

CENTRAL DENMARK REGION

1,300,000



Challenge

The peninsula of Salling was once the manufacturing site of 80% of the Danish-produced furniture and hosted had around 70 furniture factories. Today, only 14 factories are left in the region. The rural area of Salling now faces rapid depopulation and young people struggle to find employment opportunities. How can the local cultural heritage and know-how be used to create jobs? How can the community drive development initiatives in the area?



Solution

By reviving the local tradition of chair production and using the existing infrastructure (furniture factories), the STOL (chair) project created a sustainable platform for crafts and design which creates new jobs and brings life into the area. The project also creates a meeting place for all ages, contributing to community building and participation.

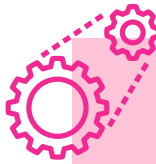
STOL The Chair Project



Reviving traditional crafts for local development



Participatory Governance



How ?

- 1 A group of residents from the villages of Salling approached an artistic organisation looking for new ways to encourage community engagement and local development. Together, they designed an artistic project around the tradition of chair production.
- 2 A series of workshops were organised to test, develop and disseminate the project. They included local crafts for children and events where professional carpenters transferred their skills and knowledge to people. The local and regional authorities helped to spread the word.
- 3 Community visits to local archives and to current and former factories were organised to discover the history of the furniture industry in Salling.
- 4 During a special event, locals were asked to bring a chair from one of Salling factories, to tell a story about it and donate it to the project. The chairs were photographed with their donors, and their stories were recorded.
- 5 International artists, designers and architects gathered to redesigned and upcycled the collected chairs. The resulting chairs were exhibited in museums.
- 6 The project is ongoing, the ambition is to expand it through European collaboration, focusing on traditions and the inclusion of working with professionals and semi-professionals, locals and designers.

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Budget/Financing

€ 141,000

The total budget is €141,000.00, used for pay expenses, consultancy fees, communication and public relations, administration, accountancy and other expenses.

The funding sources are:

- Skive Municipality: 15%
- Central Denmark Region: 40%
- National administration: 37%
- Private investors : 8%

Management

- The artistic organisation Grasslands devised the project. It was executed with a local working group and a board composed of citizens, artists, fundraisers, curators and volunteers.
- Artist Lene Noer manages the project. The Business and Development Department of Skive Municipality oversees the project.
- Professional Carpenters, woodworkers and local furniture factories are key partners. International artists, designers and architects redesign and upcycle the chairs.
- Museums and cultural organisations host exhibitions and events (The Wood Museum, Horsens Industrial Museum, Museum Salling). Local schools organise workshops on design and crafts.
- The Ministry of Industry, the Central Denmark Region and the Skive Municipality support the project financially, as well as the Danish Art Foundation, the Savings Bank West foundation and the Art foundation for Jutland.
- The community contributes to the project by donating chairs and actively participating in events and workshops.

Transferability

- This initiative can be a source of inspiration for rural areas that used to have industrial productions.
- The resources you need are at your fingertips: mobilise the local heritage to create new opportunities.
- Keep it simple: STOL introduces a simple concept focusing on one single object: a chair.
- The active role of the local community in the development developing and implement of the project is key to secure their ownership.
- In rural and remote societies, it is important to build partnerships that are based on trust. Building on previous experiences increases the community's acceptance and openness to a new project.

Impact

- Revives traditional skills and crafts. Young people are mentored by experienced craftsmen/women, allowing the transmission of traditional skills across generations.
- Youngsters and unemployed people acquire new skills and self-confidence to access or return to the job market.
- Contributes to preserve the identity of the Salling peninsula, giving new generations a possibility to connect with the cultural heritage of the area.
- Strengthens the businesses of the woodworkers and carpenters involved.
- Fosters cooperation with local furniture factories and cultural institutions.
- Contributes to community building and social cohesion by gathering the locals around shared artistic project.



[Project webpage](#)

[Grasslands book](#)

[PPT Presentation of the initiative](#)

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