

Jonna-Eveliina Tiitto

INTERNATIONALIZATION PLAN FOR NOPANKYLÄ

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SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

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Ohjaaja: Ulla Autio

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Opinnäytteen tavoitteena on tuottaa kansainvälistymissuunnitelma Ilmajoen Nopankylälle. Yhteistyökumppanina toimii maaseudun kehittämissyhistys LEADER Liiveri ry. Kansainvälistymissuunnitelmaa voidaan hyödyntää jatkossa maaseudun kehitystyössä. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on käytetty osallistavaa toimintatutkimusta. Metodeja ovat havainnointi, ideointitilaisuus ja benchmarking.

Teoriaosuus käsittelee Euroopan-laajuisen LEADER-verkoston toiminta-ajatusta. Vahvoja teemoja ovat alhaalta ylöspäin -ajattelu, paikallisuus ja kotiseudun yhdessä kehittäminen. Lisäksi teoriaosuudessa käsitellään kansainvälistymistä, verkostoitumista ja yhteistyötä.

Tutkimuksen tuloksena syntynyt Nopankylän kansainvälistymissuunnitelma osoittaa, että kyläläisten kanssa yhdessä ideoimalla ja maaseudunkehitysyhdistyksen tuella saavutetaan kestäviä tuloksia. Kansainvälisyys ei ole itseisarvo vaan keino kylän elinvoimaisuuden lisäämiseen. Opitaan myös suvaitsevuuutta ja lisätään yhteisöllisyyttä yhdessä tekemällä. Vastaavia suunnitelmia on mahdollista tehdä jatkossakin.

Avainsanat: LEADER, paikallinen kehittämissyhistys, kylä, kansainvälistyminen, alhaalta ylöspäin -ajattelu, yhteistyö, verkostot

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Thesis abstract

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The aim of this thesis is to create an internationalization plan for Nopankylä, located in the municipality of Ilmajoki. The partner is the LEADER Liiveri ry local action group. It is possible to use this internationalization plan in later development work. The research method used is represents participatory action research. The methods are observation, ideation event and benchmarking.

The theoretical part covers the operational idea of the European-wide LEADER organization. The key themes are the bottom-up ideology, locality and developing home areas together. Furthermore, the theoretical part discusses internationalization, networks and cooperation.

The internationalization plan for Nopankylä, which resulted from the study, shows that developing villages together with the villagers and LAGs allows reaching sustainable results. Internationalization is not an absolute value but a tool to sustain the vitality of the village. Cultural tolerance is increased and, at the same time, communal bonds are strengthened by doing together. It is possible to create similar internationalization plans for different villages later on.

Keywords: LEADER, LAG, village, internationalization, bottom-up, Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), cooperation, networks

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Abbreviations

LEADER	Association for Rural Development (<i>Liason Entre Actions de Developpement l'Economie Rurale</i>)
LAG	Local Action Group
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CIMO	Centre for international Mobility
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research background, objective and topicality

The nature of this thesis is a development work, *the creation of the internationalization plan for Nopankylä*, located in Ilmajoki. The aim was to choose a one active village to participate in this study. Afterwards the plan could be adapted to other villages or projects. The research method is an action research.

The research was done for the needs of a local action group (LAG), Liiveri ry. It is an association for rural development and operates in the European LEADER network. The South Ostrobothnian LEADER groups have been extremely active with village development in many ways, e.g. they even have their own *village experts* (kyläasiamies). The village dwellers see the local LEADER groups as a good partner in development work. LEADER activities are based on *Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)* and *bottom-up thinking*.

Internationalization, networks and cooperation are the leading themes of this research. Internationalization is one of the leading themes of LEADER operation and local LAG's are committed to boost it. Networks and cooperation are vital in today's rapidly changing world, and if these two are used with care and nourished, it makes the success of organizations possible.

The researcher became interested rural development while doing her internship at Jalasjärvi Municipality in the Rural Europe Network project (REN). The author found out that there are many tools for developing rural areas. The international aspect is especially interesting for an International business student. This study was a great way to get to know the rural development topic and real working-life problem solving better.

Lastly, the topic is a very current one due the new starting LEADER programming period 2014–2020. The international aspect is strongly in spotlight, and what could be a more natural step for already active Southern Ostrobothnian villages than internationalization?

1.1. Presentations of LEADER operations

The European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) is an international non-profit making association. It was established in 1999 by the National LEADER Networks of different EU Member States (European LEADER Association for Rural Development).



Figure 1. LEADER logo
(European LEADER Association for Rural Development).

According to European LEADER Association for Rural Development, the aims and objectives of the ELARD Association are the following:

- ELARD aims to support rural and regional development under LEADER philosophy
- to promote experience sharing through its members and partners
- to promote networking and cooperation by transnational projects

The term *LEADER* comes from the French words "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale". In English it could be translated and summarized as "*bonds between the rural financing development actions*" (Leader Suomi).

The leading idea of LEADER is to utilize local experts and skills in the rural development work. In Finland, there are 56 Leader groups which develop their own development plans and choose their projects. LEADER financing is possible, for example, for supporting

- setting up enterprises, investments and developing
- international action
- living prospects of villages

Through these actions, rural areas become more attractive places to live in.

The LEADER operations consist of three parts (Figure 2):

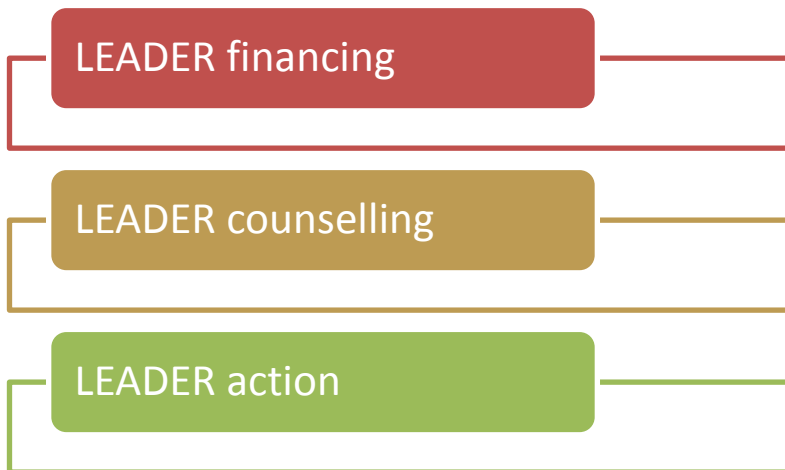


Figure 2. LEADER operations (Leader Suomi).

The EU's new program year 2014–2020 LEADER is involved in Manner-Suomi's Rural Development Program. In LEADER actions, circa 5 percent is budgeted as an EU financial contribution, i.e. over €300 million of public funding (Leader Suomi).

1.1.1 The bottom-up aspects of the LEADER

The research is considered in the light of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The aspects of CLLD are bottom-up action and local communities (villages).

It is typical of LEADER operations that cooperation between public power and civil action functions from bottom-up (grass roots action). In the boards of LAGs, single inhabitants, local communities, companies and associations in the municipalities in the area are often equally represented. This is a so called tripartite model. The tripartite model spreads equally sense of responsibility and produces projects that are designed especially for local needs. The mode of operation is multi-

organizational and suitable for all kinds of development work (Suomen kylätoiminta ry:n julkaisuja 2014, 19).

1.1.2 Definition of a village

The village is understood as a place where local people feel to belong. The village defines itself. The people experience social cohesion and want to operate together. There are villages located in rural areas, population centers and in the new areas built up around population centers. It is impossible and sometimes even unnecessary to define the boundaries of the villages in a map. However, it is possible to specify the heartland of the village where the village is built up and where its action concentrates (Etelä-Pohjanmaan LEADER-ryhmät 2012, 3)

1.1.3 Liiveri ry

Liiveri ry is a local action group (LAG) of Seinäjoki Region.

It operates in the Ilmajoki, Seinäjoki and Jalasjärvi region in South Ostrobothnia. It was founded in 1997 (Figure 3).



Figure 3. . Liiveri ry's logo and operation area (Liiveri ry).

The objective of Liiveri's development program is to increase the competitive capacity of the area to make the region a more attractive living environment, especially for young people.

Liiveri ry's strategy for the years 2014–2020 falls under the theme *Pysyy ja paranoo*. It means that the previous development work is used for the base for the new strategy. Certain themes will stay in the center of operations but also new kinds of ideas are warmly welcomed and linked to the strategy.

The vision is to make the Seinäjoki region a place full of life and with good spirit of doing. The people, companies and communities utilize the region's strengths in diverse ways and have the courage to create new things.

There are four priorities

1. *Dear home, more active communities.*
2. *Courageous enterprises, renewing livelihoods.*
3. *Prosperous environment, healthier life.*
4. *Food nearby, tastes for life.*

The main themes are sustainable development and near ecology, culture, international and interregional cooperation, young and greater community and finally, networks (Liiveri ry).

As a consequence, a creation of an internationalization model for a village could fit under of several themes mentioned. Almost every aspects of life it can be seen internationalization in some level. The LEADER action can strengthen readiness for facing internationalization: language skills, contacts and organizations skills (Arpala 2013, 8).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Internationalization

In the new program year 2014–2020, the LEADER groups, Liiveri ry among other LAGs, are committed to activate international cooperation. Internationalization is one of the leading themes of LEADER operation according to Arpala (2013, 3).

2.1.1 Definitions of internationalization

Internationalization is treated as a phenomenon which has many definitions according to who defines it and from which perspective (Luostarinen & Welch 1993, 187).

According to Ahokangas and Pihkala (2002, 62), different definitions of internationalization have been created by Welch, Luostarinen, Johanson, Mattsson and Ahokangas (2002). Below there are four definitions for internationalization described (Table 1).

Table 1. Definitions of internationalization (Ahokangas & Pihkala 2002, 62).

Definition	Descriptor
<i>“Internationalization is a process which means increasing presence in international operations.”</i>	Welch & Luostarinen, 1988
<i>“Internationalization is a process, where the awareness of enterprises’ forthcoming international business operations’ direct and indirect influences grows. Enterprises launch and perform business operations where the parties are in different countries.”</i>	Beamish 1990
<i>“Internationalization is a process where business relations are devel-</i>	Johanson & Mattsson 1988

<p><i>oped to other countries either by expanding business operations to new networks, digging into deeper to networks or by integrating networks together.”</i></p>	
<p><i>“Internationalization is a process where companies move, pull in and develop resources for their international operations.”</i></p>	<p>Ahokangas 1998</p>

By contrast, Matlay (2006, 477) defines internationalization as a synonym for the geographical expansion of economic activities over a national country’s border. The term replaced imperialism gradually as the dominant organization principle framing cross-border interaction between market economies starting in 1920s. In the post-second world war era the internationalization process accelerated and appeared matchless until the early 1970s, when a new phenomenon, *globalization*, started to evolve.

Globalization usually refers to a phase in which a firm’s operations are managed on a global scale, not just a few selected countries. It is characterized by the worldwide interaction of even more competitive markets and companies facing global competition (Matlay 2006, 477).

Because internationalization is a multidimensional term, it is important to define the term more precisely because there are several series of term like *international/ internationalization/ internationalism* (Goldmann 2001, 8).

International. The first term *international* is “a matter concerning or belonging to all or at least two or more nations” (REDFOX MASTER Dictionary).

Internationalism. This second term is a program for the growth of international exchange and communications. It covers also the strengthening of the international law and institutions – a program for internationalization (Goldmann 2001, 9).

Internationalization. The third and last term, *international*, is a process where the object is becoming more international than before (Goldmann 2001, 9).

In this research, the focus is put on the internationalization and more precisely, on the internationalization of the villages. The acts are allocated to make the target village more international than before.

2.1.2 Theories behind internationalization

In this study, internationalization is viewed from the perspective of LEADER groups and village's people. Thus, the internationalization process is viewed from *a strategic and networks' point of view*. The strategy of internationalization is described more in detail in Chapter 2.2.

The common thing for all theories is that internationalization is seen as a process. The process means that it is assumed that internationalization evolves step-by-step from simple, undeveloped operations towards complex, developed operations (Luostarinen & Welch 1993, 187).

There are some typical theories related to internationalization (Table 2). Traditionally, these theories are divided into four main categories: *historical, traditional, networks and resource base models* (Ahokangas & Pihkala 2002, 65).

Table 2. Summary of internationalization theories (Ahokangas & Pihkala 2002, 65)

THEORY	FOUNDATION	GOAL
Historical	Explain international trade	Gives a code of behavior to nation states
Mercantilism	Prosperity	Surplus
The theory of absolute advantage	Products and services	Efficiency
The theory of relative advantage	Efficiency	Networking
Traditional	Describes the strategy of organizations	Gives guidance

Porter	Nation's competitive advantage	Explaining the success of branch
Johnston	Commitment	Describing the development path
Bamberger& Evers	Adopting the innovation	Describing the development path
Dunning	Placement of production	Decision making model
Hill, Hwang& Kim	The choose of operation model	Decision making model
Larimo	Foreign investment	Influencing factors
Johansson& Vahlne	Learning	Explaining of learning
Luostarinen& Hellman	International operations	Defining the operation path
Networks	Network theory	Describe processes
Johanson& Mattsson	Business relations	The situation of internationalization and understanding it
Resource-based	Resource and learning theories	Categorize and describe processes
Tallman& Lindquist	Organizations international development	Strategic categorizing
Ahokangas	The development of international know-how	Describing the learning strategies
Malnight	The development of mother- daughter relationship	Describing the development of organization
Growth models	Describing the growth	Describe processes
Greiner	Gradual versus fast	Internal crises of organi-

	chance	zation
Churchill& Lewis	Strategic goals	Describing the growth
Vernon	Product lifecycle	Describing the development

2.1.3 Internationalization strategy

In his research, internationalization strategy means those operations in which the organizations, LEADER groups, reach the goals set to internationalization.

Overall, *the aim of strategic planning is to create principles for an organization's long-term operations*. In practice, it means that the organization defines measures for success. *In strategy, the organization describes how these strategic goals are reached* (Äijö 2008, 133).

According to Ahokangas& Pihkala (2002, 89), the strategy can be discussed from six different points of view.

- What kind of internationalization is needed related to strategic 1) *decision making element* and decision making 2) *inquiry* and information processing in the organization (e.g. information received from external or internal stimuli)?
- 3) The *contents* and *timing* of strategic steps related to the organization's operating environment, and what do they tell about organizations strategic 4) *go-ahead mentality* and *flexibility*?
- The organization's 5) *position* in market and what kinds of internal and external 6) *resources* and know-how are involved in this position?

2.1.4 Theoretical framework for internationalization strategy

The strategies of internationalization are developed from the theories mentioned previously in this text. The internationalization strategies that drive the international village model development process are based on *network* and *resource-based theories*.

The network model is chosen because it is a well-suitable for organizations, whose internationalization process is in a starting point and who can benefit from international networks. Actually, there are over 2,000 LEADER groups in Europe but international cooperation has not functioned as aimed. The resource-based theory selection precedes that there are interest, resources and know-how in LEADER groups for international operations.

Network Theory. Ahokangas and Takala (2002, 90–91) describe that the core of the network theory is that organizations are *independent* and *network voluntary* either from their own initiative or following a signal coming from outside. Starting points for networks are 1) *operators* and their 2) *operations* as well as 3) *resources* and the 4) *operating capability* which is possible due the resources. When these factors are combined, it is possible to go deep into *the competence of networks*, especially to *the value-added chain roots*.

Resource-Based Theory. The managing of internationalization is finally crystallized to organizations' know-how. According to Ahokangas and Takala (2002, 96), *know-how is the organization's capability to benefit from resources*.

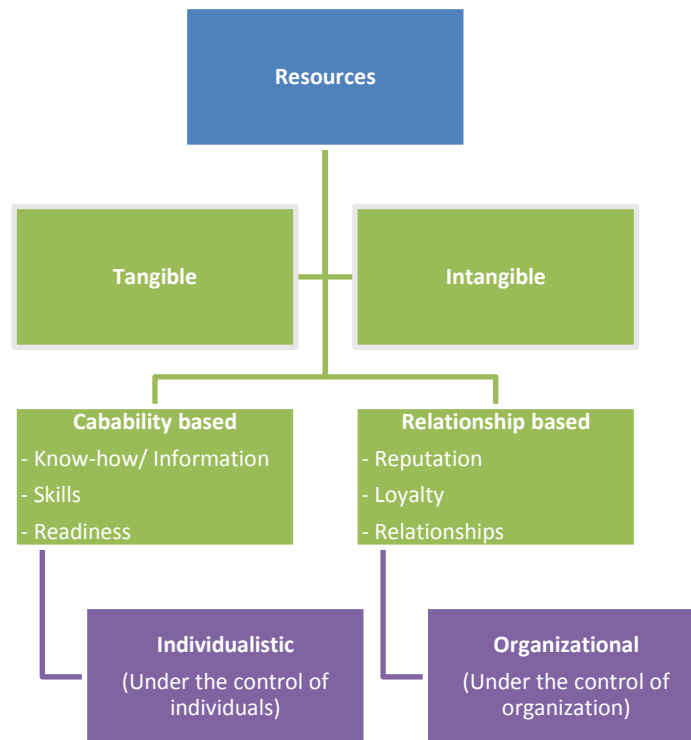


Figure 4. The strategic resources (Ahokangas& Pihkala 2002, 96).

As for the strategic resources mentioned, it is a good to consider especially the resources needed for internationalization (Figure 4). Every resource has characteristics, which may be a good cornerstone for internationalization. After all, the know-how needed for internationalization is finally dependent on the organization's operations and operating environment. Naturally, this know-how is evolved, matured and changed after times when the operations develop (Ahokangas& Pihkala 2002, 99).

2.1.5 Motives for internationalization

There are several reasons that drive an organization to consider internationalization. According to Äijö (2008, 38), the motives can be divided into *push and pull factors*. The push factors mean different kinds of problems in domestic markets which force to seek for better opportunities abroad. Instead, the pull factors are tempting and better opportunities in international markets. In practice, an internationalization decision is often a mix of these both factors. Sometimes, the decision is simply based on an impulse coming outside.

Luostarinen and Welch (1993, 13) discuss the factors affecting decision-making in international operations with the help of stimuli influence (Figure 5).

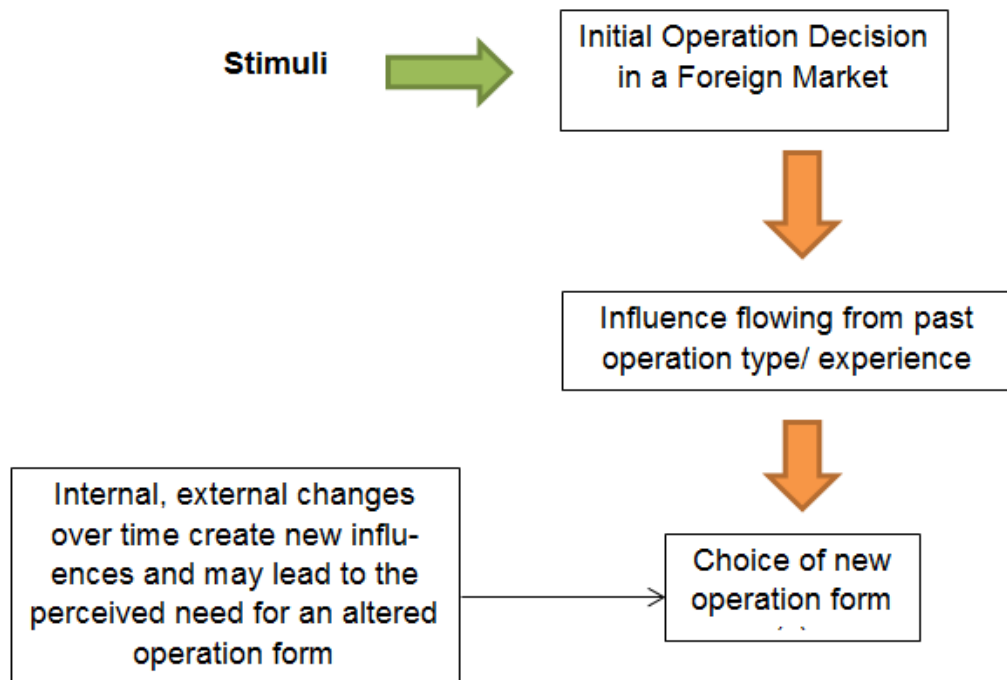


Figure 5. Longitudinal Factors in International Operations decision (Luostarinen & Welch 1993, 13).

Similarly, Äijö (2008, 39) summarizes the long-term internationalization reasons as follows: All the motives for the internationalization can be crystallized to a one central need: to guarantee organizations' growth and results.

Äijö (2008, 40) continues that these motives can be tested with a question: *Do international markets offer better potential compared to domestic markets and is the organization capable of benefiting from the potential?*

In the study, LEADER group Liiveri ry's main motive for internationalization is to reach internationalization goals set in their own and European-level strategies. Thus, the factors affecting are mainly pull factors. Then, for Nopankylä offers internationalization an opportunity to develop the village more and make it more attractive place to live for both current and future inhabitants. Those motives for internationalization are a mix of both factors.

2.1.6 Conditions for internationalization

It is important to note that internationalization is not separated but integrated to all the operations of an organization. The internationalization process makes an *all-encompassing learning- and transformation process* possible where the result is that the organization, in this case the LEADER group and village, expand to the international field (Äijö 2008, 41). In a general fashion, international operations are more demanding than domestic ones. According to Äijö (op. cit. 41), it means that, for example, the leaders and personnel of organizations must have skills to deal with the international scale. In LEADER groups, there international coordinators have been hired and international projects are supported by the frame of “normal” LEADER counselling (Arpala 2013, 7).

On the contrary, there are some problems with internationalization. As the report of Southern Ostrobothnian LEADER groups international actions says, the main issues are that only part of the operators are interested in international cooperation. This is due to the small size of operators business, lack of language skills and modest international experience. Also, the challenge is that not all European LEADER groups have resources international cooperation. Finding good and committed partners is vital.

To continue, LEADER cooperation, both at the national and the international levels, has usually been identified around a one person. An international coordinator is a good resource in the preparation process of international operations but the overall process should involve the whole personnel. This way, human risks can be tackled (Arpala 2013, 8)

Lastly, the successful internationalization process should start at a very bottom level. This does not mean that the old methods should be used, vice versa. There is a need of new, innovative ideas that comes from the rural people living in villages. The preparation of an internationalization plan is a good example and the threshold to participate is low. If this act started as a direct project, it would be too heavy and people might be suspicious to participate long-term. At first, it is important to show that internationalization can be fun and not too exhausting.

2.1.7 Opportunities of internationalization

Internationalization involves great opportunities. Internationalization increases both villages' *vitality* and *multidimensional local developing*. International connections open for example concrete possibilities opportunities for cities and villages international *sister city cooperation*. Finland is seriously underrepresented in the use of CIMO's financing. Active applying also leads to positive results with other financing sources. Through LEADER financing, it is possible to promote internationalization, too (Suomen Kylätoiminta ry:n julkaisu 2014, 43).

In the pilot village, they are

- developing networks
- sharing best practices
- creating new ideas
- involving youth to participate in village activities
- finding new financing sources for bigger transnational joint projects (e.g. the Europe for Citizens program)
- offering international experiences for all stakeholders

Thus, the internationalization of a village can mean language or cultural studies at small scale or in wide scale the whole village might have internationalization plan, transnational networks or know-how in financing.

2.2 Global networking and cooperation

2.2.1 Networking

As the word *networking* can be used to describe many kinds of things and forms of organization. Even in academic discussion, the phenomenon is a very multidimensional one. Nevertheless, a hard line can be seen between a sociological and an

economic view. The sociological models emphasize the importance of relationships in networking among other things. In the other end, the economic approach is more interested in effectiveness and productiveness in networking (Suominen 2004, 7).

Globalization of business and economic activity has resulted in competition that takes place between networks of operators (Taggart 2001, 10). According to Taggart (op. cit. 10), in order for a player to be an effective competitor in the global economy the player needs to be a respected cooperator in some network.

Network Formation. According to Ryhänen and Laitila (2014, 28), form a network requires a maker of an initiative (Figure 6). It can be a person, organization or a development association. The initiative maker has a development problem that needs to be solved in order to fulfil the strategy. The maker sees a network-based approach as a solution to solve the problem. The initiative is made to potential partners, and if they join the development work, a common strategy and goals for this cooperation will be defined.

Ryhänen and Laitila (2014, 30) continue that the cooperation starts if the network is formed as an equal base of partners and their stakeholders.

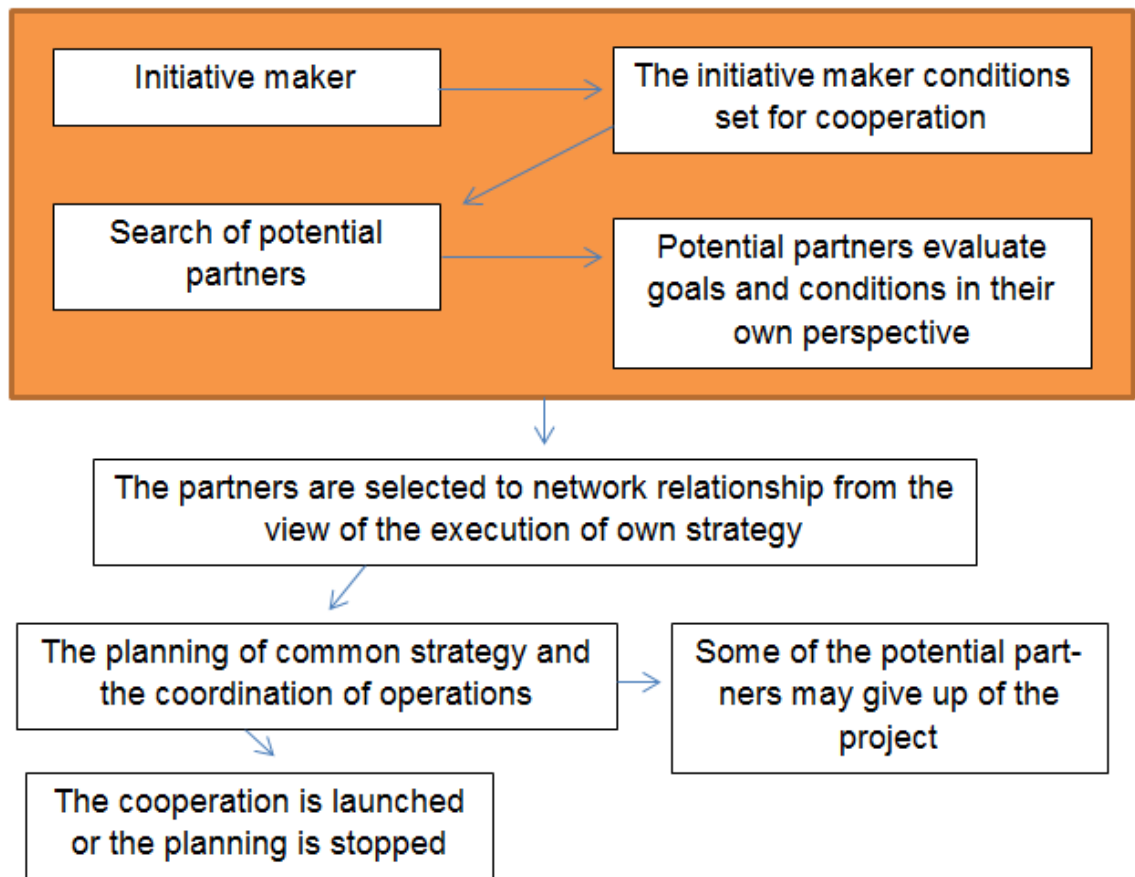


Figure 6. The formation of a network relationship (Ryhänen& Laitila 2014, 30)

Networks in LEADER Operations. Admittedly, networking is one of the main features of the LEADER approach. It includes the exchange of achievements, experiences and know-how between LEADER groups, rural areas, administrations and organizations involved in rural development within the EU, even if they are not direct LEADER beneficiaries. The focus is also on the transferring of good practices. It means disseminating of innovation and of building on the lessons learned from local rural development (European LEADER Association for Rural Development).

There are different types of networks in LEADER operations (Figure 7).

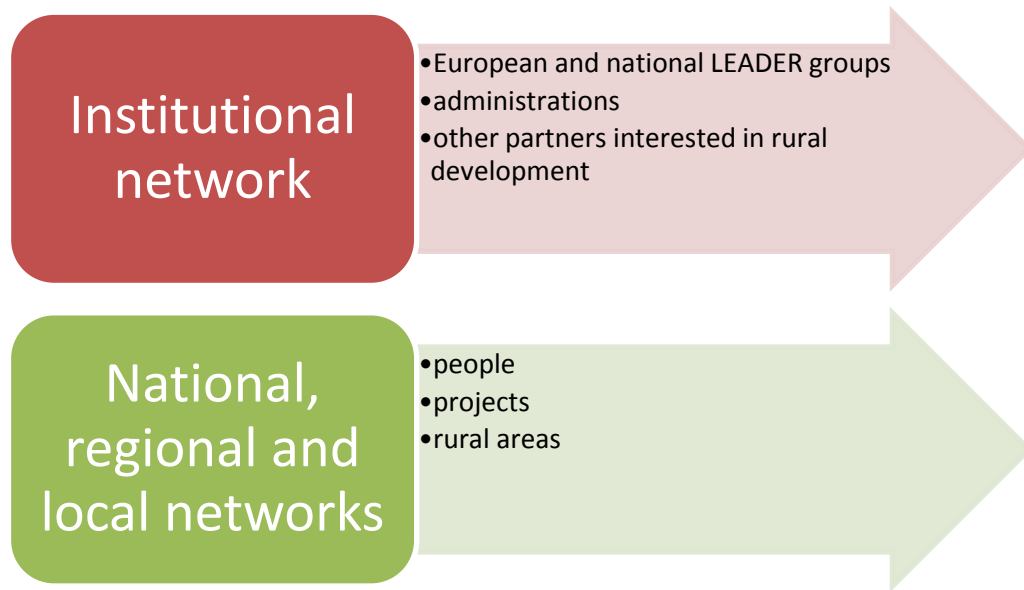


Figure 7. Networks in LEADER operations
(European LEADER Association for Rural Development).

Since 2007, LEADER networking activities have addressed a much broader range of rural development issues. The expert support and take in charge practical activities like preparing publications on different aspects of rural development, organizing seminars, analyzing rural development actions to identify good practice, identifying development trends in rural areas, running websites and helping LEADER groups search for potential partners and start cooperation projects.

The purpose of a European network is also to act as a meeting point for national networks and administrations in each Member State in order to share experience at the European level (European LEADER Association for Rural Development).

Current networking operational environment both increases and reduces the chances to anticipate acts and their consequences. Still, networking is a mean to cut down environments risks and boost cooperation. However, the increase of relationships in networks may result to more complicated and unsafe operational environment. That is why it is important that agreement systems and culture form a solid basis for networking (Virtanen et al. 2005, 1). In LEADER networks, the European Union provides the frame for agreements and culture.

Clusters. Together with networks, it can be talked about clusters. Network thinkers' think that the primary focus is on cooperation between companies but cluster

minds highlight competition between companies. In the course of time, these two approaches merged (Virtanen & Hernesniemi 2005, 1).

Virtanen and Hernesniemi (2001, 22) state that the clusters can be seen in everyday life. These clusters involve companies, public power and third sector which work in the complex network of relationships. Innovation capital and social capital are accumulated to cluster and that is why they are valuable.

Liiveri ry belongs to associations and the third sector in cluster thinking. According to Virtanen and Hernesniemi (2001, 22) these two operators are important when it comes to increasing the nation's competitiveness. The associations' roles are important in project launching and formation of open discussion forums.

A successful cluster needs a clear coordination point and a person (s) who can link different actors to cooperation. In LEADER, this can be achieved due to decentralized administration which allows autonomy to the local partnerships in the program implementation, leaving the strategic choices and the selection of projects to the LAG. This constitutes an invaluable incentive for individual and organizational learning (European LEADER Association for Rural Development). On the other hand, if the cluster is identified only around one person it might be a risk if the person decides to leave the cluster for some reason.

According to Virtanen and Hernesniemi (2005, 20), the other possible threats linked to cluster which may damage operations if not considered carefully, are

- *interlocking*, where the resource and operators density in same area can prevent the born of a new cluster
- *decrease in competitors*, where the cooperation between clusters is so high that it decreases the creation of new innovations
- *self-satisfaction*, where the operators in same the cluster are so focused only on the operations inside the cluster that they do not see possible changes outside

In the internationalization process of the village, these risks can be eliminated by the fact there are no existing ready-made practices which are focused on creating

internationalization opportunities for villages. There is a need for a functioning cluster. The main goal of the internationalization plan is to gather together and inspire village people to see the chances and to participate actively. At first, the focus is only on one village but later on the purpose is to extend the internationalization plan to other areas. This might happen in a form of a project.

To conclude, it can be seen that the networks and clusters form a backbone for successful operations in the international field. In the pilot village, it is possible to benefit from the existing strong networks of clusters in order to involve new, motivated stakeholders. Motivated stakeholders guarantee the continuum of the project in the future. If the project succeeds, it can help to stimulate the born of new ones. Networking forges links between people, projects and rural areas.

2.2.2 Cooperation

Cooperation goes further than networking. The learning of cooperation skills is seen an important at the latest in primary schools and the skills are highlighted in job advertisements in every occupation. For example, in health care services, there are established multiprofessional teams, children are raised in the cooperation between school and home and, from cooperation, solutions are sought in the face of international competition. Restructuring of work life and globalization are forcing organization to cooperate in order to survive. Cooperation is the order of the day (Aira 2012, 11).

Argyle (2013, 4) defines cooperation as follows

Cooperation: acting together, in coordinated way at work, leisure, or in a social relationship, in the pursuit of share goals, the enjoyment of joint activity, or simply furthering the relationship.

Furthermore, Argyle (2013, 3) wants to point out that cooperation is a central human existence. Other displays of species have also shown cooperative behavior in order to survive.

The understanding of cooperation process and structures helps organizations to win the challenges of cooperation and benefit more of it. Aira (2013, 17) discuss cooperation as following process

- *cooperation structures*, which enable but do not guarantee cooperation
- *process of cooperation*, where the cooperation is not born from structures but is based on freewill, and, thus, the participants of cooperation can either implement cooperation or destroy it with their behavior
- *social relations and communication*, where the cooperation is considered in the context of the influence of physical communication and telecommunications technology

In LEADER operations, cooperation can help LEADER groups to boost their local activities. It can allow them to resolve certain problems or add value to local resources. For instance, the Southern Ostrobothnian LEADER groups have gathered their power together in joint village development projects. Groups have hired *village experts* (*kyläasiamies*) who cooperate together and with village people. The goals are common: help and activate villages to develop operations, inspire to join project work, organize events and counselling. The results have been good and today, LEADER groups are one of the most important partners of villages (LEADER Etelä-Pohjanmaa 2013, 12).

According to the homepage of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development, LEADER cooperation in international level involves a local action group involvement a joint project with another LEADER group, or with a group taking a similar approach, in another region, Member State, or even third country. The projects must include a concrete joint project, ideally managed under a common structure. There are two different types of cooperation possible under LEADER:

- *interterritorial cooperation*, where cooperation takes place between different rural areas within a Member State

- *transnational cooperation*, where cooperation occurs between LEADER groups from at least two Member States, or with groups in third countries following a similar approach

In the creation of internationalization plan, the cooperation is planned firstly to take place at the domestic level and, in the future, the goal is to seek committed international partners for different types of joint projects. This requires long-term creation and managing of international relationships.

Lastly, it is essential to remind that, in most research cooperation, is seen as a very positive phenomena, but cooperation might have also negative consequences, like freeloaders, narrow-minded group thinking or the concentration of power. These negative aspects can be prevented by creating clear goals, use of telecommunications technology as supportive way, setting of milestones and both nourishing and strengthening the interpersonal relationships (Aira 2013, 143).

2.3 International procedures and projects related to community development in Finnish and other LEADER Groups

Internationalization of villages and associations increases both coziness and toleration. With help of international cooperation it is possible to create new know-how, events and ideas to local area. International actions are also a good way to involve youth to participate in village activities. It is possible to have international operations over nation's borders or locally (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan LEADER-ryhmät 2014, 24).

This chapter presents some of the best practices in the international activity of Finnish and some of the other European LEADER groups. The ideas of these practices can be used later in the creation of internationalization plan for Nopankylä.

A more information of Finnish LEADER projects can be found from the project database of the Agency of Rural Affairs (Mavi). The expatriate projects can be searched from the project cooperation offer database of the European Network for

Rural Development (ENRD). REN project was chosen due to different financing channel that can also be used to finance communal projects.

2.3.1 Internationalization at home

Internationalization at home (kotikansainvälistyminen) means acquiring international experiences and cultural knowledge in your own country.

Local communities can internationalize by organizing open events for everyone. Good ways to internationalize are

- organizing briefings with local immigrants
- international dinner events
- pop-up restaurant days
- international days for kids
- living libraries

One example is from the city of Ylivieska. It belongs to LEADER Rieska ry's operation area. There were organized dinner events for youth and at best there have been over 40 youth present. Good partners for events are for example Finnish Red Cross, immigrant associations, educational institutions, libraries, parishes, municipal's department of cultures and projects (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan LEADER-ryhmät 2014, 24).

2.3.2 International Youth Camp

In international youth camp a group of volunteers work for a local community's common-good goal. For instance Allianssi Oy arranges youth camps.

The volunteers do not receive compensation but they are offered food and accommodation, for example in local country school. The camp lasts up two to three weeks and has usually 10–20 participants. The theme can be an event arrange-

ment, renovating a village house, nature management or culture (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan LEADER-ryhmät 2014, 25)

An international youth camp was organized in the area of LEADER Veej'jakaja, Pieksämäki, The theme was OUR EARTH HOUR and the goals were increasing the civil activity of rural young, increasing the vitality of area and strengthening the international cooperation. The camp was LEADER funded and organized by Mikkelin University of Applied Sciences. The international partner came from North-France.

During the camp the campers participated in workshops of four different kinds. As part of work the participants learned new skills, thought about own acts influence to environment and values related to renovating own traditional area. For example the partners learned tarring of windmill's wings, cutting of bulrush and producing material for different publishes.

The camp was a very successful one and the Finnish youth will make a visit to see their French friends (LEADER Veej'jakaja).

2.3.3 Erasmus in schools project

The Erasmus in schools project makes possible to invite European exchange students and volunteer workers to visit schools. The visitors tell about their homeland and culture. At same time, the students and volunteers have the opportunity to get familiar with the everyday life of Finnish schools.

During the school visits, the visitors can for example participate in foreign language or foreign culture lessons. They can discuss about Erasmus experience and volunteer work, plan international projects with a single class or participate in internationalization strategy planning of school. Teachers can present special wishes according to the participants' special skills.

For example, youth centre Villa Elba in Kokkola coordinates European voluntary service's volunteers who would like to come to visit different schools (Eurooppalainen Suomi).

2.3.4 Twinning village

Kiihtelysvaaran Eteläiset Kylät ry. The village association Kiihtelysvaaran Eteläiset Kylät ry has been ready for international cooperation for a long time. They have been looking for a twinning village and now they received a cooperation request from the village of Geresdlak, Hungary.

Kiihtelysvaaran Eteläiset Kylät ry's partner in the project is LEADER Joensuu Seutu. The aim is of the project "*Uskalista Unkariin ja Raatevaaralta kansainvälisille raiteille*" is both to research and map the more detailed content of the cooperation and launches it. There have been already study visit to the twinning village. Different methods have caused some problems with the project applying process. For example, it is impossible for rural areas to make decisions of international projects themselves. The decisions always go to cities to be decided. At that time the village of Geresdlak did not have international projects ongoing (Kiihtelysvaaran Eteläiset kylät ry]).

Pyhäjärvisseutu. LEADER Pyhäjärvisseutu applied Gruntvig financing from CIMO in 2009 for a project where they would have organized international village seminar. The application was not accepted.

Though, the project coordinator participated into international seminar held by The Rural Network of Finland. There were participants from over 20 countries. The next year Pyhäjärvisseutu ry launched a new project "*Path to Europe*". They hired part time international project coordinator with LEADER Ravakka ry to manage action. The project operations involve announcement, information exchange, study visits, events and participating in seminars in Finland and abroad. The goal is to find connections to local communities and after the project these connections could be used later on. Especially this project wants to motivate young people to join rural development (Pyhäjärvisseudun toimintayhdistys ry 2009, 8).

2.3.5 Innovative village project

In international LEADER project the partners are Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, LEADER Viisari ry and Jyväskriihi ry. The aim is to find solutions to prevent escaping of services in rural areas and same time develop village-based services together with village people. The international partners come from North-Ireland and Estonia (Monien kulttuurien Keski-Suomi). An active village resident Tanja Rämö praises especially the cooperation with Ireland. The villages are around same sizes like in Finland and distances are as long. Rämö continues that Finnish could learn more about communality from Irish because the role of community is even bigger (Innovative Village).

The project has been very successful. One of the best practices is planning events organized for village's people where they together can plan development procedures to update their village (Monien kulttuurien Keski-Suomi). During the project there have been organized over 130 events, in which have been participated 18 municipalities and over 4500 people. Also visits to partner countries have been made on both sides. Valuable connections have been made (Innovative Village).

With small group action, workshops and courses organizing the aim have been that events are carried out together by local associations or other operators. Gathering around a specific theme, mostly food and craft, has tuned conversation of habits, traditions and challenges related to themes. On top of this, the participants have learned to know new people both over cultural borders and with same background. For the immigrants the participation has been very helpful. They have learned Finnish with new friends and this has helped them to get a work. For instance one Chinese woman came to tell about her country and culture and after this an adult education center offered a job for her. Also the some of the Finnish participants have found a work after the project because during the workshops and events their special skills have been marked (Innovative Village).

2.3.6 A joint project between 4H-associations

The 4H-association of Varpajaisjärvi coordinated the project “*Nuotio-Nuorten Taitoa, Intoa ja Osaamista*”.

According to Agency for Rural Affairs’s Project register, the project is implemented as a joint project between the three 4H-associations in Varpaisjärvi, Lapinlahti and Maaninka.

Project objectives, target group and activities:

- co-operation between the local 4H-associations
- Nature Guide Training for young people
- co-operation with rural tourism
- transnational co-operation
- international days at schools
- a study visits to partner countries

The project is funded through LEADER Ylä-Savon Veturi ry. The total costs of the project were €115.000 in which the financial contribution of ELY was €73.600, the municipal money €18.400 and a private financing €23.000 (Varpaisjärven 4H-yhdistyksen Nuotio-hankkeen tilapäisrahoitusta koskeva anomus, 2011).

2.3.7 Rural Europe Network- project (REN)

There are five countries participating to the project REN. Countries are Italy, Spain, Croatia, Sweden and Finland. An initiative for this project came originally from Italy. The common factor of these countries is that rural municipalities are facilitated with issues

- aging population
- young people are moving away

- lack of workplaces

Thus, the aim of this project is to find best practices to save our rural municipalities. The common motive is make countryside a tempting living environment in a way that it offers work and other ways for a good living. The target groups consist of local farmers, decision makers, young people, companies and associations. The purpose is to change best practices with other participating countries.

The financing of the project comes from EU's the Europe for citizens program 2014–2020 (REN project).

2.3.8 ENO - European Network of Orchestras and bands for Young

The project ENO aims to target young people interested of music. The coordinator is LEADER Aktiivinen Pohjois.Satakunta ry.

The main objects are

- developing of virtual concerts;
- composing of own music together internationally and practicing it by distance developing and testing streaming technology to do it;
- organizing of concerts, making concert halls/equipping spaces to realize this activity in rural areas;
- exchange of experiences, study visits between areas and learning of musical culture of each other's in network
- friendship activity

LAGs and the participation are open for all EU Member States (ENO - European Network of Orchestras and bands for Young).

2.3.9 Folk Music and Youth Exchange

According to European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) project cooperation offer data-base, LEADER area in Sweden was interested in organizing a folk music summer course and youth exchange in summer 2012. One part of this exchange was done exclusively between Sweden and Finland.

Their strategy focuses on in promoting entrepreneurship within tourism, added value on local products, nature, and culture. Also local initiatives and cooperation are in spotlight. The Study & Learning Association Bilda Gävle-Dala is since 2002 running a large folk music activity in cooperation with the Leader area in the Hälsingland county. At that time they were looking for a Finnish partner to expand the existing TNC which already includes northern England & Bretagne.

The steps of the project were

- 1) to find a folk music teacher who can participate in a summer course in Järvsö in the summer 2010 to teach tunes from Finnish folk music in a team of teachers from Sweden, France and England
- 2) planning for a larger project with a youth group of 25-30 participants from 4-8 countries for summer courses in Hälsingland (Sweden), Northumberland (England) and Bretagne (France) in 2011& 2012. In the end, summer 2012, a music tour with concerts in several countries will be arranged

2.3.10 Multilingual Horse Riding Camp

LEADER Pyhäjärvisseutu and horse riding club Jazz T in South-Western Finland coordinated a project which aimed to offer language immersion camps.

The club is a very active and full of ideas and energy to organize training and competitions as well as to provide riding as a hobby and other activities to all ages. The idea was to offer language immersion camps for instance to bilingual young people. In Finland and Europe there are lots of kids whose other parent speaks a

foreign language. It is important to offer those kids language immersion camps to maintain both languages.

The camps were held in a horse farm. Kids did not had to be able to ride a horse, the most important was to bring them together and get to know each other (Horse Riding Club JAZZ T).

3 EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The starting point and goal of the development work

The goal of this development work is to create internationalization plan for a one village in Southern-Ostrobothnia area. If the process is successful, the plan could be adapted to other villages later on.

The need for this development work stems from the common themes of The European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD). *Internationalization* is one of these leading themes of LEADER operation and local LAG's are committed to boost it. Internationalization is possible with *transnational networks* and *co-operation*.

The LEADER operation is based on *bottom-up action*. By involving local communities in rural development planning and implementation LEADER has breathed new life into communities facing challenges. A village was chosen to development target because they are the heart of local communities and in Southern Ostrobothnian villages are really active and communal. Thus, what could be a more natural step for already active South Ostrobothnian villages than internationalization? The characters of a participatory action research approach are cooperation and active participation. Developing together is often reached a better solution to development work than adopting ideas exclusively coming outside. Thus the planning is done together with village people. The action research possible sharing of the ideas and this is a good start for a long-term developing.

The target village is Nopankylä, located in Ilmajoki. There was held a village survey 2014 in Ilmajoki area and Nopankylä showed interested toward internationalization (Kortesuo 2015). On top of that, there are already Erasmus- project ongoing in the local village school.

The researcher approach one of the village association's board member via e-mail in April 2015 and asked, if they would be interested to participate this project. The answer was a positive and the board member promised to present internationalization idea in the meeting of local village association. The village expert of Liiveri

ry and the researcher wanted that the board member would ask people from different background and ages to participate in ideation event. This is how the internationalization goal and theme that fulfils the desire of most of the village people could be achieved. In the village meeting held 26th of April were opinions positive toward internationalization plans.

The board member contacted the author in the last week of April. She proposed dates for the ideation event and the date confirmed to be 12th of May. This was only possible day because May is full of events in Nopankylä. Also many students will graduate. To continue, there was a wish that in the event would be presented some examples about internationalization. This would be possible with Power Point presentation. An advertisement was also asked to prepare about the event for village's Facebook group site.

The event was held 12th May at Nopankylä village house. The author went there together with the village expert from Liiveri ry. There was only handful of participants but they pursued inspiration for the topic. The listeners got information about the local village school Erasmus+ project where all the students from the first grade are in. This was seen an opportunity to search contacts for the twinning village partners. The other themes discussed where internationalization at home, youth exchange, voluntary services and the international experiences of the village. The conclusions of the discussions were that the village has potential and it would be best to start from the small-scale internationalization like international dinner events, pop-up restaurant days, international days for kids and maybe even organize a youth camp in Nopankylä. There was an interest to boost the ecotourism in the village. It would mean renovating the local summer camp, nature tracks and preparing English signs for the nature tracks. This could be possible with the volunteers.

The villagers wanted the author to create a short but detailed plan about the internationalization process. The wishes were responded and the plan was ready 25th of June. Both the Liiveri ry and Nopankylä villagers were pleased to the plan. They are excited about organizing a youth camp next summer at the Kalajaisjärvi summer camp. The hope is that the plan would inspire as many villagers as possible. The internationalization could be "*the thing*" at Nopankylä.

3.1.1 Nopankylä

Nopankylä is a communal, lively and an active village. The village has long traditions in village action and event organizing. This is a way how Nopankylä stays vibrant and alive. There are around 330 people living in Nopankylä. The village is located 15 minutes' drive away from Ilmajoki and Kurikka. To Seinäjoki it is only 30 minutes by car.

Long traditions in village association activity bring permanence to village and it is a very easy for everyone to join village activity. The other strengths of Nopankylä are village school, a well located village house, active associations like 4H-association and diverse events. In village there operates rural entrepreneurs, a car repair shop, day-care center, a smithy and a building firm. The vision of the village is that the surrounding nature could offer chances both for wildlife and eco-tourism and Green Care business (Ilmajoen kylät 2015, 16-17).

3.2 A participatory action research approach to development work

The nature of this thesis is a development work, *a creation of internationalization plan*, and the research method is a participatory action research.

The starting point of action research is usually solving a work life or situation of social environment, where a researcher or a work community experience unsatisfied or problematic. Developing refers to concrete action which aims to reach targets set. The goal is often to create new procedures, methods, services and innovations. It is very common that the development pressures stem from the chances which occur around the world. No organization can live separated from the surrounding world but they have to answer to chances and develop operation. The organization has to actively aim to effect the direction of the chance (Suojanen 2004).

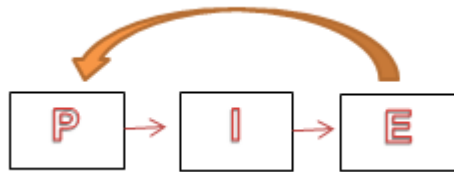


Figure 8. The process of the development work (P=planning, I= implementation, E=evaluation (Ojasalo 2014, 23)

All kinds of development work can be structured into a simple process (Figure 10). The first step is to figure out development target, goals and a plan how the goals could be reached (P). Secondly, in the development process is needed implementing the plan (I). Lastly, are the results evaluated (E). Usually after the evaluating is often started a new project (Ojasalo 2014, 22).

Suojanen (2004) continues the action research must fulfil following criteria

- the aim of the research is to develop together some social target, the action of a group, a certain project or product
- the research is implemented as planning- action- observation-reflection cycles
- the participants of the research process participate actively all the phases of the research
- the progress of the research is reported

Often a social psychology classic by Kurt Lewin is presented as a backbone for action research. Lewis made a research called *Harword* during he was a consult in Virginia (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

“The problem of Harword factory was a low productivity, the churn rate of workers and the aggressive behavior of workers toward to lead when there were chances made concerning work and it’s coordination. The lead of the factory wanted to know why there was a so huge negation toward chances and what could be done in order to fix the problem. So in the factory was made a true-life experiment and for the starting point was set a “theory of frustration”. The more difficult and speedy is a job, the more frustrated are the workers. In the actual experiment were used three groups of workers. Every group’s tasks

were modified and renewed. The first group did not participate the planning of the modifications, the third group participated partially through an intermediary and the third group negotiated about modifications together with the lead. The results were that in the first group work morale and productivity declined. In addition, aggression and churn rate increased. This happened not in the two other groups. The overall picture was that the third group which participated into planning process achieved good results measured by productivity (Coch & French 1948, according to Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

From the example by Lewis it can be seen how huge impact the participatory methods gives to final desired output. Ojasalo (2014, 59) sums up, that together developed is often better solution to development task than the ideas coming outside of the community.

The aim in action research is by developing to create change and improve the target. As important is to remember that the matter is research. In action research is also material and information produced even if the aimed chances would not succeed (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

3.2.1 Reflection in action research

The essential part of the action of the action research is continuous reflection of action.

The task of the researcher is to analyze the collected data so that the researcher can form a clear picture of the whole entity. The analyze process occurs during the whole action research process and the even information *gained (a real time reflection)* during the process has impact to actual process ongoing. The final analysis is made with a help of logical thinking and interpretation. The results are then categorized. The reliability of research strengthens if all the participants can reflect the final output. In this research it is internationalization plan (Suojanen 2004).

3.2.2 Creative Methods in action research

According to Heikkinen and Huttunen (2007, 198), action research can be understood more like a research orientation which benefits different methods like observation, interviews and literal material. When using a methods, action research highlights the use of own creative thinking, not using right way a methods and material. The research methods can be gradually changing and developing like practices where the action research target.

In this study, several methods are used together with literal material and discussions with stakeholders.

Research Diary. The action researcher discuss with the stakeholders almost every day during the action process. The opinions and observations are presented on both sites. The action is planned together. These kinds of discussion the researcher can record to a diary. The researcher collects data systematically from different themes suitable for the research. She/ he organize ideas with help of diary and together with the field work is information from the process and feelings recorded. The diary can involve for example feedback, summaries, questions and observations concerning own action. The purpose of this all is move research forward (Huovinen& Rovio 2008, 106–107).

The researcher started writing the diary after the theoretical part of thesis was almost written. This was a good solution because it would have been too early to write diary before the overall structure of the research was planned. Now the researcher could reflect theory to practice and start writing diary. Mostly the things in diary were questions or a sudden ideas coming after a night good slept. Also discussions with stakeholders and field work were recorded.

According to Huovinen and Rovio (2008, 108), the research diary should always be kept available. This succeeded because the researcher kept the diary in her bag all the time when going out. The diary was also kept private. The diary was most helpful to construe ideas. It was also a tool to record the author's own learning process.

Ideation events. According to Huovinen and Rovio (2008, 106), the aim of action research is to understand and describe the target. The role of the researcher depends, sometimes he/ she is an outside observer and sometimes a central actor. As an observer, the researcher makes notes but in order to participate must make notes afterwards. In this research the role varied. In the early stage of the research the author was an active actor in order to find out what Liiveri ry and village people want from this development work. Also, finding a potential village to join the research needed an active action.

Benchmarking. With help of this method it is possible to learn by comparing the development target to other one, usually to best one. The basic idea of benchmarking is to learn from others and questioning own action. When using a benchmarking it is often necessary to adapt the best practises to fit to own development target (Ojasalo et al. 2014, 43). In this research the best practises have been looked from other international LEADER and European Union related project. They provide valuable information how to make internationalization process successful and give inspiration to people of Nopankylä.

3.3 Implementation of action research

In the action research process, the cyclicity of the process is in important role. The cycles are formed by *planning- action- observation-reflection cycles*.

The Figure 8 describes the cyclicity of internationalization plan process in Nopankylä. The actual starting point of the research was a careful familiarization to theories related to work and discussion with stakeholders. It was important to know what Liiveri ry and people of Nopankylä want from internationalization process. The first cycle means the preparation of internationalization plan after the wishes of stakeholders. The information was gained with help of communal ideation methods and researcher's observation. Afterwards the plan was ready was the time to discuss about the results and reflect it to context. The second cycle describes the continuous nature of action research. It is possible to update internationalization plan for the next goals with help of feedback and experiences of the first one in the future.

MAPPING THE CURRENT SITUATION

- gathering LAG's and village people together
- listing the strengths and weaknesses
- finding out possibilities and limitations

The functions of LEADER operation and a local community

- theoretical familiarization
- consciousness of own practice foundation
- listing stakeholders
- values
- creating overall outline

- conversations together with stakeholders
- evaluation of process and output

- participatory observation
- following the process and output
- observation of own working methods
- conversations, communal idea-tion methods, benchmarking, interviews and diary

Internationalization Plan I

- the current situation and goals of the local community
- themes
- uniqueness
- tasks of LAG's and the local community
- self-evaluation
- new practices
- flexibility
- networking and cooperation

Internationalization Plan II

- use of feedback
- continuously developing action



A LOCAL COMMUNITY UNDER EXAMINEE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Figure 9. Cycles in development work (Anita Saaranen-Kauppinen & Anna Puusniekka.)

3.4 Timeline of the action research

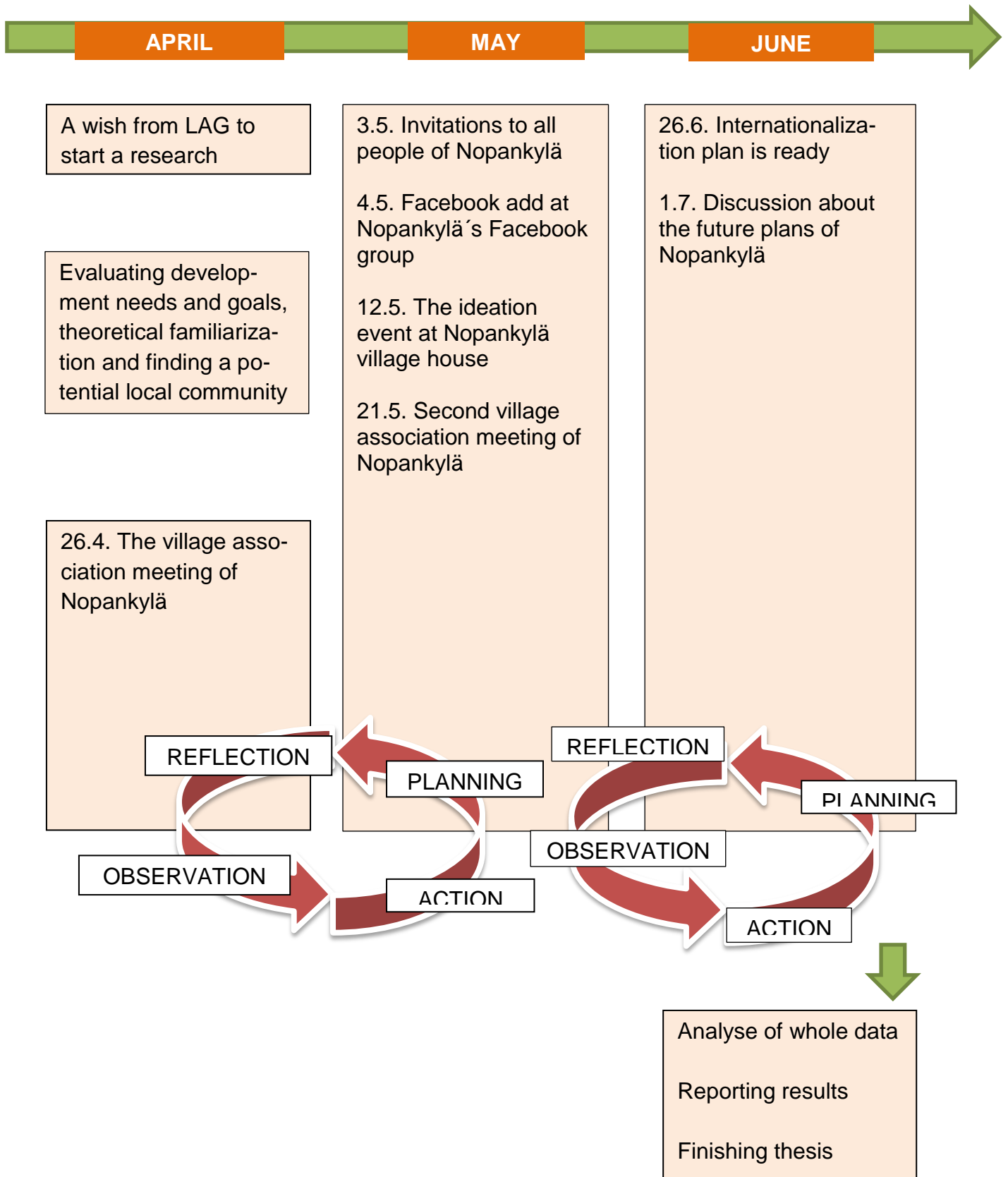


Figure 10. Timeline of action research.

3.5 Summary of internationalization plan for Nopankylä

First of all, the starting point of the internationalization plan was to develop it after the wishes of Nopankylä villagers. Together developed is often better than ideas coming outside of the community. With the help of concrete and customized plan the internationalization process is convenient.

The plan was made using the project application form of Liiveri ry. Despite the fact that the plan is not straightly applicate as a project, the form was a clear and convenient to use. Later on, it can be used as an official project application. The original plan is written in Finnish because it is made for Finnish speaking village. It cannot be assumed that all can understand fluent English. The other reason for choosing Finnish is that often it easier to approach new issues in your own mother tongue.

The themes of internationalization of Nopankylä are

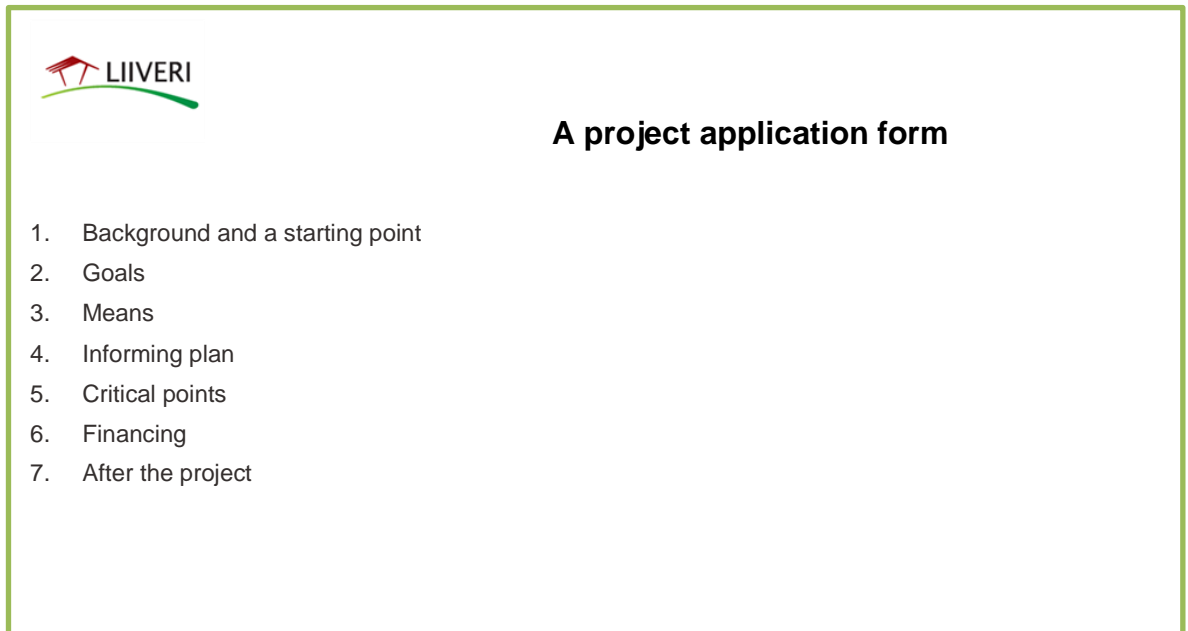
- internationalization at home
- organizing a youth camp
- finding a twinning village


The themes which were chosen were the result of the various e-mails, meetings and events. The wish was also to do close cooperation with village school. In addition, the plan should be short but detailed. It also considers internationalization from the aspect of developing

The plan intends to offer all the people of Nopankylä opportunities for internationalization. Always one does not need to leave your home town in order to see the world.

The internationalization plan is divided into two main chapters. The first one introduces the background and a starting point for the plan. The second one describes all the issues and steps what a successful project needs. A well planned is half done. The good project plan describes what is intended to be made and how (Fig-

ure 9). And if the financing is applicable from Liiveri ry, the decision is made based on the plan (Liiveri ry).



 **LIIVERI**

A project application form

1. Background and a starting point
2. Goals
3. Means
4. Informing plan
5. Critical points
6. Financing
7. After the project

Figure 11. A project application form (Liiveri ry).

The internationalization plan involves all the seven steps needed (Figure 9). First is the goal and means how they are reached. The execution of the internationalization plan is flexible, not tied tightly to schedules. The villagers can also choose if they want to start from internationalization of home or start with all themes. The only time they have to keep in mind is application times for financing.

All the means for the internationalization are considered from the local aspects. In the Ilmajoki area are many schools and associations with whom to cooperate. There live also immigrants and exchange students who could be willing to join the events and share their knowledge. This is beneficial for all because the villagers gain new experiences and the foreign get closer to Finnish life and people.

Next, there is a plan to organize a youth camp in Nopankylä. The camp can be organized through KVT which is the Finnish Branch of Service Civil International. The theme of the camp is eco-tourism. The volunteers will help with conservation of Kalajaisjärvi summer camp and nature tracks. They can overnight low cost at the village school. These volunteers will bring also chance for people to hear from other countries and get new friends.

As mentioned before, the village school is participated into Erasmus project. These connections are used for finding a potential twinning village. The all five partner villages are under LAG's operation area and this possible a joint project application. The theme can be for example eco-tourism. Naturally villagers can use existing connections too. The connections can be for example immigrants in the village, friends and relatives living abroad.

A good project plan involves evaluating critical points. In this project the international cooperation might cause problems. Currently, the starting programming period of the LEADER is in different phases in different countries. In some it hasn't even started. Also cultural differences should be kept in mind. In the village level the problem is often lack of time. Being a member of village association is based on voluntarily. To continue, the developing of international activity often needs financing outside. The financing of this project is applicable either from Liiveri ry or from the Europe for citizen's program. Also self-financing is needed. The village can organize fundraising events like rummage sales or metal receiving.

Spreading the information is vital in project. All are free to join activities but not always all can participate. They are please if there is a possibility to know where the project is going. Nopankylä has various channels to reach all the villagers like the home page, Sunday post, Facebook group and the village house. Village has own chosen peoples to do this activity.

What is important in the execution of the project is asking help and cooperating with the financer. This is how the success is more likely to happen. For example Liiveri ry has knowledge about financing and internationalization of villages.

Lastly, the future plans are discussed. The internationalization is hoped to continue as a part of the village activities. If there is a lack of time or resources, it is possible to cooperate with the other villages of Ilmajoki area.

Anyhow, the internationalization is not intended to be exhausting but fun. By sharing tasks and responsibility it is possibly to tie all the people to join and boost the "we" spirit. With cooperation are more likely long lasting results reached.

4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 Liiveri ry's and Nopankylä's evaluation of the development work

The aim of the research was to create the internationalization plan for Nopankylä according to villagers' wishes. Secondly, Liiveri ry and other LEADER groups can use the plan as a tool in later projects.

The usability and expediency of internationalization plan was the key issue. The village expert of Liiveri ry comments the plan as follows (Kortesuo 2015)

During the whole process the cooperation succeeded. Creation methods were planned together. It was good that you paid attention to propositions and advices. This is how it was easy to implement the workshop [ideation event]. Unfortunately the original idea of the workshop did not actualize due the low number of participants. Nevertheless, you could adapt the situation and chance the plan. Even with the few participants it was possible to develop a new strategy for later actions. In the creation of the actual plan you also listened the wishes of Liiveri ry and Nopankylä. The plan is a really good and usable tool for the internationalization process of Nopankylä.

Nopankylä villager comments the plan like this (Kananoja 2015)

The plan is good and clear. Not too long so it is easy to read. My personal opinion is that it would be awesome to organize a youth camp next summer in the camping area of Kalajaisjärvi...In the camp could all the international volunteers and villagers be mixed. We can organize a language immersion and cultural interchange.

To conclude, the plan pleased both Liiveri ry and Nopankylä. Cooperation with all participants took place smoothly and it was rather easy to meet the schedules. Success means that internationalization plans are possible create to later on. Success needs commitment and passion from participants.

4.2 Self-evaluation of the thesis

To develop rural areas is possible to keep vitality. LEADER actions are a tool to inspire people in rural areas to take part development work. When development work is done together, it is possible to reach long-lasting results. Europe is full of small, distance villages. Cooperation and networking help us survive and keep our countryside populated.

Creation of internationalization plan was interesting. The author learned a lot about LEADER work in Finland and Europe. Now it is easy see the possibilities of LEADER and spread the information. Development work is always a good thing. To have Nopankylä as a target was a great choice. Even though it is a small village, it is full of talented and inspiring people. They do good work at the village school. Not all schools have Erasmus project. With help of the few active villagers internationalization wishes were easy to map. Wishes were very clear.

There were some limitations with research process. In ideal situation there could have been more ideation events but due the fact that researcher moved to a city far away from Nopankylä in May. Anyhow, the participants did not see this fact as a problem. It was easy to communicate through phone and e-mails.

Internationalization is not absolute value but developing the village's vitality is. As the plan shows, the village has all the possibilities to have youth camp or international dinner evenings. Important notion is that these plans can be created later on in other villages.

As mentioned in the introduction, execution of internationalization theme in LEADER has not always been easy because of the resources. Nevertheless, the author believes that it will raise it head in upcoming year. LEADER groups cooperate strongly and this helps to have for example a joint financing for transnational projects. Internationalization and youth are common themes in LEADER groups.

Internationalization plan of Nopankylä shows that by listening the villagers' wishes it is possible to forge a plan that is workable. LEADER as an advisor and financier is good partner.

4.3 Recommendations of further inspection

Internationalization is a bottomless source for projects. Liiveri ry can continue developing its strategy in international aspects on mind. The new starting programming period 2014-2020 is on the best go and full of opportunities.

The proposition for internationalization actions are

- applying a joint Erasmus project with other Southern Ostrobothnian LEADER group
- offering internationalization planning for other villages
- developing internationalization at home actions in Southern Ostrobothnia
- planning internationalization aspects with a youth work group of Liiveri ry

Lastly, the goal is that Liiveri ry will follow internationalization plan of Nopankylä and learn from villagers' experience. This information is valuable in the future work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Nopankylän kansainvälistymissuunnitelma

Jonna-Eveliina Tiitto

Nopankylän kansainvälistymissuunnitelma

Seinäjoen ammattikorkeakoulu
Syksy 2015



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1 TAUSTA JA LÄHTÖTILANNE

1.1 Suunnitelman syntyminen

Suunnitelma on laadittu Nopankylän kyläseura ry:n ja kylän käyttöön. Kylän kansainvälistymishalut ja teemat aiheeseen liittyen nousivat esiin Nopankylälle suunnatun opinnäytetyön puitteissa. Suunnitelman on laatinut kansainvälisen kaupan opiskelija SeAMK:ista. Suunnitelmassa on käytetty apuna Leader-toimintaryhmien asiantuntijoita sekä julkaisuja ja muuta lähdetietoa.

Opinnäyte toteutettiin yhteistyössä maaseudunkehittäjäyhdistys Liiveri ry:n kanssa. Liiveriltä ehdotettiin ottamaan yhteyttä aktiiviseen Nopankylän kyläseuraan ja kysymään, kiinnostaisiko heitä kylälle laadittu kansainvälistymissuunnitelma. Kyläseuran aktiivijäsen lupasi esitellä ideaa kyläseuran kokouksessa 26.4. Vastaanotto oli myönteinen.

Seuraavaksi alkoi suunnittelu ideointi-illan järjestämisestä kylälle. Ajatuksena oli, että mahdollisimman moni kyläläinen osallistuisi miettimään teemoja ja keinoja Nopankylän kansainvälistymiselle. Tilaisuudesta tiedotettiin pyhäpostissa ja Facebook- sivuilla. Tilaisuus järjestettiin 12.5. Valitettavasti kovin moni ei intoutunut paikalle, mutta pienelle porukallakin nousi esiin tärkeitä teemoja. Osanottajat saivat kuulla kyläkoulun mielenkiintoisesta Erasmus- hankkeesta. Opettajat, vanhemmat ja etenkin oppilaat ovat olleet innoissaan. Lisäksi kiinnostusta herättivät kv-työleiri, kotikansainvälistyminen ja yhteistyö koulun kanssa.

Ennen suunnitelman laatimista oli vielä hyvä kuulla muidenkin mielipiteitä. Ideointitilaisuudessa nousseet ideat otettiin esiin kyläseuran kokouksessa 21.5. Toive toteutukseen oli selkeä: *”Yhteistyö koulun kanssa tässä asiassa on keskeistä. Suunnitelmaan olisi hyvä sisältyä kotikansainvälistymistä, työleiriasiaa ja ystävyyskyläasiaa niin se olisi meille mieluinen. Mahdollisimman paljon konkreettisia ideoita ja kanavia miten, mistä, kuinka, kenen kanssa jne.”*

Jo aktiiviselle Nopankylälle kansainvälistyminen on seuraava askel koko yhteisön etujen lisäämiseen. Hankkeet mahdollistavat etenkin pienille yhdistyksille kansainvälistymisen. Kylien ja yhdistysten kansainvälistyminen lisää viihtyisyyttä ja suvaitsevuuutta kotiseudulla. Kulttuuritietämys lisääntyy. Kansainvälisen yhteistyön avulla alueelle pystytään tuomaan

uutta osaamista, tapahtumia ja ideoita. Kansainvälinen toiminta on myös nuoria innostava tapa lähteä mukaan kylätoimintaan.

Konkreettisen, Nopankylälle räätälöidyn suunnitelman avulla kansainvälistymistä voi toteuttaa kotikansainvälistymisen, kv- työleirin ja ystävyyskylän muodossa. Suunnitelmassa halutaan luoda kaikille kyläläisille mahdollisuus kansainvälistymiskokemuksiin. Aina ei tarvitse poistua omaa kylää pitemmälle nähdäkseen maailmaa.

Kansainväliseen yhteistyön onnistumiseen vaaditaan seuraavat askeleet (Kovacs 2015):

1. avun pyytäminen asiantuntijoilta
2. kontaktien ja partnereiden aktiivinen etsintä
3. rahoituksen hakeminen (esimerkiksi Leader- rahoitus tai Erasmus+)
4. sopivan partnerin löydyttyä, yhteisen kehitettävän tehtävän etsintä
5. toimenpiteiden luominen yhdessä
6. hankkeen toteutus

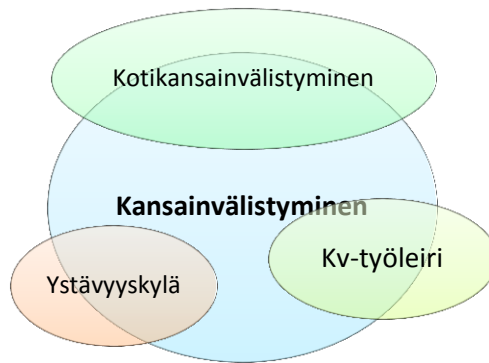


2 KANSAINVÄLISTYMISEN KEINOT

2.1 Tavoite

Tavoitteena on innostaa nopankyläläisiä kansainvälistymiskokemuksiin omalla kylällä.

Kaikille kyläläisille halutaan luoda mahdollisuus kansainvälistymiskokemuksiin. Tässä suunnitelmassa halutaan esitellä mahdollisimman tarkasti menetelmät, yhteistyökumppanit ja rahoituskanavat. Aikataulu suunnitelman toteuttamiseen on joustava. Tietenkin ha-kuajat rahoituksen suhteen on huomioitava.



Kuvio 1. Kansainvälistymisen menetelmät

On mahdollista lähteä toteuttamaan kaikkia osa-alueita kerralla, taikka lähteä liikkeelle yhdestä suunnitellusta osa-alueesta (Kuvio 1). Lisäksi suunnitelmassa halutaan tuoda esiin luontomatkailuteeman kehittämistä, joka on yksi kylän visioista.

Suunnitelman tavoitteena on jatkuvuus. Tavoitteena on innostaa koko kylä mukaan ja ideoida lisää kv-toimintaa. Ystävyyskylän löydyttyä on mahdollista toteuttaa opintomatkoja, kulttuurivaihtoa ja yhteisiä hankkeita.

Nopankylän kv-teemoja ovat

- Kylätoiminta
- Luontomatkailun kehittäminen
- Lapset ja nuoret

2.2 Keinot

Tahtoa kansainvälisyyteen löytyy, joten keinot myös löydetään. Tässä osiossa kerrotaan tarkemmin kv-menetelmistä ja yhteistyötahoista suunnitelman toteuttamiseksi. Liikkeelle lähdetään oman kylän / kunnan tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista ja osaamisesta.

2.2.1 Kotikansainvälistyminen

Kotikansainvälistyminen on nimensä mukaisesti kansainvälisten kokemusten hankkimista ja vieraisiin kulttuureihin tutustumista kotimaassa (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan Leader- ryhmät, 43). Nopankylän kylätalolla voidaan järjestää erilaisia tilaisuuksia ja tapahtumia.

Toimintaohjeet: Ruokailta

Toteutus

- Säännöllisesti järjestettävä ilta (klo 18–21).
- Joka kerta aiheena eri kulttuuri, kulttuurin edustajat ohjaavat kokkausta.
- Tarvikkeiden hinta jaetaan osallistujien kesken.
- Monen lajin illallinen maksaa keskimäärin 2-3€/ henkilö.

Toimintaohjeet: Lasten kansainvälinen päivä

Toteutus

- Tarpeen mukaan järjestettävä.
- Lapset (1-6 lk.) kiertävät ”maailmankartan avulla eri pisteissä, joissa maiden edustajat kertovat toiminnallisesti (mm. musiikin, tanssin avulla) omasta kulttuuristaan.
- Matkan järjestys luokittain. Oppilaat jokaisessa pisteessä 20 minuuttia.

Yhteistyökumppanit

Hyvä menetelmä on tehdä yhteistyötä alueen maahanmuuttajien kanssa. Nopankylällä on paljon **virolaisia maataloustyöntekijöitä**, heitä perheineen voisi pyytää mukaan toimintaan. Lisäksi Ilmajoella toimii **Etelä-Pohjanmaan opisto**, joka tarjoaa maahanmuuttajille suomen kielen- ja kulttuurin opetusta. Opistosta voisi löytyä intoa ja kokemusta tilaisuuksien järjestämiseen. Vastaavaa toimintaa ja osaamista tarjoaa myös paikallinen **kansalaisopisto**.

Lisäksi **Suomen Punainen Risti** harjoittaa monikulttuurisuustyötä. Ilmajoen SPR voisi myös harkita yhteistyökumppaniksi. Kannattaa muistaa **Sedu Ilmajoki** ja **SeAMK Ilmajoki**.

Oppilaitoksissa on paljon vaihto-oppilastoimintaa.

Paikallista osaamista löytyy!

Kylällä voisi järjestää kv-työleirin, jonka teemana on luontomatkailu. Työleirillä vapaaehtoistyöntekijät voivat kunnostaa Kalajaisten luontopolkua ja kunnan uimarantaa. Yöpyminen voisi onnistua kyläkoululla taikka itse leirikeskuksesta.

Kv-työleirin voi järjestää esimerkiksi **Kansainvälinen vapaaehtoistyö ry:n** kautta. KVT välittää vapaaehtoisia talkootyöhön yleishyödylliseen toimintaan (Kansainvälinen vapaaehtoistyö ry).

Taulukko 1. Kv-työleiri

KESTO	LEIRI-ISÄNNÄN TEHTÄVÄT	RAHOITUS	MITEN
Leirin kesto on vähintään 10 päivää ja enintään kolme viikkoa.	<p>Majoitus ja ruoka.</p> <p>Työnohjaus.</p> <p>Kuljetus leiri paikalle, jos sinne ei pääse julkisilla kuluneuvoilla.</p> <p>Huolehtiminen muista leirin käytännön järjestelyistä.</p>	<p>Ruoka, majoitus ja vapaaehtoisten kuljetuskustannukset kannattaa ottaa budjettia laatiessa huomioon, samaten kuin kulut työvälineistä ja materiaaleista.</p> <p>Ruokapuolen suhteen mahdollista saada lahjoituksia paikallisilta ruoka-kauppailta.</p> <p>Leiri -isäntä voi varata 6 euroa/ leiriläisen/ päivä.</p>	<p>Kun ajatus kansainvälisen työleirin järjestämisestä on syntynyt, otetaan ensin yhteyttä KVT:n leirikoordinaatioryhmään/toimistoon osoitteessa leirit@kvtf Finland.org.</p>

2.2.3 Ystävyyskylä

Kansainvälistymisprosessin yhtenä tarkoituksena on löytää ystävyyskylä Nopankylälle. Kylän tulee olla sopivankokoinen, ikä- ja elinkeinorakenteeltaan vastaava kylä jostakin EU-maasta. Lähtökohdat ystävyyskylälle voivat olla puhtaasti halu tutustua eri kulttuuriin taikka kehittäminen yhdessä. Ystävyyskylä mahdollistaa yhteisen hankkeen hakemista, teemana esimerkiksi luontomatkailun kehittäminen.

Nopankylän kyläkoulu on parhaillaan mukana EU:n Erasmus-yhteistyöhankkeessa. Lisää suhteita voidaan etsiä partnerimaista: Puola/Rejowiec Fabryczny, Romania/Oradea, Kreikka/Ateena, UK/Doncaster ja Espanja/Fraga.

Olennaista on myös se, onko paikkakunnilla Leader-kytköksiä yhteistyötä ajatellen. Selvityksen tuloksena kävi ilmi, että kaikki alueet kuuluivat toimintaryhmien piiriin. Nopankyläläiset voivat miettiä, että mikä maa kiinnostaa eniten ja ottaa yhteyttä toimintaryhmiin Liiverin avustuksella. Näin molemmat ystäväskyläehdokkaat saisivat tukea, neuvontaa ja mahdollisesti myös rahoitusta. Täytyy kuitenkin muistaa, että uusi Leader-ohjelmakausi 2014–2020 on käynnistynyt hitaasti, joten muutoksia toimintaryhmiin voi ilmaantua. Kylältä voi myös löytyä kohdemaista lähtöisin olevia henkilöitä avustamaan.

Taulukko 2. Leader-toimintaryhmät partnerimaissa

Maa	Toimintaryhmä	Sähköposti	Kotisivut
Puola	PROMENADA S-12	http://www.promenadas12.pl/	e-mail: biuro@promenadas12.pl
Romania	Valea Crişurilor	gal-valeacrisurilor@yahoo.com	http://www.galvaleacrisurilor.ro/
Iso-Britannia	Bolsover North East Derbyshire	info@bned-leader.co.uk	info@bned-leader.co.uk
Espanja	Centro de Desarrollo de la Zona Oriental Huesca	gerente@cederoriental.com	http://cederoriental.com/

2.3 Tiedotussuunnitelma

Tiedottamalla laajasti ja tehokkaasti kylässä saadaan innostettua uusia toimijoita mukaan.

Nopankylällä vastuu tiedottamisesta on jaettu kyläseuran jäsenten kesken. Nopankylällä tiedottaminen tapahtuu mm. pyhäpostin kautta, Facebookissa, kotisivuilla, kylätalon ilmoitustaululla ja kyläseuran kokouksissa.

Näitä kaikkia tiedotuskanavia voi hyödyntää kv-suunnitelman toteutuksessa. Lisäksi mahdolliseen rahoittajaan tulisi olla yhteydessä suunnitelman toteutuksen alkuvaiheessa, jotta saadaan luotua pohja kestäväälle yhteistyölle.

2.4 Kriittiset kohdat

Suunnitelmissa on hyvä ottaa huomioon mahdolliset riskitekijät. Riskejä voivat aiheuttaa mm. Nopankylän omat resurssit (aktiivikyläläisten ajanpuute, raha). Jos ryhdytään ystävyysskylätoimintaan, viivästyksiä voi olla aikataulujen vahvistumisessa (kulttuurien välinen ero), sähköpostiviesteihin vastaamisessa, yhteistyöhaluisen toimintaryhmän löytämisessä, ja uuden Leader-ohjelmakauden käynnistymisessä eri aikaan eri maissa.

Suunnitelman toteutus saattaa olla aluksi hidasta. Kylätoiminta perustuu vapaaehtoisuuteen ja aikaa on rajallisesti käytössä kylän asioihin. Kyläseuralaiset voivat nimetä vastuhenkilön kv-suunnitelman toteutukseen. Henkilö vastaa yhteistyötahojen yhteydenotosta, tiedotuksesta ja muista käytännön järjestelyistä. Avukseen hän voi ottaa esimerkiksi kv-asioista kiinnostuneen nuoren. Otollisinta olisi kuitenkin jos mahdollisimman moni kyläläinen osallistuisi suunnitelman toteutukseen.

2.5 Rahoitus

Kansainvälisen toiminnan käynnistäminen ja kehittäminen edellyttää usein ulkopuolista rahoitusta. Tässä muutamia vaihtoehtoja, jotka on jaoteltu suoraan EU-rahoitukseen ja Leader Liiverin rahoitukseen. On hyvä muistaa, että hanketuki ei voi kattaa kaikkia hankkeen kustannuksia. Tästä syystä on hyvin tärkeää suunnitella jo hankkeen alkuvaiheessa, miten hankkeen omarahoitusosuus katetaan.

2.5.1 LEADER rahoitus

EU-osarahoitteen Manner-Suomen maaseudun kehittämisohjelman Leader-toiminta tarjoaa kylän toimijalle hyvän kanavan kansainvälistymiseen. Nopankylä voi hakea esimerkiksi kehittämishanketta Leader Liiveristä. Hankkeen tulee olla innovatiivinen, ei yhdis-

tyksen normaalia toimintaa ylläpitävää. Kehittämishanke voi olla esimerkiksi kansainvälinen yhteistyöhanke, jonka teema sopii Liiverin strategiaan.

Kv-hankkeen budjetti voi olla noin 5 000–120 000 €, **tukiprosentti on 100 %**. Kv-hankkeeseen tarvitaan kumppani toisesta EU-maasta (Liiveri ry).

2.5.2 Europe for Citizens

Kansalaisten Eurooppa -ohjelmasta rahoitetaan hankkeita, jotka tukevat aktiivista kansalaisuutta ja rohkaisevat kansalaisia osallistumaan päätöksentekoon.

Yhtenä osiona ohjelmaan kuuluu **ystävyysskylätoiminta**. Ystävyyskuntatoiminnan puitteissa järjestettävissä kansalaisten tapaamisissa saatetaan yhteen monenlaisia ystävyyskuntien asukkaita. Erityispainopiste on hankkeissa, jotka käsittelevät Kansalaisten Eurooppa -ohjelman painopisteitä.

Korkein myönnettävä tuki on 25 000 euroa. Hankkeet pisteytetään ja arvioidaan. Siksi on tärkeää laatia hankesuunnitelma mahdollisimman tarkasti ja ohjelman painopisteitä noudattaen. Ystävyyskylä-hankkeiden seuraava haku päättyy 1.9.2015 klo 13.00 Suomen aikaa. Hakuja on kaksi vuodessa. (CIMO).

2.5.3 Nopankylän omarahoitus

Varainhankinta on osa Nopankylän kyläyhdistyksen muuta toimintaa. Kerättyjä varoja voi käyttää esim. hankkeiden omarahoitukseen.

Nopankylän varainhankinnan keinoja ovat: jäsenmaksut, talkootyö, metallin keräys, myyjäiset, kirpputorit ja kylätalon juhlasalin vuokraustoiminta.

2.6 Suunnitelman toteuttamisen jälkeen

Kansainvälisen toiminnan toivotaan juurtuvan osaksi Nopankylän toimintaa. Mahdollisimman moni kyläläinen halutaan saada innostumaan ja osallistumaan kv-toimintaan. Lähtökohdat ovat otolliset, sillä kyläkoulun Erasmus-hanke on innostanut koulun henkilökuntaa,

oppilaita ja vanhempia. Koulun hanke jatkuu vielä ensi vuoden puolelle. Oppilaiden kanssa voisi ideoida yhdessä ja kysyä mitä he haluavat kansainvälisyyden näkyvän kylällä.

Kansainvälistyminen, etenkin kotikansainvälistyminen, ei vaadi suuria rahallisia resursseja. Yhteistyö Ilmajoen tahojen, maahanmuuttajien ja vaihto-opiskelijoiden hyödyntäminen vaativat lähinnä ajallista panostusta. Nopankylä voisi miettiä oman kv-vastaavan nimeämistä.

Yhteistyötä voi harkita myös muiden alueen kylien kanssa, jos oma aika on kortilla. Vastuuta voi jakaa ja on mahdollista järjestää suurempia tapahtumia ja tilaisuuksia. Yhteisellä ideoinnilla innostetaan koko kylä mukaan toimintaan!

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