



## B7 Education Conference on Gotland

As a part of the Gotland Chairmanship programme, a conference on the theme "Education on Islands – Opportunities, Inspiration and Cooperation" was held at Rickard Steffengymnasiet in Visby the 9-10 June. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the essence of being an educational institution on an island, to discover challenges and opportunities and to find areas of possible cooperation between the islands.

– A basic condition that all islands are struggling with is the limited number of inhabitants. Despite this fact, we have to provide the same level and quality on our

education as on the mainland. To succeed we need to work together and think "out of the box", says Educational Strategist with the Municipality of Gotland Mr. Lars Danielsson.

School personnel, teachers, headmasters and civil servants operational in school issues represented the B7 islands during the two-day conference. Contributing to the programme was Assistant Professor in Systematic Theology with the University of Göteborg, Mr. Ola Sigurdsson, giving the participants a mind-blowing lecture on the concept of learning in times of change. Mr Sigurdsson emphasised the need for the



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educational system to create “critical citizens”, citizens that dare to critique and analyse, evolving into responsible human beings.

– This might be uncomfortable, but necessary if we are to survive today’s globalisation, says Mr. Sigurdsson.

Four parallel seminars with different focuses were arranged at schools all over the island: Gråboskolan, Christoffer Polhemgymnasiet, Gotland University and Lärcentra in Fårösund.

Several ideas for future projects were presented at the last part of the conference that ended with Information Officer Mrs. Heléne Säll Mattsson from the International Programme Office for Education and Training informing on the possibilities of EU support for future projects of cooperation.

An evaluation of the conference shows that a large majority of the participants found the conference to be “Excellent” and many proclaimed the need for continuation and emphasised the importance of further island cooperation.

– The B7 wanted to provide professionals dealing with education an arena for cooperation through the B7 and I think we succeeded, says Chairperson of B7 Mr. Claes Kullberg.

Hanna Waluszewski  
B7 Secretariat