



WHY WOMEN INNOVATE IN RURAL SWEDEN AND FINLAND

PRACTICE ABSTRACT 1

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Insights from FLIARA's Nordic Baltic region case study comparative analysis show that while economic gain is usually assumed to be the primary reason for embarking upon innovation, this is not the case among women innovators in rural areas. Instead, the most important motivation is the desire to realize an idea—whether it is a new product, a service, or an innovative organizational form. Women are often driven by a strong passion for and belief in their ideas, not least because they see that their idea will help create a more sustainable society. The strong commitment to their ideas helps them overcome any challenges they face.

Ideas for innovation can emerge from four different areas:

- Their ideas are often linked to their **earlier education** or professional experience, which they use to create new career paths.
- In other cases, **hobbies are transformed into businesses**, particularly for those that use local natural resources.
- Many want to realize their ideas in **a specific rural place**, which could be where they currently live, or where they or their partner have their roots. The place is thus intimately connected with the innovation, providing specific opportunities as well as place-bound limitations.
- **Life changes**, such as leaving an unsatisfying job or starting a family, can also function as catalysts for the innovation journey.

It is important to recognize and legitimize the diverse motivations behind innovation, which extend beyond economic measures. Ends must be met, of course, but money by itself is not motivating. Personal development is a powerful motivator and should be acknowledged in the innovation journey of women-led initiatives in farming and in rural areas.



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Useful links:

- Realizing an idea based on the place: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/emilia-hildingsson/>
- When growth just happens: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/anne-leena-pellikka/>



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