors for each commune. The County Governor checks that each Commune does not collect more tax for a service than it costs.

Agriculture

There are 5,400 farmers in Sogn og Fjordane, 1,700 full time. The average holding is 9 hectares of cultivated land (national average is 13 ha) with another 50 hectares of forestry. The land is privately owned by the farming families. Milk production is the highest sector followed by mutton and beef production. The other main sectors are fruit & veg production, forestry and poultry. Some Norwegian produce are at present protected by a custom barrier on imports. However, this may soon be phased out by the Government.

Boat trip to Selja and Silda islands.

Because of poor weather conditions we were unable to visit the ruins of the Monastery of St Sunniva. However we passed by, getting a good view from the boat.

Silda island

Approximately 40 people live on the island. There are no children and therefore no school. There are also no roads or cars on the island. We visit a floating restaurant, which in the summertime employs 5 people on a part time basis. Here we were served a buffet of fresh and smoked fish and shellfish.

DAY 4 – WEDNESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER

Touring Eid Commune and the Nordfjord area

Eid Commune adjoins Selje Commune and has approximately 6,000 of a population with half of these living in the town. This is a strong agricultural area with 300 farms. The area is also important for apple growing but 1999 was a bad season due to a cold spring.

Kjolsdalen

Kjolsdalen has a population of 500 and are former participants of RDP. They entered the RDP in 1995 with 10 board members; each village had at least one person on the board with Kjolsdalen itself having four people, as it is the largest area. There were one or two responsible leaders for each project they started. At first they carried out a resources demands survey which asked the community about their personal, social and environmental demands. They based the projects on these local demands. Mostly they were projects, which would build up local identity.

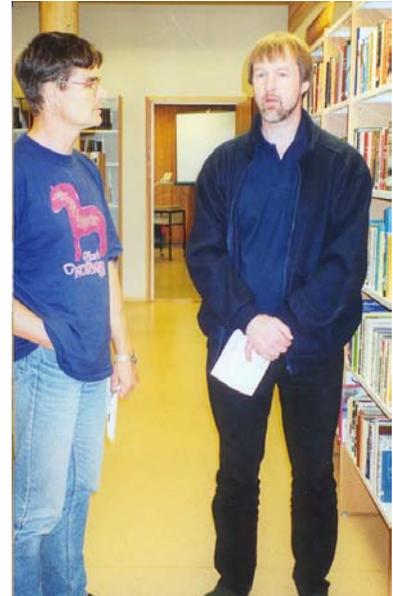
They received 80,000NOK each year for 3 years from RDP and used it as seedcorn finance. They believe that IT is central to any community and that it is a tool in rural development. Rural areas should not be excluded from IT and they should use it to create an advantage against the competition. They have their own website, which has information about Kjolsdalen community and local history (<http://www.westweb.no/kkul>). This is also used to market the country life to the young so that they will return. As their Y2K project they plan to put the genealogy of every family on computer. They also encourage people to e-mail politicians, councillors and members of their board with questions or queries.

Another project was to produce a map of the local area, which was user friendly and showed the natural and cultural sites in Kjolsdalen. They have a local newsletter, which keeps the community involved with the projects.

Community School & Library

After the school reform in 1997, when children started school from the age of 6 years, they found that the old school was too small. Therefore a new school and play area was built. Local people helped with the general labour but are not allowed to do specialist jobs such as plumbing or electrical work.

They asked the pupils what they wanted in the area surrounding the school. They then set up a project group consisting of the headmaster, parents, Eid Commune representatives and local sports groups. Their ideas were given to a local architect who worked with them to produce the plans. The whole project cost 2 million NOK – 650,000 NOK came from the State and Eid Commune, the rest came from voluntary work which helped to pull in public funds. The project is not yet complete but 90% of the original plans are now finished. Drumnock School in Aberdeenshire is in contact by e-mail with Kjolsdalen School.



Starheim

Visit to Steinar Myrold's Farm

The 4.7 hectare farm has been in the family for approximately 40 years. They are in the most northerly fruit growing region of Norway. They produce strawberries, raspberries, apples and Christmas trees. They have two large polytunnels, which house early strawberries (June) although many more are grown outside. They use integrated techniques so that a nearly organic product is produced which does not require pesticides – strawberries are kept off the ground so there is less chance of mould occurring. They get a three year crop from the strawberry plants. He propagates them himself and has a nursery bed. They have a freezing unit on site so that strawberries are frozen immediately without being washed. If they are frozen within 2 hours of being picked they will not go soggy when defrosted. Strawberries are sold direct from the farm as he has made a good name for himself over the years. The apples are sold through a co-operative. He gets 35NOK per kilo for strawberries and slightly less for raspberries, 5 NOK per kilo for apples.

In December people come and pick out a Christmas tree and he cuts it for them. He is also kept busy pruning apple trees in winter. In addition, they have a small museum showing animals shot by his father during his travels. His father also sells seven books, which he has written.

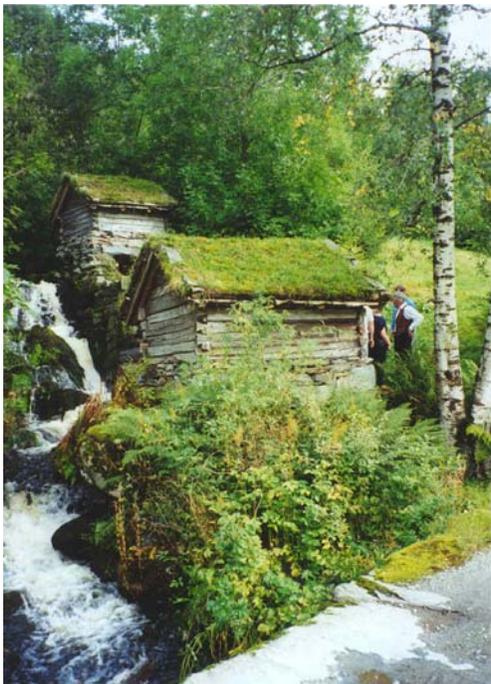




Haugen

Local timber and wood processing

The group visited a mobile sawmill belonging to Geir Ove Smordal. The Canadian machine can be operated by one person – the double bandsaw reducing handling. Logs are processed directly into planks. Some is exported and some is used furniture production by Peder Engeland. The project demonstrated the benefit of adding value to indigenous resources at source. The plant goes from farm to farm so there are no transportation costs for the raw material.



Lunch at Tippatunet Farm

Tippatunet Farm has a small museum, café and handicraft shop. We were first given a chance to sample the home brewed beer and told a little about how the farm has turned to tourism to help support it. The farmer and his wife greeted us in national costume and invited us in for mutton soup and lafte (dry flat bread – made of flour and water).

The museum houses various national costumes and old implements that were used on the farm for cheese making and drying and salting meat. The museum was their old house and was an older style than the modern house – wooden structure raised one story off the ground (area underneath used for storage) with a birch bark and turf roof for insulation (same roofs are used in the Faeroes). The steps were about a foot from the door in order to keep small animals like mice out! The nearby stream had once been used for milling. There were four small millhouses, similar to those found in the Western Isles, two for the farmer who used to live up the hill and two for the farmer at the bottom of the hill. These were also turf roofed huts.

Nordfjordeid

Gamlebanken – Culture House

The “culture house”, is a 100 year old building that was a bank until 1963. The community decided to take the building, as they needed a focal point for cultural activity. This culture house is one of the things they hope will make it more attractive for people to return to the area. They have two years to try and make it work – during this time they will not have to pay rent, only the electricity. They are one year into these two years. They wanted a building that would involve as many people as possible; therefore they hold small concerts, talks, puppet shows and video and drawing workshops, a music room and display the work of six artists and have sculptures in the garden.

Opera Nordfjord

Opera Nordfjord is a local opera company with five local volunteers on the Board. This year they are producing La Traviata. They use professional singers and musicians for the main roles but a local amateur chorus. The orchestra and choral society is brought together from professional musicians throughout Sogn og Fjordane but they also have 150 people working for free. It brings all of society together from farmers to doctors.



However it is a high quality production. Professional technicians teach local volunteers how to do the lighting, hair and make up, costumes and floor management and they stay until the premier, after that it is up to the local people. There are usually four shows but this year they will have six shows. They require 1million NOK to put on the show, some they receive from door entry. They receive funding from Eid Commune and Sogn og Fjordane County (110,000 NOK each) and 100,00 NOK from the Rural Development Fund.

They believe that it is important for small communities to have something new and high profile, something, which is as interesting as anything you would find in the city and something that gives them a sense of ownership. They believe that their “artistic role is to touch people’s hearts”.

Members of the Community Music School entertained us with traditional fiddle tunes. There are three groups in Eid who play traditional folk music. The “Fiddle Team” comprises 15 fiddlers, guitarists, a double base player and an accordionist.

Stryn

Stryn Commune has a population of approximately 6,000. This is the largest tourism area in the county. One of the main industries is a bus factory, which employs 60 people. The main town is Forde, which is the administration centre for the county. It has the district University, most of the car dealerships, hospitals and 8,000 people in the town.

Oldedalen Valley

Guided by Inge Melkevoll

The last ice age ended 10,000 years ago and this formed the hills and surrounding landscape. Olden Lake is 7km long and is a green/grey colour because the glacier at the head of the valley grinds 1mm per year off the rocks beneath and this causes dust, which floats in the lake. The glacier moves about 1m per week but it also melts each week which balances out the advancing effect.

There is an average rainfall of 1,200mm in Olden. This valley is warmer than the surrounding valleys because as you go up the glacier the temperature drops 0.6 °C per 100 metres. Therefore the warm air is compressed in the valley – it is the first place to go green in the spring. Birch trees near the glacier are green in April. Because the valley lies east to west it means that for 4 months of the year they do not see the sun. Even in summer time they only see the sun between 7am and 5pm. The road out of Olden was built in 1955, before this they used a boat in summer and horse and sleigh in winter.

Accommodation at Signe Abrekk’s farm in turf roofed cabins.
Dinner and local entertainment at Brikdalen Fjellstove with the local community.

DAY 5 – THURSDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER

Olden

Water Bottling Plant

Four members of the community had the idea for glacier mineral water after hearing of a sailor who was surprised that he could not buy Norwegian water abroad. People laughed at the idea as mistakes had been made in the past. They tested various samples and sent them to a lab for analysis. They invited investors to join them in tests as they realised they needed help from a distributor who would be able to secure shelf space. Several breweries were interested and in the end they chose one in Bergen. The brewery now has 80% control while the four original community members have 20%. This is less than they first wanted but they are now quite happy with the arrangement.



When they started the total Norwegian consumption of bottled water was 6 million litres - this has now risen to 50 million litres. 15 million litres of that is Olden Water – they have 20% of the Norwegian market. They also export to Sweden and have tried the USA. Each month they send a container to Japan.

This project has helped to put the area on the map as the name is on the bottle and the lorries. The plant has also given much employment to the area. In summer they work 3 shifts of 20 people working 7.5 hours. In winter they only have two shifts. Each shift they

produce 25,000 litres of water. They bottle them in ½ litre bottles and 20 litre containers for coolers. Every hour 6,800 ½litre bottles are produced. They can only use new bottles although these bottles can then be reused 12 – 14 times (but not for water) before being recycled. Each bottle has a shelf life of 1 year. They have a licence for natural mineral water, which is of a much higher quality than spring water. Spring water can be filtered and processed and is therefore not so natural.

Brikdalen Glacier

The group walked up to glacier with stops to discuss Jostedalbreen National Park and the local farmer's horse transport co-operative.



All the farmers in the valley have an old agreement, which gives them a right to transport tourists up to the glacier using horse and cart. This agreement originated from the time the road was built – it was shared out according to the work done by each farmer. However the farmer who owns the land surrounding the glacier has all other rights – restaurant, souvenirs etc. Because of this agreement no one else can come in and compete. As agriculture decreased tourism moved in – now there are 250,000 tourists a year. There are two companies from outside which take tourists onto the glacier. Both these companies are now training local people as guides and instructors.

Travel to Eldalsden through Gloppen, Jolster and Forde Communes

Gaular Commune has a population of 3,000. The main industry is agriculture although it also claims to have the best fishing lakes in Western Norway for trout and salmon. The River Gaular stretches from the glacier and is 50 km long with 29 waterfalls. This is now a protected "Wild River" after a 20-year battle to have it protected against hydropower. There are 340 protected rivers in Norway and both the local and national government have an obligation to look after them.

Visit to Giant Pine

Served with juice and buns. The giant pine is one of the attractions in Kjelstand Nature Park – which has signposted walks with sites of natural and historical significance. Norway is one of the few countries with legal public access all land (except domestic and in-by). You are allowed to walk, ski, ride and cycle. You may also gather flowers, berries, and mushrooms.

Hestad Kapelle

The chapel here was built in 1805 after the original stave church was demolished. People used to take boats to church as there were no roads and therefore the church was built on a causeway-like area of land (this is now a protected landscape). The church sits 100 people, although half of them have to sit with their back to the minister. The men sat on the right hand side and the women on the left. The pillory stone outside was used for people who did not attend church regularly or women who were pregnant outside marriage – they had to stand there and be ridiculed.

The chapel has a guide for one month in the summer and the costume is supplied by the preservation society. The chapel is still used for christenings, weddings and funerals, as well as a service on New Years Eve and 29th July when a bonfire is lit outside.



Accommodation at Hov Hyttegrend

Supper and Evening Programme at Eldal Tre & Rosemaling by the local community.

- Display of traditional dancing and music on the Hardanger Fiddle by local young people.
- Slide show of surrounding environment
- Talk about forestry, timber and woodworking

Forestry

Following a long period of de-forestation, in 1958 the government passed a policy to plant as many trees as possible and by 1965 five million trees had been planted in Sogn og Fjordane. The Norway spruce, which is the fastest growing tree, though not indigenous to western Norway, now has a vast number considering the number planted between 1955 – 65 alone. However there is much debate as to its suitability as it is an introduced species. There are also problems because it has a shallow root and can easily be blown over in storms – fallen trees are difficult to manage. Mixed woodland is good for bio-diversity and also helps protected bird species.

By law all municipalities must have access to a forestry advisor. The forestry department's priority now is to build roads to access the timber from the many smallholdings. The government is also encouraging the afforestation of cultivated land but this has not been popular. Communes have been ordered to produce plans for their forests, integrated with other planning controls and GIS.

There are various problems with forestry at present such as low pay for timber, high cost of transportation, distance from markets and the need to find new markets (they are looking at Scotland as a target market). There is also a need to convince customers that the quality of timber from northern areas is as high as from southern communes.

DAY 6 – FRIDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER

Breakfast at Eldal Tre & Rosemaling

- Visit to handicraft shop and workshop. Traditional carved plates, painted boxes and knitwear. Demonstrations in the workshops.
- Talk by Wenche Kvellestad about RDP
- Eldalsdalen have this year finished their 3 years in the RDP
- Talk about background of area and the craft business
- Presentation about planned waterfall interpretation Centre



Eldalsdalen RDP

The projects started by the community included having signs put up with the local old names. A knitting business was started, run by 2 local people who have revived old patterns. Support was given to shooting and fishing and assistance was given to a hairdresser to set up a business. Help was given with preparing areas for house building and two old school houses were renovated and used for meetings. Each spring there is a 'tidy-up' day when the local youth organisations (10-18 year olds) rent a container and tidy up the area.

Future plans include parking for tourists, handicapped and tourist access, a biological fuel plant and the promotion of Norwegian and local food culture.

Background

We heard from the son-in-law of the couple who owned the place. He gave us some background to the area. The earliest known farm in the area was established in 1535. In 1957 all the houses were swept away in a landslide.

He told us about his parents' craft business. Due to the low prices received for sending wood to the sawmill or to pulp mills in the east of Norway, his parents decided to make wooden products for sale.

There had been a long tradition in Viksdalen of rose painting on wooden boxes etc. It was a winter activity and the objects were taken to Bergen in the spring and sold. After 1900 there was a decline in rose painting and by 1920 the best painter had died. In 1976 Olfe (the mother) decided to study the rose painting patterns in the museums. She collected the patterns and they now sell them from their house.

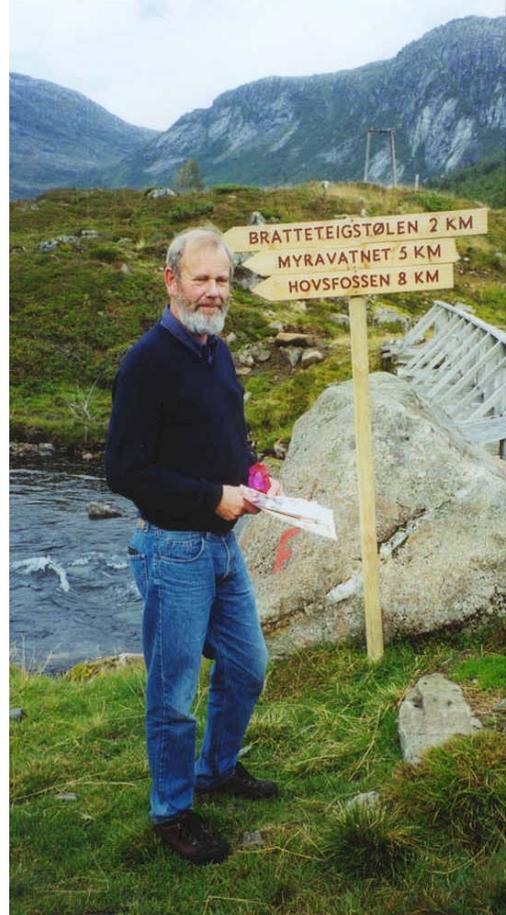
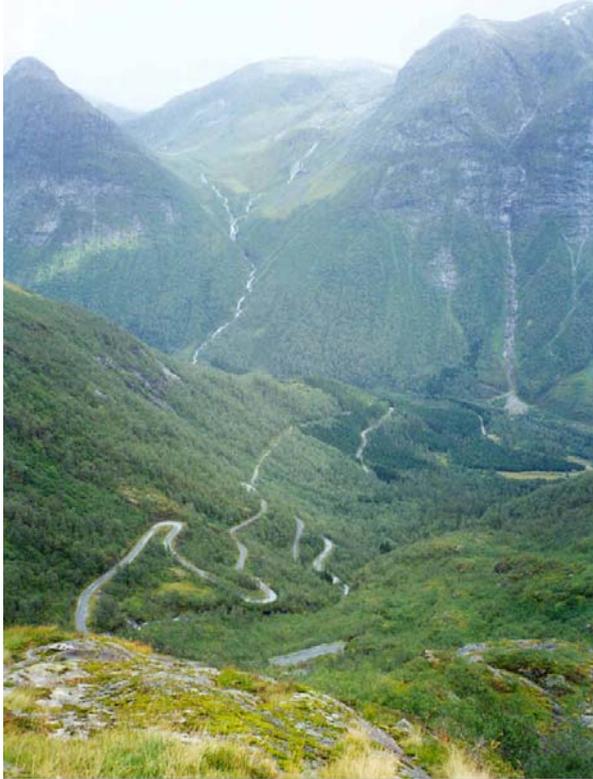
The future is difficult for farmers with small farms on very steep ground, low prices, no profits and long days. He believes many will disappear in the coming years but they can survive if they diversify. The government still sees value in keeping people in the countryside so there is support for new projects.

Waterfall Centre and Walks

Guided by Ottar Hov.

This watercourse has the most waterfalls in one area of Europe. The tourists wanted planned walks that were sign-posted, although the locals knew all the walks anyway. The whole community used to go to the out-farms, which were half way up the mountain. However nowadays they feel they have to teach the young about the outdoors and convince them that it is fun, as they are more used to being inside with TV's and computers.

The planned waterfall interpretation centre (near Hov cabins) will cost 13 million NOK and they are looking for assistance to build and run the centre. They can receive 20 - 30 % bank credit but are looking at other possibilities. 12km of the planned 22km in the waterfall path has already been completed. The paths are sign-posted and have easy access over bridges. We walked about 2km of the course.



Crossing Gaularfjell mountain pass
Guiding by Leife Grinde, headmaster from Balestrand
Stopped at view point overlooking Veteifjordan Valley

The road was built in 1938 after demand for a short cut, which would help the connection between the valleys. The road into the valley has 13 hairpin bends. It was started from

the bottom with only one lorry and each bend is named after the foreman in the work group who built it. The snowpoles along the road are 6m high but sometimes they are covered in snow. They plan to have the road open between 1 May and as late into the autumn as possible each year.

When the powerstation, which is in the valley, was being considered, its effects on the valley had to be taken into account. The negative points were that it would have a visual impact because of pipes and wires, it would damage the fishery and would remove and reduce waterfalls. The positive benefits were that it would create 5 jobs and give 450,000NOK to the commune annually.

Shooting Season

The 10th September is the first day that farmers are allowed to start shooting. Farmers are given a quota that they can kill, through negotiation between the community and ministry of the environment. There are heavy fines if they take more than their allowance – this is checked by the authorities. They keep some of the meat for themselves and sell the rest to friends.

Sanga Day

The 11th September is collecting day. This is when everyone is obliged to go out into the hills and gather sheep in time for winter.

Visit to hatchery

Salmon and trout died in the rivers as a result of the power station making the water too warm for them to breed. The water is warmer in winter than it should be and colder in summer than normal. As there was no natural reproduction

in the river the hatchery was started as a hobby to restock the river. However the owner is now battling with the County Council for funds, as the costs are too high.

Lunch at Fjordane Primary School

Lunch and entertainment was provided by the pupils and teachers at this school. There are 15 pupils, 5 teachers and 4 kindergarten pupils. Two special needs children are integrated into the mainstream. The pupils entertained us with songs (in English), keyboard and accordion tunes. However this school is at risk of closure as the commune want to bus the children to another larger school.

Flexibo – Furniture Factory

The factory was established in 1980 by Srein Endre Gronlund and his wife. They have a retail outlet in Bergen, which is managed by their son and daughter-in-law. The factory makes specialised bathroom and kitchen furniture for handicapped people. The furniture is electronically controlled by the user so that it can move to accommodate their needs. This is the only factory of its kind in Norway, maybe in Europe. They used to source wood from others but they only use their own wood. They employ 9 local people and at present have a turnover of 8 million NOK. Their plan for the next 3 years is to reach a turnover of 10 million NOK.

At present the family are extending their business to include 3 holiday houses specially built to accommodate handicapped people. It will be possible to reach the houses and the beach by wheelchair and there will also be a specially adapted boat to use.

Every member of the Scottish group was presented with a wooden picnic tray produced at the factory.

Fjordane Community Shop and Petrol Station

Presentation by Inga Midtunn

Two years ago the village shop was in danger of closing as the owner wished to retire and no one was willing to buy it outright. The shop also had a small fuel station but the supplier was threatening to stop supplying. The community felt the shop and fuel station to be of prime importance to the survival of the village. Without the shop people would start to travel to the larger towns and it would be less attractive for tourists to come and stay in the Chalets and B&B's around the area. The villagers therefore decided to embark on a co-operative venture to buy the shop. Everybody in the village has at least one share in the shop - This gives everyone an incentive to use it and to keep it. The shop was refitted by voluntary effort and today employs one person full time. Villagers work on a voluntary rota basis doing other tasks such as stocking shelves.

The fuel station was another challenge. As soon as the shop owner transferred the shop to the community the Oil Supplier pulled out and stated that they wished to remove the pumps. The community had to buy the pumps and was able to re-instate a supply but could not have any livery on the pumps. This made the station look as if it were closed. With some guidance from a small grocers consultant, the community co-op joined forces with some other small grocers and set up their own company which they called Fjord Oil. They then started purchasing the fuel on the stock market themselves and set up their own distribution system ensuring a future for the fuel station in the village.

Visit to Kraftstasjon Power Station

Due to essential maintenance works we were unable to have a tour of the Power Station but were given a **talk and Video presentation.**



The building of this Hydro Power scheme was a contentious issue from the day the idea was first mooted, throughout construction and even today despite it providing 5 jobs in the area and bringing in 450,000NOK to Balestrand Commune each year. Consent to build the power station was granted in 1985 and work started in 1986. The construction of the power station began high in the mountains above Mel in inhospitable terrain covered by snow and ice for almost half the year. The construction contract was a great feat of engineering and the contractors suffered many setbacks during the 3 year construction period including the total demolition of the site offices, compound and machinery by a night time avalanche. Fortunately no one was killed but before work could start again avalanche protection had to be built. The Power station opened in 1989.

Supper at Fjordane Community Hall

- Traditional dancers and singers entertained.
- Local dishes using local produce prepared by the community.
- Final Presentation to Scottish representatives
- Presentation to Fjordane Community, local guides and County Governor representatives who organised the trip.

DAY 7 – SATURDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

Balestrand

Leife Grinde, the local guide met us in Balestrand and gave a historical tour of the village. We visited the internationally famous hotel to view paintings, traditional carved furniture and tapestries. Later free time to explore the village took in, churches, statues and the Aquarium.

Express Catamaran from Balestrand to Bergen

DAY 8 – SUNDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER

Bergen

Free day to explore Bergen. Everyone went their separate ways to see what was of interest to themselves; funicular to top of mountain for excellent panoramic views, art galleries, museums, the old town and souvenir shopping. Getting a last look at the colourful buildings of Bergen before flying back to Aberdeen in the evening.



SECTION 2 NORTH UIST REPORT

2.1 RELEVANCE TO NORTH UIST

The county of Sogn og Fjordane, which hosted the study from Scotland, consists of 26 communes which face the same issues as North Uist. Each commune has 1,000 – 11,000 of a population with many of the people rural areas, which are not always easily accessible. only two communes in this county with no access to the therefore most of the communities have close links to the communities in North Uist. Each commune is approximately 4 or 5 hours from Bergen, the nearest city

The rural farming communities relate to crofting communities here in that the average farm is only 7.6 and cannot in most cases support a family full time. the farmers have part time jobs although many are now looking at ways of diversification, including rural tourism alternative crops. They are also looking at ways to add primary produce, which is also an issue in Uist.

Another problem faced by both Norway and Scotland is retention in rural areas. Young people move to the cities further education and then don't return to the rural areas. there are plenty of rural jobs for young Norwegians to choose from, many choose to stay in the city. Therefore the population balance in rural areas is affected. The communes have been looking at ways to attract the young to return to the rural areas.



group
many of
between
living in
There are
sea,
sea as do
centre.

hectares
Most of
also
and
value to

youth
for jobs or
Although

2.2 LESSONS FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

After looking at the Norwegian Rural Development Programme it became apparent that there were four important factors to community development which should be noted.

- Development needs to be at a level and speed, which the community identifies and feels comfortable with
- Communities must have access to non-targeted seedcorn funding and support
- Belief in communities must be achieved within agencies
- Self-belief and confidence must be stimulated in the communities themselves

Norwegian communities also taught us some lessons about retaining the population:

- Sell rural life to children while they are young so that they are proud of where they come from. These values are then in-built. "Coming home is a step forward not backwards."
- Promote traditional industries and skills while still promoting diversification and development. It is important that our children know about their heritage and roots if they are to return.

2.3 LESSONS FOR REGIONAL/ NATIONAL POLICY

- When we look at the Norwegian Government structure it is based on a three tier system; National Assembly (with County Governors), County Councils and Commune Councils (1,000 –11,000 population). The Communes have an income from the income taxes which they gather (they have a 20% share) and from local property taxes. They also receive funds from Central Government. This all points to an administrative system, which is well financed but is also close to the people. It also points to local empowerment since the communes have the power to make decisions for themselves.

- The Norwegian Government has a national policy of distributing industry evenly throughout the country. There is also a policy of encouraging people to stay in rural areas. Both the county and the commune create a wide range of jobs for people through their administration. All of this ensures a vibrant community – there is a range of jobs available for every skill level, which ensures that there is no drain of people leaving to look for jobs in the cities.
- Land tenure is another important issue, which differs in Norway. Land is privately owned by the farming families and is passed on to the first born. This means that the land can only be sold outside the family if the children agree to it. Even if land is to be sold outside the family, the government must approve the sale and the new owners agree to the set criteria (agree to live on and work the farm for at least 5 years). The State also has a right of pre-emption if the land is sold outside the family. A family who sells land (which they have owned for 20 years) also have a right of pre-emption if the land is re-sold at a later date. Few families sell their land, which ensures that rural areas are not losing their population or being bought up by absent landowners.

2.4 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

We analysed our experiences in Norway against the Duthchas definition of sustainability for rural areas, which has the following four components:

Maximising benefit from natural and cultural resources by wise use, and by protecting and enhancing these resources.

Examples of maximising benefits from natural resources in Norway included rural tourism projects, which capitalise on the area's natural beauty and wildness (fjords and glaciers). The farmers co-operative at Briksdalen Glacier shows how they are working together to protect themselves and the natural resources. As the enterprise is exclusive to a small number of farmers and only allows horse transport the area will not be damaged by over use or over development. Natural local produce are also used to promote the area's healthy image, with hotels and guest houses serving local meat, shellfish, cheese and vegetables. Many of the small farmers are now diversifying into tourism or into alternative crops which can be sold locally.

Local crafts using local materials are another example of using both natural and cultural resources. In one enterprise we visited, a low income from raw timber was turned into profit by adding value to the wood. The proprietor researched traditional crafts to create unique hand-crafted and hand-painted boxes and baskets. Another enterprise had revived traditional knitting patterns, which were no longer in use, to produce beautiful garments to sell to the tourists. Traditional music and dance is also kept alive through being passed on to the younger generations.

Retaining a viable and empowered community.

The Norwegians proved that if you want a viable community you must retain the population, especially the young. To achieve this there must be employment opportunities for skilled and non-skilled people. This is achieved in Norway through a policy of industry dispersal and local commune job opportunities. However, they also emphasised the importance of social activities – rural areas must be fun places to live, with activities, which will compete with the city. People must also feel involved in the community and therefore local planning is important. The RDP shows that the communities are trusted to look after their own future development and encourages self-belief within the community. The Rural Development Fund is given to the community without restriction on its use. This all leads to a strong and empowered community.

Reducing problems of remoteness by delivering local needs locally and reducing dependence on external inputs.

There were numerous examples of Norwegian communities delivering local needs locally. The culture house and opera projects in Nordfjordeid were set up in order to ensure that a social and cultural life on a par with the city was available. It was recognised that people, especially young people, who were thinking of returning, would be encouraged if they could have a fun and exciting social life in rural areas. Both these projects involved the whole community.

We visited a community, which has provided school facilities locally for their children. After the Commune wished to close the school and bus the children elsewhere, the parents and the rest of the community came together to raise the money to build a community school. The community felt that it was important to have the school as a focal point in the village. They also felt that families were less likely to move to a village with no school. At another school the community had raised money to add a library and youth facility to the school after the other facilities were closed. In both cases the community felt a strong need for the facility and believed that it was possible to provide the facility themselves. Many hours of voluntary work was contributed to both facilities.

Fjordane Community Shop is a great example of the community coming together to secure a facility, which is an essential local need. The community felt that to be without the local shop could deter both tourists and people who were thinking of returning, therefore they all bought at least one share in the co-operative. Rather than depend on an external supplier for the fuel station they set up their own oil company with other small operators and now buy their fuel direct. Therefore the community themselves have control of two important facilities in the village.

However some of the communities were dependent on external inputs to some extent – for example the hydro power companies which in return for the use of their resources paid them an annual sum. Some communities depended on this money and felt it justified the damage or disruption to the area, which was caused. However these communities may now be so dependent on this income that if the hydro company pulled out they would suffer dramatically.

Minimising the negative and enhancing the positive impacts of actions on other places and communities and on future generations.

The deer quota ensures that the deer are kept at a manageable level; they will not destroy the forest or arable areas and will not starve in the winter through too much competition for food. Therefore the farmers get to control their land and shoot for venison but the number of deer will not be affected dramatically and will remain for future generations.

There is also an emphasis on the use of renewable energy sources such as wind and water. The houses are also built in an energy efficient way with excellent insulation using local timber. Many older buildings are restored so that the traditional style remains and are used for diversification into tourism. This also helps the visual appeal of the area and helps people to remember their heritage.

2.5 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT

Immediate concrete action in North Uist

- To return to the PAAG and report on the lessons learned on the Norway Study Trip. To advise them that we learned that development works best at a very local level; therefore that **local** task groups should be set up in villages who have an idea for a **local** project. That the group would take control of this project for themselves but have the co-ordinator available for advice or information needs.

1 action at national / regional level

- To lobby for the decentralisation of budgets as well as jobs. Although there are now moves for the decentralisation of jobs throughout the islands, having looked at the Norwegian system, we feel that this alone is not enough. If a local budget is not available for the use of the person on the ground they have no real power and the decision is actually made at central level as before. (Probably by someone who has no real knowledge of the area or the people). What is the sense in creating local jobs if they do not have local power to help tackle local needs?
- Lobby: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, HIE, Jim Hunter, Councillors, MP, MSP, Donald Dewar, Alex Salmond, etc.

Dissemination plan for North Uist

- Am Paipair – two articles in October & November

- Radio nan Gaidheal – interview on return to Uist
- Eorpa – seen by most of Uist!
- Presentation to PAAG – informal meeting planned; slides & photos.
- Over 60's Club – slide show
- Community Hall Presentations – chance for people in every community to see what we learned. Could maybe be tied into asking the community if there is a need for a local task group.

Inter-community links

- Primary Schools linked though e-mail/internet
- Taigh Chearsabhaigh linked to Culture House (e-mail?)
- UCVO interested if suitable voluntary organisation found.
- SNH interested if suitable conservation representative found.
- Community Council link to Communes we visited.
- Community Halls linked to one of the community halls we visited.
- Task groups (when set up) linked to groups who have already completed similar projects through RDP.
- Lochmaddy SAC (Marine Project) interested in link if there is a marine conservation project or community marine management scheme.

3.1 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

We analysed our experiences in Norway against the Dutch definition of sustainability for rural areas, which has the following four components:

Maximising benefit from natural and cultural resources by wise use, and by protecting and enhancing these resources.

Observations

- Much use of water for power and bottling for consumption. Clean image of country makes a good selling point for bottled water.
- Extensive use of timber from forestry.
- Young people encouraged to go out and enjoy the wild. Nature trails.
- Landscape has an organised visual appeal. Man and environment in tune with each other.
- Blots on landscape kept to a minimum eg scrapped cars taken away – council pays.
- Regulated deer hunting – each farmer has quota for killing.
- Wide participation in cultural activities eg major operatic production involving large cross section of people
- Ruins and old buildings well maintained eg if there is a ruin by the roadside, put roof on it.
- Much made of local produce and pride in displaying it.
- Conservation areas and interpretive centres available to increase awareness of natural and cultural resources.



Recommendations for Trotternish

- Investigate renewable energy possibilities eg community windfarms
- Support and develop water bottling proposal
- Encourage Council to provide free uplift scheme for scrap vehicles and machinery
- Look to adopting forests within the area – purchased by local community land unit.
- Look to leasing/buying fishing lochs and rivers from SOAFD – land unit.
- Co operation within area
- Resource audit – what is in the area

Retaining a viable and empowered community

Observations

- Strong community support for local projects. Political system helps.
- Communities are more empowered than we are.
- Much voluntary work relating to local projects indicates a determination to see it through and succeed.
- Distinctive identity of local products is promoted.
- Successful local initiatives encourage young people to return and settle.
- Strength of local organisation.
- Access to local seed funding and support(development officer)
- Sense of belonging in communities

Recommendations for Trotternish

- Generate more community confidence – work together as an area, support each other.
- Work to encourage more power to communities.
- Look to developing more croft production of fruit and veg.
- Try to research a local co-operative system for butchering stock.
- Encourage participation – Community Councils.

Reducing problems of remoteness by delivering local needs locally and reducing dependence on external inputs.

Observations

- Affordable fast integrated system of transport- express ferry boats calling at many community stops.
- Keen to deliver education as locally as possible.
- Full time jobs created in communities eg water bottling plant.

Recommendations for Trotternish

- More use of sea crossings eg Staffin to Gairloch
- Lobby to reduce fuel costs – co-operative purchases.
- Work to create more full time work in communities – move public bodies into our area such as crofting entrants scheme officer and Crofters Commission staff.
- Use of ICT to enable new form of working

Minimising the negative and enhancing the positive impacts of actions on other places and communities and on future generations.

Observations

- High efficiency in the use of water and timber.
- Land tenure system looks ahead to future generations
- Communications and links between communities.

Recommendations for Trotternish

- Develop shared links and visions between communities ie 4 sub areas
- Adopt a “Walk Trotternish” marketing plan to strengthen the clean and accessible landscape.
- Recognition by public agencies of the importance of Gaelic and culture and its role in strengthening communities.
- Highlight benefits of an area project to all other areas
- Look at different models – integrating traditional agriculture with horticulture/forestry.
- Emphasis on quality stock – strike a balance with environment

3.2 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT

Immediate concrete action in Trotternish:

See points made above in section 2.

Action at national/regional level:

See points made above in section 2.

Dissemination Plan

- Brief report to heads of department of Highland Council

- Presentation to community councils in Kilmuir and Uig
- PAAG sent copy of local report, and covered in PAAG meeting
- Radio interviews
- Talks to Trotternish WRI

Inter-community Links

- One of the Skye delegation made a return visit to the water bottling plant to investigate further the feasibility of similar enterprise in Trotternish.

4.1 SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

We analysed our experiences in Norway against the Dutch definition of sustainability for rural areas, which has the following four components:

Maximising benefit from natural and cultural resources by wise use, and by protecting and enhancing these resources

We found that the Norwegians are adept at using local produce and local resources and that use of local resources is protected by legislation.



Timber

We found that one of the best used resources in the communes is timber. Almost all the buildings we visited, whether a community building, holiday cabin, school or business, were built from and fitted out in wood. Household items such as trays, storage, plates, light fittings etc were often made of wood, plastic and formica seem to have been banished. The Norwegian Forestry Department's top priority is to build roads to access timber with a large state subsidy. The Flexibo factory which makes elevating furniture for the disabled is a good example of using timber imaginatively - no other company is producing this kind of furniture (none in UK either).

Relevance to Sutherland:

- Potential for marketing local timber locally and further afield, using it imaginatively for building and products as well as firewood.

Lessons for practical application:

- The mobile sawmill SELECT 4221 would be ideal for Borgie and other local forests highly mobile, high volume production (up to 3 feet per second), double cut blade which cuts in both directions.
- Examine possibility of transporting timber by rail from Kinbrace or by sea from Scrabster or Kinlochbervie.
- Norwegians acknowledge the Slovaks are the oldest experts on trees in the world and co-operate with them.

Lessons for regional/national policy:

- Lobby for money to be invested in roads to make mature timber accessible.
- Promote timber processing at/near source and support marketing locally and further afield.
- Be aware that Norwegians are looking for a new market and Scotland is one of its targets.

Food

Most of the food we were served was locally produced fish, jams, fruit, honey, cheese, milk, butter, meat, vegetables and home made bread and rolls. The dairy farmers are not expected to produce the maximum per cow, the more they produce the less they receive in subsidy. This system is more sustainable and better for small units. There is also an environment tax which takes the form of a tax on fertilisers - they are penalised for using fertilisers rather than expected to pay a premium to be classed as organic as we are here - again a system which benefits smaller producers and discouraged over production. The average coastal farmer in Norway has 30/40 ha, 8-10 cows, about 50 sheep and no barley. The average inland farmer has 70 ha, app 20 cows, barley and 50 sheep. The Norwegians benefit from strong import controls which reduces their need to compete with world markets.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- In Britain 60% of the mutton and lamb sold is imported from New Zealand therefore producers (crofters) are not only competing against big farmers but against the world market.
- Subsidies per head irrelevant to total number, and you have to pay to become organic.

Lessons for practical example:

- Be proud of and use local products wherever possible.

Lessons for regional/national policy:

- Encouragement for local producers to market and sell their goods locally.
- Promote and subsidise increased production of fruit and vegetables.
- Promote organic production by removing fees of private regulating bodies.
- Encourage and support smaller units making it easier for them to compete with the national/international market.
- Provide loans to crofters for agricultural purposes, not just housing.
- Mineral and sporting rights should be held by the land users.

Bottled water

The water bottling plant in Olden was a good example of a community getting benefit from a local resource. Although the company was yet to make a profit and a brewery were the largest shareholder, 20% of the shares were held locally and the farmers who had been instrumental in starting the venture were well paid as directors. There were a number of local employees in the plant. The source was protected by environmental legislation, the company was growing and expanding its market throughout Norway and the community seemed to have little to lose.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- We have potential to use this resource and this had been mooted recently at Durness. However, we are also restricted by European legislation which was instrumental in closing a bottling plant in Caithness, but it is worth exploring.

Lessons for practical application:

- If you have a resource which will make money, make sure it makes it for you. Retain ownership.

Lessons for regional/national policy:

- Ownership of the land was instrumental in allowing the farmers to benefit from their resource. Sporting and mineral rights should be held by the land user.

Natural heritage

The Norwegians have been using their natural heritage to encourage tourism since the end of the last century and tourists have been visiting the fjords and the glaciers since then. They have more recently been promoting skiing and hunting/fishing as a holiday activity. In Gaular (waterfall country) there was an argument running locally as to whether they should allow a hydro scheme on the river or not. We met a farmer who had built a number of holiday cabins on his land (Hov hyttenden) and was dedicated to getting money to build an interpretation centre to promote the waterfalls and a number of walks the community had signposted along the river. He was very much against a hydro scheme going ahead. The community were using their RDP money to build and promote forest walks and nature trails and at the same time were showing that using the forest resource was not destroying the natural heritage. The promotional literature for the Kjelstad forest and historic nature trail states: "The purpose of this trail is to show some of the economic as well as recreational values of the forest. In addition we would like to point out the fact that using and managing forest resources does not necessarily mean destroying nature and ruining recreational opportunities."

Relevance to Sutherland:

- More and more we are being advised to capitalise on our natural heritage to market the area yet, to use the Kjelstad forest model, we don't need to market it as the last great wilderness. Visitors are happy to see people and nature in co-existence.

Lessons for practical application:

- Don't get hung up on marketing the area for one activity but promote the variety of activities that are offered remembering that evidence of human activity is as much of interest to the visitor as nature in the raw.
- Promotional material should be drawn up by local people and local guides should be employed wherever possible - there is no substitute for local knowledge.

Lessons for regional/national application:

- Money invested in marketing the area should be in the hands of communities allowing them to market what they feel is special to their area.
- Money should be spent on providing the local view through guides and interpretation.

Cultural heritage

One of the churches we visited, Hestad kapell, was a very beautiful tiny wooden building, and we were taken on a boat trip to Sleje Kloster, a 12th century monastery dedicated to the memory of St Sunniva who was martyred there. We also visited the site of WW2 German gun emplacements and a POW camp. It was disappointing that little information was available about the history of Norway, particularly their pre-Christian history, since it only became a Christian nation 1000 years ago. We were treated to two displays of Norwegian dancing - one by a troupe of dancers in national costume and another by some young people. We noted that some of the dances had only been rescued recently from some old cine film and we were told that some of the dances had fallen into disuse until recently. We were also lucky to hear some beautiful choral singing at Briksdalen and some instrumental music at the Kulture house at Nordfordeid. All music was traditional Norwegian. When we went to Valdres to meet Anne Holden we saw her weaving barn where she is producing fine woollen cloth used in making the national dress. She only uses traditional patterns and is the only person in her community keeping the tradition alive and is teaching others.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- We are lucky to have a small core of individuals dedicated to teaching children traditional music and song. However, this is done purely on a voluntary basis and there is therefore a limit to the amount of work these individuals can do.

Lessons learned for practical application:

- The model of the culture house where they have an art collection, performing space, workshop space and is run by and for the community is perhaps one we could adapt here based on the village halls.

Lessons for regional and national application:

- Preservation of the culture and musical traditions should not rely on volunteers alone.
- Provide traditional music teaching in Highland schools - aim for model suggested by North Uist that one person in every family should be able to play a musical instrument.

Retaining a viable and empowered community

There are a number of features which we felt contributed to community empowerment and viability in the communes we visited:

- A culture of faith and trust in the people in the communities by the authorities. The RDP, for example, gives money to the communities to spend on their own development as they think correct. They are trusted to have the ability to determine their own future.
- The system of local government has each commune represented by a far greater number of councillors than we do in this country and we noted that when a councillor said "we" he meant "we" the community rather than "we" the council.
- The system of land ownership helps retain the land in the hands of the indigenous people. By law land is passed through families, it is difficult for people from outside the area to buy farms and therefore the indigenous population tend not to be displaced.
- High employment levels - less than 2% unemployment
- The programme in Balestrand was a good example of a community's efforts to retain their own viability. They had taken over the shop and petrol pump when there was a threat of closure. Because there were only 15 children in the school efforts were being made to provide housing for families with children to come into the village.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- As far as land ownership is concerned we are at opposite poles to the Norwegians. Here the greater part of the land is owned by a few and we have little or no access to sporting or mineral rights.

Lessons for regional/national application:

- Reduce fragmentation of grant system to make it more accessible.
- Provide a capital input to communities for them to spend on their own development.
- People at a local level should be given more say in what happens in their communities, how money is spent etc. rather than people/agencies from outside who don't live in rural communities.

Reducing problems of remoteness by delivering local needs locally and reducing dependence on external inputs

The public transport system in Norway is excellent. We used boats, buses and trains and all seemed to provide an excellent and reliable service to the communities and the visitor. There were (compared to rural Scotland) few cars and lorries on the roads. Concentrated use of local products coupled with the efficient public transport would undoubtedly have contributed to this.

The schools we visited were beautiful buildings and the pupil:teacher ratio was much the same as in Sutherland. However, on the Stadt peninsula the situation was very much like the Highland and Islands in that the declining school rolls had forced school closures. Two old schools had been closed and one new one built instead with children being bussed from one community to the other.

On the healthcare side we heard that the local hospital in Forde is one of the largest employers in the area with 600 staff members, yet we were told there was a shortage of ambulances. We also heard that there was little or no home care for the elderly and looking after old folk was the duty of the family not the state.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- Our public transport system is notoriously bad being poorly designed and funded.
- Our primary schools, although more cramped, are similar to those in Sogn og Fjordane.

Lessons for practical application:

- Continue to lobby for a better public transport system.

Lessons for regional/national application:

- Recognition that a proper public transport system for rural communities is going to be a feature of their continued viability.

Minimising the negative and enhancing the positive impacts of actions on other places and communities and on future generations

The Norwegian fishing industry has the same problems as in the UK. The Norwegian fishermen feel they were squeezed out of their fishing grounds by the EU with Spanish boats fishing the areas the Norwegians saw as theirs. Over-fishing with bigger, more efficient boats has reduced the stock. Some of the fishermen were going back to line fishing with long lines, the restaurateur at Silde Island showed us a device she spent her winters making for the line fishermen, a cartridge for feeding the line and hooks from. The fish caught by long-line are of a better quality than those that are netted and command a higher market price. It is a method of fishing that depends on quality as much as quantity and therefore a reduced and more sustainable catch.

The question of wind farming has cropped up in Outer Stadt in an area of great natural beauty and there was conflict between the developers and the community. There is no local support for the wind farm and, although the site is in a very prominent place, the locals are not going to benefit from it.

Relevance to Sutherland:

- The proposed wind farm at Melvich will be sited far into the hill, out of sight, and the community stands to gain £32,000 per annum. There is little opposition to the proposal.
- Many of the small piers and jetties have fallen into disrepair with money being invested only in the larger harbours to enable bigger boats to land.

Lessons for practical application:

- Although line fishing is on the increase in this area there does not seem to be a great enough differentiation between the price for line caught and netted fish. Neither are available for sale within the area.

Lessons for regional/national policy:

- Money should be targeted towards the small local piers, encouraging the use of smaller boats and help those already active in line fishing.

4.2 ACTIONS FOLLOWING FROM VISIT

Immediate concrete action in North Sutherland:

- Invest in a sawmill type SELECT 4221 for use in Borgie and other forests in the area.

Action at national/regional level:

- Reduce fragmentation of grants system and encourage local produce

Dissemination Plan

- Slide show developed and shown to local community, Duthchas Partnership Group and Crofters Commission.
- Norway evening for local community in Armadale with Norwegian food

Inter-community Links

- Pursue linking with Fjordane community in Balestrand Commune



1 ~ THE NORWEGIAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2 ~ AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN NORWAY

3 ~ FARM OWNERSHIP - LAND TENURE

4 ~ NORWEGIAN HOSTS

APPENDIX 1: THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - 1992-1995

(Excerpts from the Review Report 1995)

Review and Final Summary

1. **Background and Structure of the Programme**

The initiative for the programme was taken by Sogn and Fjordane County Council and the Department of Agriculture in 1991. A main objective was to encourage the rural population take more responsibility for its own development. They would draw attention to matters of importance to the community and in addition, have the main responsibility for accomplishing the initiatives. The rural communities would also try to find types of employment which would, from a local standpoint facilitate active involvement of community residents. Special emphasis would be made on the engagement of women and youth.

The work would be organised as one project in each individual rural community without a full-time employed project leader. The aim would be for a closer working relationship directly between the rural community and the Local Council, especially in regards to the initiatives organisation and the Department of Agriculture. The local Councils had to formally commit themselves follow through with the intentions of the programme. Twenty local Councils applied for rural communities in their districts to participate in the programme. Five rural communities were selected.

As assistance to the work, each of the rural communities received a grant of NOK 100 000 per year for 3 years that could be disposed of as they thought fit They were also given access to assistance from several quarters such as the Local Council, the County, the Department of Agriculture and More Research Institute in Volda. Communication between the Programme Leadership and the rural communities took place in the form of inspection visits in the project communities and through meetings twice a year.

2. **The 83 Initiatives**

The initiatives given priority by the rural communities covered a wide area in several ways. Some were large in structure and costly while others were simple and economical. Some are a direct result of the programme's intention while other initiatives would have been taken without the implementing of the Programme. Nevertheless, the programme has had direct and indirect effects on accomplishment. Some of the initiatives are aimed at economic development while others are purely initiatives at improving the environment.

Many of the initiatives one has attempted to achieve come in under the heading of tourism. Examples of these would be; cafeteria/restaurant and accommodation services, tourist information and guide services, picnic stops and information boards. Another group was development of local production and expertise as with quality control in goat cheese production, development of harbour facilities for the fishing industry, initiatives to establish textile and timber production and juice pressing factories, machine pools, discussion evenings with rabbits as the topic, trade subject meetings on the sheep control and courses in motivation and new creativity services to the local rural population has also been a central area. Examples here are a centre for economic services, community settlements, developing of the rural community centre, neighbourhood caretaker, clearing and trail marking outdoors, swimming areas, ball sports courts and boat marinas, mechanics workshops and second hand shops. A number of the initiatives are borderline cases and would normally be regarded as straightforward council tasks. Examples of these are street lighting, organising rubbish collection and initiatives within the residential and town housing areas.

We have also several examples of initiatives focused on local history and preserving of old traditions which include preservation of the rural landscape and its buildings, regulation of river flow and attempts at tanning and tar burning.

According to the rural communities' own evaluation, 52 of the initiatives have been realised as a direct result of the programme. A certain influence has been effected by the programme on the remaining 31 initiatives. Thirty-seven of the initiatives are regarded as economic-development-targeted while 46 are purely social/neighbourhood environment initiatives. Thirty-seven of the initiatives were completed (with positive and negative results). Twenty-two were partially completed while 24 were still in the planning stage when the programme was concluded.

In this report's introduction we discuss rural development as first and foremost an economical or social development. It is often difficult to place an initiative in either one or other of the niches. This applies especially to initiatives aimed at the local market as for instance, public service initiatives. Often these are very important services for the well-being of a community in addition to providing workplaces.

In practice therefore, it is not always so important to differentiate between the two. But the underlying background for my closer scrutiny of economic initiatives is the previous experiences which show that it is by far, more difficult to mobilise people to start independent self-employing initiatives than to engage them in communal and neighbourhood initiatives. A major cause for this is that companies often have a commercial goal, that one or a few persons can earn a living from this, whereas a communal or neighbourhood initiative is in the interests of many others.

This factor arose also out of the programme. - The social initiative is more visible and therefore easier to get started, it has been said. In two of the rural communities it was also maintained that the need for new workplaces was not that great as the unemployment figures were minimal. This is indeed correct if one looks at the short-term statistics of this assertion. But employment prospect development within the traditional rural industry areas in the future is nevertheless uncertain. An important point of fact also is that this - and other rural development programmes will lay the foundations for future generations so that they can live and work in their home rural communities.

Of the 37 initiatives reckoned by the rural communities as economic initiatives, 17 of these are communal initiatives, which can be translated as serving the rural community as a whole. Four initiatives were aimed first and foremost at the rural district market. Twenty-one initiatives were focused on local community enterprises. In these cases, mobilisation of the local population has gone reasonably well.

The remaining 16 are more independent, concrete economic initiatives. These are of an entirely different nature. Seven of the initiatives from the project committee were not started for various reasons which included lack of interest to engage oneself in investing manpower and own capital. Five of the 16 were completed. But in these cases and with 2 other initiatives that were only partially completed, the project had only an assisting role, mostly in the form of guidance and financial grants. Two of the initiatives were still at the planning stage.

The conclusion is that the project has first and foremost been in starting social initiatives for the rural districts and communal and support initiatives for rural commerce. Some had perhaps expected more permanent workplaces to emerge directly out of the programme. But then we must remind ourselves that we must try to differentiate between that part of rural development which is aimed at local society and which will form the foundation for well-being and commerce and that which is aimed more at the individual, as opposed to cultivating a single business or person/s establishing a new business.

Both are important and interact with each other naturally. However the dividing line is of equal importance. It is possible that the expectations and intentions behind the programme can have been somewhat vague and differing from one another. In my opinion, from a short term view, there was little reason to expect permanent workplaces to emerge directly from the programme, such as it was structured. But there is all grounds to believe that the programme has enabled other initiatives, aimed more at individuals and companies to find a better basis on which to establish themselves.

3. Mobilisation of the Rural Population

Mobilising people in the rural communities was an important task in the programme. The term mobilisation has been interpreted in many different ways. In this report I have chosen to divide the mobilisation up into three points:

- to encourage the rural community to contribute with ideas
- to encourage them to contribute with physical manpower and capital
- to teach the rural community, foster local self-confidence and positive attitudes and to enable people to understand that it pays to make a stake and how they can go about this.

A fourth form of mobilisation is the external mobilisation of joining up persons and businesses in the rural community with resources (capital and expertise) from outside. Ideas were gathered in different ways. Open public meetings were held in all of the rural communities, two of which also placed a Query-and-Idea box in the local shop. Questionnaires were also sent out to people in some of the rural communities. There was good attendance at the open public meetings from which many elements arose that the project committee worked further with. Of the 2 communities which had an idea box; one received many suggestions while the other was less of a success. Questionnaires were not followed up properly and therefore were of little or no use.

The thoughts and ideas were discussed by the project committee. Some were put aside while others were followed up by the project committee or conveyed further to other instances. The project committee were also active themselves by suggesting initiatives. It is therefore difficult to say with any certainty where the individual thoughts were conceived. But according to the project committee, 30 of the initiatives came from the rural community, 48 from the project committee and the remainder were a combination from both. In one case, the local County Council took the initiative.

On the whole, the Project Committee has succeeded in activating the rural communities to contribute with both manpower and capital. Just over NOK 1 million kroner of the project funds was used directly on the initiatives. This released closer to NOK 3.7 million kroner from other sources. The total number of man hours put in on the initiatives was 2,300 by the Project Committee and 13,300 by others connected to the above-mentioned.

In this report, I have used proportional figures which I have called the Mobilisation Quotient. This shows the total input of capital and manpower in relation to input from project funds and work from the Project Committee on concrete initiatives. With the above-mentioned as the basis, the mobilisation quotient is 4.6 for capital and 6.8 for manpower.

The variation in these quotients is great from community to community and is an indication that some of the project committees have had better success in mobilising an effort than others. This can naturally have its explanation in the efforts of the project committee itself; but it can also arise from the different expectations of each rural community. It would seem, not unexpectedly, that mobilisation has gone smoothest in those rural communities which have the strongest traditions for this type of work. In some places, similar processes were already started before the project was implemented. However, it is worth noting that the quotients only measure the total effort and not the concrete result. Even if participation from the rural community was a goal in itself the quotients give very little indication on how the rural community would receive most benefit from the programme - in any case, from a long term viewpoint.

The task of getting women and youth to participate was an important goal. In regards to women, this has proceeded well. They have, as is usual in most rural communities, given their support and whole-hearted effort. It was more difficult with the young people. This is a problem that affects all of the rural communities. The main reason mentioned on this was that many young people are away at college. This is indeed true. But we have to consider what we mean by the term <<young people>>. If one looks at young people past their teen years, newly established, often with small children themselves; they have played an active role. But the very young have only participated to a lesser degree.

In regards to instruction and schooling in the rural community, the opinion is definite that the programme period has brought new insight and knowledge to the rural population. The communities have seen that it pays to make an effort and they have discovered that the world is full of good helpers. It is especially interesting to see that the rural communities seem to have (discovered the Local Council) - and vice versa. Greater knowledge about the other, what one works with and how one thinks in the rural community and Local Council, will make a future working relationship a lot easier. If this knowledge is anchored in the organisations or just to certain individuals is another important question that we will return to later on in the summary.

4. How has the process functioned?

The members of the project committee are in general agreement that the work has functioned well. There have been periods with frustration and discouragement and at times they have been weighed down in paper and organisation work. Most are of the opinion that the best medicine when the going gets tough is to just grit your teeth and get stuck into it. Persons regarded as "driving forces" from the project committee and the rural committees were a key factor to providing inspiration and innovation. Otherwise, the public meetings with the other community projects plus proposals from these, the Programme Co-ordinator and More Research Institute have been instrumental in renewing interest and activity. Producing concrete results played a strong role in keeping the process alive.

As could be expected, a number of persons have dominated the project committee's work to a certain extent. This has led to some friction but nevertheless has been generally regarded as positive that individuals are prepared to stand by their opinions and make an extra effort.

A particularly interesting angle of these projects was the possible conflict situations that could arise from the more established section of the rural community and Local Council when one tried to implement development that was just outside of the traditional power structures.

This proved to be a very small problem in the five rural communities. One reason for this could be that there has previously existed a certain tradition and in some places a solid tradition for this type of work. Some of the old conflicts surfaced and some new ones were created. But most were resolved with time and patience.

There were also to a certain extent, <> personalities in the project committee with reasonably high status in regards to the <<right>> age and sex, with established rights within the rural community. The advantage with these persons was that they were able to cut their way through the system a lot easier and set things more speedily in place. On the other hand it -could appear that these well-established persons had a certain shunning effect in regards to mobilising people to make an effort. As we do not have any material on this we cannot state that this was the case with any certainty. But several statements imply that <<the tall solid trees can in some cases retard the growth of smaller>>.

Whether this has increased or diminished the effort is impossible to determine. If it is the wide majority or the strong leaders that guide a community's future is in this case also, an open question. The answer lies rightly enough in a combination of the above and it seems that on the whole, the rural communities have managed to achieve this in a relatively satisfactory fashion. All of the rural communities have laid emphasis on information and regular communication with the rural population. Information newspapers have been printed and there have been special public and other meetings held to encourage involvement. This was regarded as an essential factor in mobilising people to make an effort.

Helpers from the five rural communities have played a satisfactory role. They have largely done what was expected of them. But it was stated that expectations were somewhat vague and that roles for the different participants should have been more defined. A number of minor problems arose after four of the five initiative workers quit their jobs during the period of the project. But the agricultural department office had a stable staff with the same persons at the top for all three years, even when this department changed its status from governmental to Local Council during this time.

The financial <<kitties>> that the rural communities were granted in the form of capital was as expected, received with open arms. Having the freedom to dispose funds without a long and bureaucratic zigzag process, was regarded as very useful. The rural communities have quite clearly, not wasted the money, but used them in a very responsible and, at times in a penny-pinching way. Knowledge that no other parties could take the money from them for other purposes resulted in one being more thorough about finding other means before one dug into the project's capital. However the security of having this as a reserve back-up was seen to be a great strength.

5. Did we reach our goal - and was the Programme successful?

Of course, these are the big questions - and the answers are dependent on, as seen with whose eyes? and from which angles? According to the project committee, 3 mean that much more was achieved than expected, 7 were in agreement that the goal was reached while 2 expressed a clear No in regards to these questions. Eleven were somewhat doubtful and sat on the fence. We registered that some were disappointed that one did not manage to fire the whole population into action when there were many who gave their all for the rural community.

From an outsider's viewpoint, this would appear as though there were some very unrealistic expectations. To be realistic, I do not think that one could expect to achieve that much more when the programme was of such short duration. A lot has happened in the five rural communities. A certain amount is a direct result of the programme. This is partly due to accompanying funds but perhaps equally due to the Hawthorne Effect (a well-known concept in social psychology). The reaction in the rural communities through being selected, interest that has been created plus the encouragement received has led to this positive effect.

An interesting theme is of course if the funds and other resources could have given equally good results if used in other ways. Could one, in part, have carried out a similar process without a financial kitty and used the moneys on grants to individual initiatives within commerce and local

environment work? This is a difficult question to answer. That which has taken place during the period has a clear worth in itself. But with this system of mobilising hope arises that this will also create long term changes in both the rural communities and with the helpers themselves. The idea is that this will achieve several results in the long run. But unfortunately, these indirect long term effects are difficult to determine at this stage.

6. What should we have done otherwise?

When the Project Committee was asked their opinion on whether the project should have been carried out differently, they gave answers which were self-repeating. First and foremost was the need to have prepared oneself better before starting the project. Analysis of which elements should receive priority was not good. In other respects, several thought that there was a certain degree of over-organisation, especially in the start phase. More paperwork to and from than was necessary in relation to what was actually accomplished.

Running the project without a Project Manager went satisfactorily, but at times one missed the presence of a Project Secretary who could attend to correspondence etc. Also mentioned was the fact that one should have had better communications with the Local Council right from the start. The initiative taker and agricultural department office made an excellent effort, but the rural community should have had much more direct communication with the different departments within the Local Council.

7. What does the future hold?

The rural communities themselves feel now that they are better prepared for the future after participation in this programme. This is apparently the case. But expertise, self-confidence and the contact network are not elements that once acquired are permanent. The question is whether these values are anchored in the system and how one can manage to use them and develop further. There is no doubt whatsoever that many persons, both in the rural communities and further afield, have learnt a great deal which can be a resource in the future. But we human beings often move away and change jobs, and then we have the question of whether we have managed to communicate the message and attitudes to others.

This report is an attempt to convey some of the programme experiences further. A section of the rural population will continue the work, even if most think that they need a break just now. The innovators also need to regain their zest for the job. Twelve members of the Project Committee could consider continuing with similar work sooner or later, 6 are in doubt and 5 have answered a definite No. Now that the programme has finished, the rural communities will carry on some of the initiatives through clubs and organisations that are already established in the rural community. The initiatives that were completed will also be a reminder to keep the work up in developing an active rural community.

The Local Council and the other helpers have learnt a great deal. But here also, people change jobs. Some move away and new people move in. There is often the risk that ways of thinking must be re-thought and some of the old work must be repeated. Anchoring the experiences in the long term planning is one way to bring them and the work further.

8. Which factors must be present in order to achieve positive rural development?

The situation and challenges are the same across the board in all rural communities. But Nevertheless I would dare to mention a number of factors which I believe are important to achieve a positive development:

We must have *expertise* on the situation and the challenges, including the local, national and global. We must know about the powers and processes that create development - and accept that they do mist. And we must understand our own role in relation to other participators.

We must have a true and burning *desire* to do something to achieve successful development. This desire is first and foremost an important requisite to have in the rural community. But it is also important that the local County Council and more central organisations reinforce the statement that development is desirable and achievable. Local persons who are innovators are often totally necessary for these projects.

We must motivate people so that they *want* to join in on the work for the rural community.

We must *believe* that something can be done and we must get others to believe also

We must have enough *self confidence* to believe that we can do something. The rural community's future is first and foremost, our responsibility. Those persons who will be responsible for the work must have the rural community's confidence - they must be legitimate to carry out the work.

This does not mean that we should try to carry out all the work by ourselves. We must build up and maintain the *contact network*. We must know about and use the expertise and the resources that are available in the county and outside.

We must have a *goal* with what we do. Not necessarily a precise plan, but in my case an idea of which direction we want to go - and where we do not want to go

We must gather *resources* - in the county and outside. This involves funding partially, but also equally, physical manpower and enthusiasm.

We must have *strategies*, main avenues to the goal, to arrive at our destination.

We must have a certain amount of *organisation* of work so that we can use the resources in the best way possible - but we must not over-organise.

And last but not least:

We must have *room for individual persons and businesses*. A rural community where everyone thinks in terms of collective the whole time will never be a good rural community to live in!

THE COUNTY GOVERNOR OF SOGN OG FJORDANE - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Rural Development Programme - phase 2

1. **Background for the programme**

The background for the rural development venture can be summed up as follows:

- 1.1. There are several factors contributing to lower population numbers in certain districts within Sogn and Fjordane, which include emigration from the County and a great shortage in the numbers of women in many communities. Nevertheless, the County has still had an increase in the population and a positive development in regard to the birth rate and balance between male and female population figures. Although, on a local county level there is an imbalance in regards to the aim of sustaining the County's community pattern.
- 1.2. Trends in the development of population figures indicate a constant centralising with population increases in the regional centres and population loss in the outer communities. It is of utmost importance to convince the communities that the responsibility for their own development rests first and foremost on their shoulders.
- 1.3. Experience gained from the previous Rural Development Programme (Phase I) shows that there is great potential within communities; people have the ability and capacity take responsibility for their own development. Sharing of knowledge, support and thorough preparation are often more important than providing of funds. In particular, it is interesting to note that many women are motivated and are able to see the possibilities for employment and income generating ventures outside agriculture.
- 1.4. The previous programme also showed that area-targeted rural development work is a most appropriate strategy for encouraging neighbourhood development, activation of new enterprises and public service development in areas economically weak areas. Area-targeted rural development work consists of both the development of expertise and the use of financial means. The work is cross-sectored and therefore encourages active co-operation between the main interest groups within the rural community, local public authorities and governmental extension services.

2. **Programme Plan and Contents**

The actual programme is a segment of Sogn and Fjordane's County Plan for community and rural development where the main objective is: "To develop a self-sustaining settlement pattern *that can ensure a balanced* population increase ". The programme shall form the basis for co-operation and making use of other development initiatives that are already in process, including programmes for communities with decreasing populations, youth programmes, forum for emerging business women etc.

2.1. **Structure**

The programme's structure is the same as the previous Rural Development Programme, with projects in rural communities that have been selected from an open application system. The first year will have 3 rural communities' projects on the programme. Two rural communities will be added to the programme in the 2nd and 3rd year, so that there are up to 7 rural communities on the programme in the 3rd year. Each local project must be based on, or have a connecting element with the targeting of the economical plan/Local Council plan. It is important that there is organised co-operation between the different parties in the local service network.

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

2.2 Objectives and Target Groups

2.2.1. *The Main Objective* of the Programme is to develop attractive local communities, that will be self-sustaining. Further to encourage local initiatives, and make rural folk to realise that this goal is mostly dependent on their involvement.

2.2.2. *The Strategy* is rural development that mobilises and creates awareness in rural communities on the responsibility for own development and the encouragement of attitudes for developing profitable new enterprises.

2.2.3. *Sub-Goals*

- 1) Stimulate initiatives that form the basis for economical development.
- 2) Develop and maintain profitable workplaces.
- 3) Make use of growth factors in neighbouring areas (reside in the community - work away).

2.2.4. *The Target groups* are the local authorities (commune) and voluntary organisations that represent the community. The local communities shall each define their own local objectives for their project.

2.3. Organisation and Groups

The programme brings together into programme management authorities both at county and local level together with local organisations. Initiative takers and organisers of the programme are the County Governor through the Department of Agriculture, the County Council, the (Sogn og Fjordane) Farmers Association and (Sogn og Fjordane) Smallholders Association.

2.3.1 *Programme Steering Committee, with the following members:*

- one person from the project communities
- one person from the Farmers Association
- one person from the Commune Council
- one person from the County Council
- one person from the Smallholders Assoc.
- one person from the Department of Agric.

Tasks of the Programme Steering Committee:

- draw up the programme's Plan of Action and secure financing
- prepare a time schedule and future operation plan
- select projects on basis of applications from local communities
- arrange motivation courses, and organise education and evaluation
- offer the projects a development process based on a "hands-off" approach
- follow up on progress and counsel the projects
- allocate resources to the programme co-ordinator 1 process leader
- select and work together with external consultants
- organise involvement of the local authorities (Local Council)

2.3.2. *The local project committees* consisting of 4-5 members for each rural project, with representatives from the rural community and the Local Council.

Tasks of the local project committees:

- Primus motor for mobilisation
- allocating of priority for the different initiatives/accomplishment of initiatives
- instigate involvement and provide information to the Local Council
- hold control over the operation of the local project, and appoint a Project Secretary

2.3.3. *Programme Co-ordinator/Process Leader*

The Women's Co-ordinator at the Department of Agriculture will be in charge of the programme and act as process leader. Her tasks and responsibilities will cover:

- process leadership
- being the contact person for individual projects; and
- secretary for the Programme Steering Committee.

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

2.3.4. *The Rural Forum*

The Forum is the Programme Steering Committee's meetings with the Project Committees. The purpose of the Rural Forum is to allow local people to air their views and problem, and to exchange experiences and ideas amongst the different local communities. New communities admitted to the programme will be offered introductory/starting-up courses before entering the Rural Forum. Programme forums will follow on from these which will stimulate the exchange of ideas, etc between old and new members.

2.4. *Roles and Responsibilities*

2.4.1. *The Farmers Association and the Smallholders Association:*

- providing information and preparing the ground for motivating their members
- local involvement in motivation; and
- supplying material to study groups

2.4.2. *The County Council of Sogn and Fjordane:*

- counselling within county organisation, plan and development work aimed at local community development
- co-ordinate practical services and guidance for local community development
- present models for rural development
- concentrate a strategy aimed at women with the emphasis on "changing of attitudes" and improving competence.

2.4.3. *The County Governor, Department of Agriculture:*

- process leadership in rural development
- focus on *the Rural Analysis* as the basis and tool for work with rural development
- spotlight the role of men and women in rural development work
- counsel on rural mobilisation, schools that focus on own district, initiatives aimed at women, new enterprises within agriculture etc.
- co-ordinate economic and advisory instruments

2.5 *Programme Period*

Revolving programme starting in 1996. Each rural project has a project duration of 3 years. Annual intake of new rural projects.

3. *Demands and Assistance to the Rural Community*

The basis for the demands set to the community goes back to the nature of the programme work, which is based on not employing a project leader full-time. This is to ensure that project work does not stop when the project leader finishes his term of employment after the project period. On the basis of this argument, it is necessary for the Local Council to be actively engaged in the rural development work.

3.1. *Criteria for the Project Application*

- what are the local conditions for starting up a rural development project?
- what is the objective of the project?
- what results are expected to be achieved after three years
- geographical area to be covered, and description of target groups
- budget - the first year must include own capital and council grant
- structure (and members) of the Project Committee
- dissemination of results obtained from the project, and ideas on how the development work may be continued after the project period

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

- 3.4. Assistance available to the selected rural community (project)**
- professional supervisory assistance from the programme co-ordinator
 - the Rural Forum - an arena for exchange of experiences
 - external professional consultants. Initially two visits per participating rural community the first year, followed by one visit in each of the two succeeding
 - a grant of NOK 60 000 per year for three years of the project. The decision on how this funding may be used is the work of the local project committee.
- 3.3. Demands set to the Local Council (Commune)**
- full commitment to the objectives and intentions of the programme
 - the council must assign time and resources to follow up on the local project
 - the council's departments must commit themselves to participate in the cross-sector work relating to the rural project once it has been confirmed
 - the Council must contribute minimum NOK 20 000 per year in local funding
 - the Council should draw up a plan on how it envisages relaying experiences on from the actual rural project of
 - officers from the Local Council must commit themselves to participation in the Rural Forum.
- 3.4. Demands set to the Rural Community**
- the local "*primus motors/innovators*" must be "on-site"
 - there should be a local organisation, neighbourhood organisation, or similar involved in the project.
 - resource persons must have the time and the inclination
 - make an evaluation of work carried out and opportunities and possibilities available
- 4. Reporting and Evaluation**
- Each project must prepare annual reports as parts of the combined Annual Report for the whole programme. Evaluation of the entire programme with the various sub-projects after 3 years, towards the end of 1998.
- 4.1. Progress Indicators**
- Over a period of time it is of particular interest to look at:
- population increase or stabilising
 - positive development regarding population pattern (sex and age grouping)
 - increase in employment
 - established co-operative initiatives
- 5. Cost and financing**
- Annual cost of the Programme is estimated at around NOK 340 000 for the first year, increasing to NOK 580 000 after three years when 7 local communities are in the Programme. In addition comes cost of manpower, and financial contributions from the local Councils and the participating communities.

Most of the funding will be drawn from the Government's allocation to the Rural Development Fund.

THE COUNTY GOVERNOR OF SOGN OG FJORDANE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

APPENDIX 2: AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN NORWAY

General

The main objectives of the agricultural policy are to promote a certain level of production, especially self-sufficiency in staple farm products (milk, meat, egg, cereals), and to provide farmers the same income potentials as other groups. Other important objectives are to stimulate economic activities and settlement in economically weak areas, and to promote environmental quality aspects.

Following from the GATT-round and the WTO-agreement, the Norwegian Parliament set new guidelines for the agricultural policy in 1993. The new guidelines aim at a more cost-efficient agriculture sector through a more market-oriented production, freer competition, less protection, promotion of larger holdings etc. In accordance with the WTO-agreement the direct support to agriculture was reduced by 2 bill. NOK from 1994 to 1997, or about 20%. In addition prices to the farmers have been frozen or reduced.

Also following from the WTO-agreement, the Norwegian Government has had to comply with the approved rules for protecting its agriculture from world market competition. Hence, the former system of import restrictions through quotas and legal instruments has been abandoned and replaced by a custom-based system. In principle all kinds of foodstuff and agriculture produce may now be freely imported, provided all sanitary and veterinary requirements are met. The inland production is, however, in most cases protected by a custom barrier, which varies according to type of product. The Government has declared that it intends to set the custom level in such a way that the Norwegian farmers will face real competition from the world market.

The result attained so far from the new agricultural policy and its range of instruments is that the average Producer Subsidy Equivalent (PSE) is reduced from 77 % in 1992 to 64 % in 1997. In comparison the PSE is around 45% in EC.

Level of support to agriculture

Total support provided by the Government (1999)	NOK 12 130 000 000
Support which goes directly to farmers (Price subsidies, production grants, social welfare grants)	NOK 10 156 000 000 (84%)
Indirect support (Market regulations, rural development fund etc., and administration)	NOK 1974000000

In addition comes indirect support through custom barriers, which has been estimated to roughly 5 bill. NOK, but this is very much disputed by the farmers' organisations.

Distribution, payment ceilings, regional and local differences.

In recent years, there has been a shift of emphasis from production-based to non-production based support. Of the many different types of support, *the production grant*, is the most important. This is distributed both in the form of a headage-based grant, and as an acreage supplement.

For livestock productions the level of support varies according to number of animals. There are altogether 11 different types of livestock productions which are eligible to receiving *production supplement*, ranging from dairy cows as the most important to rabbit keeping which is almost negligible.

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

Example: Dairy cows	1-8 cows	NOK	3 974 per cow
	9-16 cows	NOK	2 300 per cow
	17-25 cows	NOK	1650 percow
	26-40 cows	NOK	800 per cow

A ceiling of NOK 95 000 applies to all types of production, as well as for combinations of different types of livestock.

Acreage grant (actually acreage- and cultural landscape grant) is graded according to size of the farm and to district in which the farm is situated. The country is divided into 7 different zones with Northern Norway having the highest zone number and the highest level of support. The county of Sogn og Fjordane is placed in zone 5.

Example: Fodder production (hay / silage) in zone 5

0-10 ha	NOK	5 050 per ha
11-25 ha	NOK	2 170 per ha
26-40 ha	NOK	13 00 per ha (for all zones)
> 40 ha		0

In addition NOK 1 100 per ha for organic farming in all zones (NOK 1500 per ha for grain).

Social welfare grant is another support instrument that is very important for the farmers. This includes two different schemes: 1) Support to hired labour during vacations and days off (applies to livestock holders only), and 2) Support to hired labour in cases of sickness, etc. (includes greenhouse production in addition to livestock keeping). Grading according to types and number of livestock.

Example: Milk producer	1-8 cows	NOK 3475 per cow
	9-20 cows	NOK 1045 per cow

The system works as a repayment of actual expenses which the farmer has paid for hired labour, and for which he is required to present receipts enclosed with the application. Min. repayment is NOK 4 000 and the ceiling is NOK 48 000.

Investment grants

Three different grant schemes are of significant value to the farmers: 1) *The Rural Development Fund* from which a farmer may get investment grants and loans for construction of farm buildings (including buildings for rural tourism), 2) *Investment grants (and loans) for environmental protection* (reducing pollution, soil erosion etc.) 3) *Investment grants for restoring valuable old farm houses*, and *grants/support for special projects regarding the cultural landscape*.

Grants: 30 % of estimated cost. Ceiling of NOK 150 000

Investment loans (free of interest) 10-40 % of estimated cost. Ceiling of NOK 500 000

Loans (current interest rate is 6, 7%) normally 30-40% of estimated cost.

Administering, monitoring

Price subsidies are mostly administered through the farmers' coops in agreement with the Government. The direct support schemes are administered through the agricultural administration offices at county and municipal level. The same offices are responsible for monitoring. Applications for support are scrutinised (and corrected) at municipal level before being sent to county level for approval. All farms and applicants are registered in a nation-wide database, with records of farm size, type of crops, number of animal etc. Each year 4-5% of the farmers are randomly picked for a detailed monitoring and checking for correct information on the application form. For the investment grants and loans there are special monitoring procedures: Construction works must be completed within 3 years after the grant or loan has been approved. Grants and loans are paid to the farmers in portions according to progress of the construction works. A minimum of 10 % of the money offered is held back until all works are completed.

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

Application procedures, conditions for payment

For the *production grants* the farmers apply twice a year, in January and in August. A partly filled in application form (based on last year's application) is sent to all registered farmers eligible for support. The farmers make adjustments or add new records if there have been any changes. The form is handed in to the local agricultural office, where it is scrutinised and checked for any wrong records, and then sent to the county agricultural office for approval and registration in the database. Records from the database are used for payments to the farmers, normally through each farmer's bank account.

For investment grants and loans applications may be handed in throughout the year, but for most of the schemes there are set annual quotas at county level, and there is stiff competition for the money because of more applicants than actual money supply.

Some of the conditions for payment have been mentioned above. An overall requirement for being eligible for support is that the farm has a minimum size (1 ha) and a minimum production level. The *acreage/cultural landscape grant* is given on conditions that the farmer complies with certain environmental codes, such as reducing pollution (a minimum acreage is required per animal for farm manure), protecting wildlife, wetlands, cultural landscape, historical sites etc. Breaking of the codes may lead to sanctions in the form of reduced payment, and in serious cases legal actions.

Tax relief, retirement benefits, support to new entrants

There is no tax relief for farmers as compared to other people. On the contrary assets in form of buildings, livestock, machinery etc. are subject to taxation according to estimated value.

A special scheme for new entrants is included in the *Rural Development Fund*. Through this scheme new entrants may get a special start-up grant (NOK 180 000 for women and NOK 120 000 for men). Young farmers (below 35 years) are entitled to an extra production grant of NOK 5 000 for females and NOK 4 000 for males.

Retirement benefits: Farmers pay monthly fees to the public pension scheme and get their benefits on equal terms as other people when they retire. A scheme for early retirement was introduced in 1999. Under this scheme a farmer may get a (reduced) retirement benefit from the age of 62, provided he is handing over the farm to a younger person.

Co-ordination with other types of land management

Forestry in Norway is very much linked with agriculture. Almost every farm has a productive forestry area, and 75 % of the forested land is owned by farmers. Forestry receives minimal Governmental support, and no price subsidy is given. Grants may be given for special purposes, especially for investments in infrastructure, such as access road construction, construction of quays for timber shipment, etc. Also some support is given for afforestation (production of seedlings and planting).

Management of the forests is based on a multiple use concept, which aims at combining economic, ecological and outdoor life considerations. Management of the forests is placed under the agricultural administration, while management of wildlife, fresh water fishing, national parks etc. belongs to the environmental administration. Both administrations at county level are placed in the office of the County Governor, and there is close co-operation and co-ordination between the two administrations. For example is any construction of a forest access road subject to approval from the environmental administration. Likewise is logging in or close to protected areas subject to approval by both administrations.

The County Governor of Sogn og Fjordane

EXAMPLE - MILK PRODUCTION

Farm size		7.0 Ha	Milk price	NOK 3.80
No. of cows	10			
Yield		6000 kg/cow (net prod. 600 kg/cow)		

Incomes (NOK):

Sale of milk	10 x 5600 x 3.80	212800	
Sale of meat etc.		44000	
Sum sale of produce			256800

Grants:

Production grant (animal)		34900	
Acreage / cultural landscape grant		35350	
Social welfare grant	30000		
Extra production grant young farmer		5000	
Sum grants			105250

Sum incomes **362050**

Expenses (NOK):

Variable costs		100000	
Overhead costs		125000	
Total expenses			225000

Net income (NOK): **137050**



APPENDIX 3 – FARM OWNERSHIP – LAND TENURE

THE COUNTY GOVERNOR OF SOGN OG FJORDANE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Almost all the farm and forestry land in Norway is privately owned, and most of the work is carried out by farming families. Most holdings are small, and there are very few large holdings, but there is no upper limit. The average size of a Norwegian farm is 13 ha (hectares) cultivated land. In addition most farms have a forest area, which on average makes up around 50 ha.

The small size is partly due to geographical and topographical conditions. Mountains, lakes and forests divide the farmland into relatively small plots. However, the farm structure is also a result of strong historical and cultural traditions attached to owning a farm. Land is mostly passed through families. By statute, the oldest child has the first priority to take over a family farm. This tradition goes far back and has been enshrined in law since medieval times. The last revision of the law in 1965 gave females the same legal right to take the farm as males.

A farm can be sold outside the family only with agreement of the children, and can also be re-acquired by the family at a later date by right of pre-emption. The few farms sold outside the family, are subject to approval by the local authorities (government concession). The purchaser must be assessed as suitable and must agree to live on and operate the property for at least five years.

Non-national purchasers of land are subject to the same government concession, and have to meet the same conditions regarding occupancy and use.

The State has a right of pre-emption when a holding is sold outside the family. This right has been actively used during the last 25-30 years as a land consolidation instrument to create larger holdings. There are, however, relatively few cases per year where this instrument comes into use.

Land consolidation has been the aim of the Norwegian government for 150 years, to make holdings more economically viable, but without destroying the social composition of the rural communities. The consolidation work is carried out by the Land Consolidation Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and through the local Land Consolidation Courts. The consolidation of agricultural land is almost complete, but there is still much remaining for forest land.

Splitting of a holding as well as sale of smaller plots to be used for non-agricultural purposes, are subject to approval by the authorities. Sale of smaller plots may be approved by the local (commune) authorities, while larger areas and /or plots with fixed property have to be approved at county level by the Department of Agriculture. Special cases have to be taken to the County Agricultural Board, which is a body elected by the County Council. The County Agricultural Board can overrule decisions made by the local authorities or by the Department of Agriculture at county level.

APPENDIX 4 NORWEGIAN HOSTS

Organisers	
Principle Agricultural Officer	County Governor's Office, Sogn og Fjordane
County Agricultural Officer & Project Manager for Rural Tourism	County Governor's Office, Sogn og Fjordane
Adviser on Environmental Protection	County Governor's Office, Sogn og Fjordane
County Agricultural Officer	County Governor's Office, Sogn og Fjordane

Communes	
Selje	Local project co-ordinator Local project member Agricultural officer Tourist provider (hosts)
Eid	Agricultural officer Local project co-ordinator Local project member Agricultural officer
Stryn	Local project co-ordinator Tourist provider (hostess)
Gaular	Agricultural officer Local project co-ordinator Handicraft/ woodworking Tourist provider (host)
Balestrand	Local project co-ordinator Local project member Forestry officer Retired headmaster/guide