



Education on Sustainable Food Production

Policy Brief Sweden

Grant Agreement n°. 101084234



**Funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Policy Brief SE09, 2025.

Education on Sustainable Food Production in Swedish Schools

1

Better education about sustainable and organic farming and food production will lead to better informed consumers and economically sustainable food production in Sweden.

Executive Summary

A lack of knowledge about farming and food production among consumers hampers the development of sustainable farming. A revision of the national curricula in Swedish schools and collaborations with non-profits can address the problem by providing better knowledge about sustainable and organic farming and food production, as well as hands on experience with farming and growing food.

The Challenge

The FLIARA project has identified the alienation from food production and lack of sustainability wisdom as major sustainability problems that needs to be addressed. In Sweden the challenges for farming and rural entrepreneurship are:

- 🏠 A lack of knowledge among consumers about how farming worked and how the food was produced. In particular, a lack of knowledge about organic farming make them unwilling to pay for the extra costs of the locally produced organic production.

- 🏠 A lack of understanding of how different choices can contribute to sustainable development among consumers.
- 🏠 A lack of knowledge about agriculture and food production in the Swedish curriculum has also been identified by the EU program Agriculture and Knowledge Systems (AKIS) in Sweden and they have identified this as a focus moving forward.

Policy Solutions

We propose two route to take:

Revising the curriculum

- 🔗 Change the curriculum in Swedish pre-school and school to emphasize the knowledge about organic and sustainable farming and food production.

The policy proposal suggests that the national curricula in Sweden should incorporate more knowledge about sustainable farming and food production, as well as hands on experience with farming and growing food. Better knowledge within this area would help support sustainable farming and inform future consumers about the food they buy and the consequences of sustainable farming for themselves and society. In the national curricula Sweden already has goals about sustainability for the pre-school and the compulsory school. In the material from the Swedish National Agency for Education the teachers in the pre-school are also encouraged to let the children grow things both inside and outside but farming and agriculture are not specifically mentioned in the guidelines. In the compulsory school the pupils are taught the subject Home and consumer studies, based on the idea that “Knowledge of consumer issues and work in the home gives people important tools for creating a functional everyday life and

promoting sustainable development by being able to make informed choices as consumers with regard to health, finances and the environment.” The goals for the compulsory school only mention sustainability and food production in one sentence in the goals for the years 7-9, and the goals are focused on learning how to buy groceries and plan the meals not farming and food production.

Collaborate with non-profits

- 🔗 The schools can collaborate with non-profits within farming and animal husbandry to support the teachers.

Collaborations with non-profits has also been proven to be a successful way to give a more hands-on experience. This is a way to provide support for teachers and not put extra pressure of them to acquire deep knowledge about the sustainable food production in Sweden.

The revision can also build on the successful work with another similar system for entrepreneurship, Junior Achievement, which is a non-profit organization that supports elementary schools and high schools by offering programs learning how to start and run a business. There are also already good local examples of collaborating with non-profits in Sweden. For more information see links below.

2

Best practice from Slovenia

Within the FLIARA project inspiration can be taken from *Organic School Gardens Association*, a Slovenian non-profit founded Anamarija Slabe that works with organic farming together with schools to teach the children and pupils about how to grow vegetables.

Source:

FLIARA. (2024), “Anamarija Slabe”, *FLIARA Project*, 26 July, available at: <https://fliara.eu/innovator/anamarija-slabe/> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Supporting Evidence

The rural stakeholders in the FLIARA project identified the need for more sustainability wisdom, in particular a need to alleviate alienation from food production and the adoption of sustainable practice and lifestyles in order to create sustainable rural development (D2.3 Sustainability






innovations). The visions also included more organic food production in the future in Sweden, but they also pointed to the need that then the sustainable and organic products must be attractive to both producers and consumers. The children as future farmers, gardeners and consumers must be able to understand both what it means to produce sustainably and the added value of this type of production in order to create sustainable markets for sustainable and organic food. This supports the policy proposal to also incorporate more education about the conditions and value of sustainable farming and food production for both the environment and the individual.

Conclusion & Call to Action

The data from FLIARA demonstrates sustainable rural development requires citizens that can make informed choices and understand the consequences of their choices when buying food. The data also shows that alienation from farming and food production hinders sustainable development.

CALL TO ACTION:

-  Sweden should incorporate more knowledge about sustainable farming and food production in the national curriculum
-  The schools should support the teachers by collaborate with non-profits within farming and husbandry
-  Take inspiration from successful initiatives from EU, good local examples and build on previous experiences of other youth initiatives

3

Further Reading

AKIS in Sweden: "Landsbygdsnätverket" available at: <https://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/> (accessed 3 April 2025).

AKIS in Sweden: Jordbruksverket. "Kunskap och innovation", available at: <https://jordbruksverket.se/utveckla-foretagande-pa-landsbygden/kunskap-och-innovation> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Best practices locally in Sweden: Bonden i skolan. "Träffa bonden - Bonden i skolan", available at: <https://www.bondeniskolan.se/for-elever/bonden/traffa-bonden/> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Best practices locally in Sweden: Göteborgs Stad. (2020), *Odlingshandboken*. available at: <https://goteborg.se/wps/wcm/connect/7c43bb70-8530-4f3b-bd54-e8c9940c6a36/Odlingshandboken.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Best practices of youth initiatives: Ung Företagsamhet. "About JA Sweden", available at: <https://ungforetagsamhet.se/about-ja-sweden-0> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Kuhmonen, T. and Tembo, B. (2024), "D2.2: Future Vision Manifestations", 6 November, available at: <https://zenodo.org/records/14045244> (accessed 3 April 2025).

Swedish curriculum: Skolverket. "This is the Swedish National Agency for Education", available at: <https://www.skolverket.se/andra-sprak-other-languages/english-engelska> (accessed 3 April 2025).



About FLIARA

The project is on a mission to create a more sustainable future by highlighting the role of women in agriculture and rural areas. FLIARA will boost understanding of the needs and challenges facing women leading innovative environmental and rural development practices in EU farming and rural areas.

Contact

Email: info@fliara.eu

2025.



Female-Led Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas

www.fliara.eu



Funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIAMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY

